



COVID-19 IN AFRICA

HOW TO COMMUNICATE DURING A CRISIS

Communication with the public, employees and other actors is a crucial element in the crisis management of the coronavirus pandemic. Crisis communication must be open and consistent during an incident to reduce side effects and mitigate potential negative impacts. Inadequate language leads to an escalation of the incident, diffusion of misleading information and exacerbation of fear and panic.



Inaccurate and inconsistent information can cause confusion and frustration among the public.



Without a clearly articulated crisis communication plan, the contamination is likely to spread faster.



Leaders and decision-makers have a responsibility to inform others during a pandemic.



Prepare

- Select a crisis communication team with sufficient expertise and trained spokespersons
- Choose appropriate channels of communication including social media
- Map key groups of internal and external actors
- Develop pre-draft messages and holding statements for all possible future scenarios
- Establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms



Deliver

- Be quick, accurate and carefully check all facts
- Do not make unrealistic promises
- Show empathy and responsibility
- Stay clear and consistent
- Make public safety the number one priority