

Implementing UN Priorities in the Field

Managing Media Inquiries

Workshop with UNCT, Regional Heads of Office, Section Chiefs, and Office Coordinators
27-28 June 2013 - Sebroko, Unity Hall

Managing Media Inquiries

- Effective management of communications and media inquiries
- When and how to ensure media coverage for relevant events in the field
- Role of the UNOCI Spokesperson and OC
- Dealing with media in time of crisis

Management of communications and media

Media environment

- History repeatedly demonstrates the lethal power of misinformation and media manipulation by parties to conflicts
- Credible and accurate information can be rare in conflict or post-conflict environments
- There may be little or no tradition of an independent, non-partisan media
- Journalists may be biased in their reportage or intimidated into self-censorship
- People who seek out sources of independent information may face persecution

Management of communications and media

Communication environment

- Evolving context mixing traditional and new communication and information sharing trends
- Pervasive presence of digital communication: online media, social media, webcams, mobile phone, multimedia approach, podcasting, blogs, video conferencing...
- This context influences the speed of the message and audiences responses / feedback
- Exponential use of any piece of information
- Presence of non professionals in journalism
- Main issue of accuracy

Stick to DPKO SOP on Public information issues and agreed channels of Public information within the Mission through the Spokesperson Office and PIO

Coverage of activities in the field – *When ?*

In line with UNOCI's mandate, UN priorities and the Mission Implementation Plan, the activity to be covered should provide for :

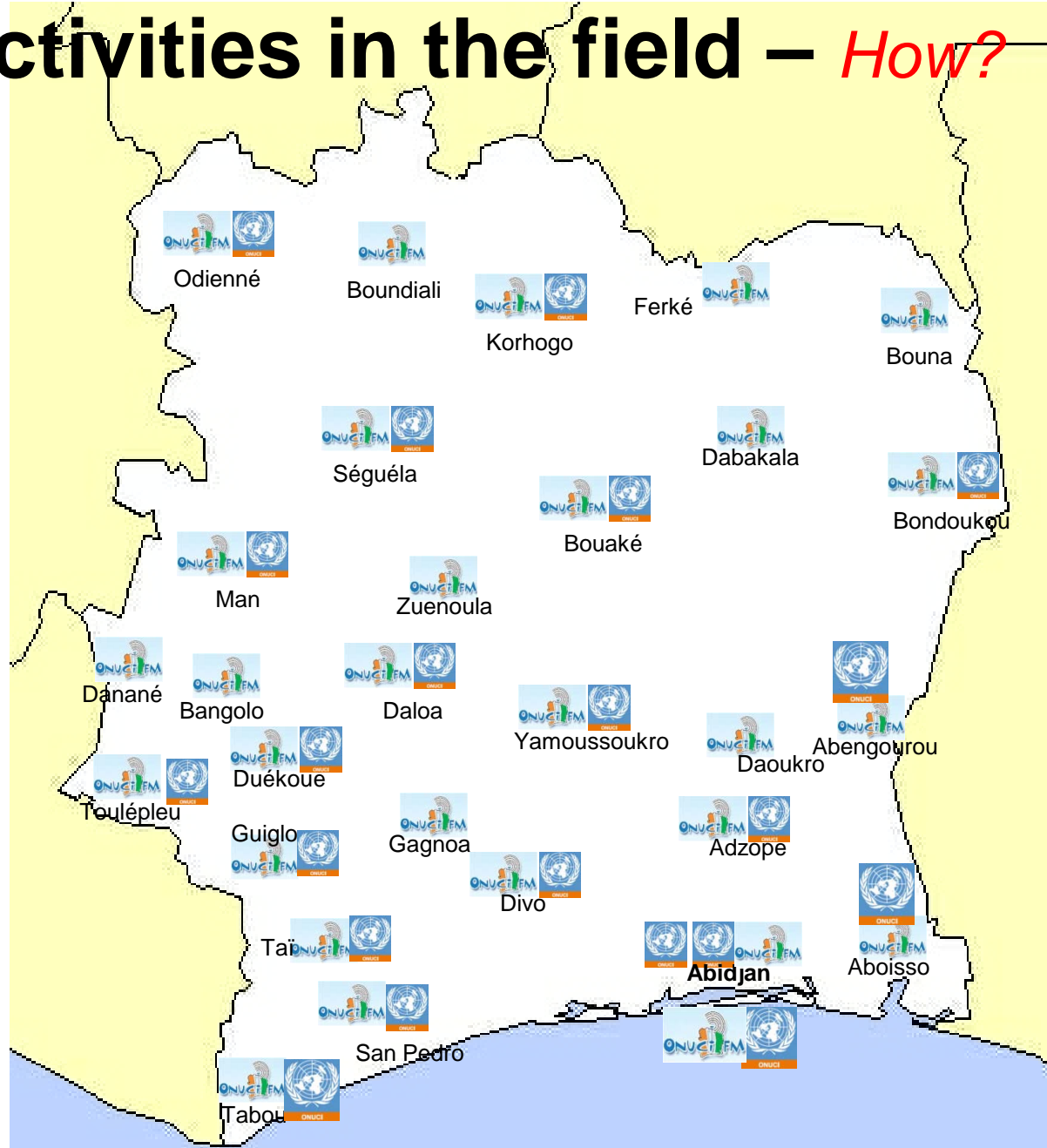
- Increased understanding of UNSCR Resolutions on Cote d'Ivoire and the role of each stakeholder
- Protection of Civilians
- Support to Rule of law & restoration of State authority
- Promotion of Human rights and social justice
- Dialogues and debates on the root causes of the crisis at all levels
- Support national reconciliation/social cohesion, conflict prevention, management and settlement
- Enhanced trust among stakeholders/political inclusiveness
- More reliable unbiased information on the peace process
- Peaceful electoral environment
- Creates a climate conducive to security/peace – DDR/SSR
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Coverage of activities in the field – *How?*

Map of Public Information Offices and



- Your tools and means are :
- ONUCI fm ensuring currently approximately 80% coverage of the country through 29 locations
- **PIO : 20 offices in Cote d'Ivoire for provision of advice and support in coordination with PIO at HQ**



Role of UNOCI's Spokesperson

- The Spokesperson works very closely with the Head of Mission to **accurately reflect Mission's priorities and objectives**
- He/her **advises the Head of Mission** on public relations and dealing with the media
- He/her gives **press briefings and interviews**
- He/her **facilitates the daily work of journalists covering the Mission**

Role of UNOCI Spokesperson and Office Coordinators

- **The Mission Spokesperson is the focal point for all media relations** - local and international media
- He/her **liaises with all Mission components and Office Coordinators** to have the latest, accurate information on Mission activities and priorities
- He/ her issues **press releases** and **provides information** to the public and relevant UN offices.
- He/her makes **official statements on behalf of the Mission**
- He/her arranges for media representatives to meet with Mission's senior officials

Role of UNOCI Spokesperson and Office Coordinators

- Build a **spirit of cooperation and exchange of information between PIO and OC**
- Ensure regular **information sharing mechanism** (daily reports) to ensure that the Spokesperson/ Public Information Office is fully briefed on developments in the field ex : *Niégré, Mont Peko*
- **The Spokesperson ensures that the Mission's media lines/leadership statements/positions on key issues are shared with OC to make certain that the various Mission's offices can reflect it in their interactions with stakeholders**

Talking to the media

- The Mission Spokesperson may be assisted by individuals with specialized expertise from a particular component of the Mission, such as a **Military Spokesperson** for military issues and a **Civilian Police Spokesperson**.
- In line with the procedures, a staff member or a military can talk to the media on matters pertaining to his/her work, as long as the MPIO or the Spokesperson is informed and has given his green light.
- Example : *A driver can talk about driving, but not about landmines*
- Always remember : there is no off the records statements with the Media
- It is always preferable to talk to the media experts

Dealing with Media in crisis period

- In crisis period the Crisis Management Cell is activated (SOP) and **PIO is part of this Cell**
- In such cases, only the Spokesperson, after clearance from the Head of Mission's, is allowed to speak to the media
- Staff members should be recalled that they are not allowed to talk to the media as it would immediately be considered as an official information from the Mission
- When UN personnel are witnesses, they should be shielded from the media, unless there is a compelling reason to expose them, such as to dispel rumours or to counter disinformation in coordination with Spokesperson office.
- In the event of a hostage situation or death/injury of a staff member, no names should be released to the media until it is certain that relatives/next of kin have been informed.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

