

Media Relations Policy

International Federation of Settlements (IFS) –

DRAFT Sept 2025



Key Points Summary

This policy outlines how IFS engages with the media to:

1. Promote social justice and community empowerment.
2. Amplify the voices of its members.
3. Ensure ethical, accurate, and inclusive communication.
4. Align media efforts with strategic priorities and values.
5. Balance global and local perspectives while respecting diversity.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance for the International Federation of Settlements (IFS) on engaging with the media, delegating responsibilities, and ensuring alignment with the organisation's principles, values, and diverse international perspectives.

This policy applies to all IFS staff, volunteers, regional groups, Executive Committee members, and Board members.

2. Policy Statement

IFS aims to maintain a positive and professional relationship with the media, leveraging it as a resource to:

- Promote awareness of social justice issues, including gender equity, homelessness, and other forms of social disadvantage.
- Advocate for the principles and values of IFS as a global network, including inclusivity, equity, and community empowerment.
- Provide timely and accurate information about IFS's work, services, and initiatives.
- Amplify the voices of its membership network, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and valued.
- Reflect IFS's primary focus on settlement houses, community and neighbourhood centres, and local solutions to global issues.

Strategic Alignment and Focus

- All media engagement must align with IFS's strategic priorities and have a clear purpose.
- Media engagement should not occur for the sake of speaking out but must contribute meaningfully to IFS's mission and goals.
- Given IFS's limited bandwidth, media efforts should focus on the most important and impactful issues.

Delegations and Responsibilities

- The IFS Executive Director(EO) or their staff delegate is the official spokesperson for IFS and is responsible for all media engagements and approvals.
- Delegates must be suitably qualified persons who can effectively represent IFS's values and priorities.
- The President also has the authority to speak to the media, particularly for calls to action, comments on current affairs, or matters of strategic importance.
- Board members and Executive Committee members may engage with the media only with prior approval from the EO, their delegate, or the President.
- Regional groups may issue their own media statements but must consult with the host office staff before release.

Media vs. Position Statements

- **Media Statements:** Reactive, factual, and time-sensitive responses to media inquiries or events.
- **Position Statements:** Proactive, value-driven declarations that reflect IFS's principles and stance on key issues. These require broader consultation and approval from the Executive Committee.
- Where time allows, broad consultation should take place to ensure statements reflect the diversity of views within the network.
- In cases where consultation is not feasible, statements should align with historic pre-agreed positions that reflect IFS's values and mission.

3. Principles and Values

As an international network with diverse views, IFS's media engagement is guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusivity:** Respecting and reflecting the diversity of perspectives within the network.
- **Integrity:** Ensuring all communications are accurate, ethical, and aligned with IFS's mission.
- **Timeliness:** Balancing the need for swift responses with thorough review and approval processes.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging input from relevant stakeholders while maintaining clear lines of responsibility.
- **Diversity of Views:** Striving to represent different perspectives while upholding IFS's core values fairly.
- **Ethical Standards:** Safeguarding the dignity, privacy, and safety of individuals featured in media materials and avoiding harm to vulnerable groups.
- **Transparency:** Ensuring openness about the sources of information and the intent behind statements.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Respecting cultural differences and ensuring messaging is inclusive and appropriate for diverse audiences.

4. Procedure

Media Engagement

IFS will respond to media inquiries when:

- The topic is relevant to IFS's mission and work.
- The engagement aligns with IFS's principles, values, and strategic priorities.
- The engagement benefits IFS's reputation and long-term goals.

Approval Process

- The EO, their delegate, or the President is responsible for approving all media releases and responses.
- For sensitive or controversial matters, the EO or their delegate will seek out-of-session approval from the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

- Position statements require consultation with the Executive Committee and, where appropriate, the Board.

Regional Group Statements

- Regional groups may issue their own statements, but must consult with the host office staff before release.
- All statements, including those from regional groups, must include the following disclaimer:
“The views expressed in this statement are not necessarily those of the International Federation of Settlements (IFS). While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, IFS takes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or any claims made by individuals or organisations mentioned herein. Any appearance or mention of any person or organisation in this statement is not to be taken as an indication of social, political, or any other assumed status of such person or organisation.”

Campaigns

- All campaigns must be pre-approved by the Executive Committee to ensure alignment with IFS’s strategic priorities and values.
- Campaigns should focus on issues of significant importance to the network and its members, with clear goals and measurable outcomes.

Crisis Communication

- In the event of a crisis, the EO or their delegate will lead the response, in consultation with the President and relevant stakeholders.
- A unified, timely, and accurate message will be prioritised to protect IFS’s reputation and uphold its values.

Supporting Member Voices

- IFS is committed to actively empowering its members to speak out in their own right.
- Wherever possible, IFS will provide tailored training, resources, and guidance to help members effectively engage with the media.
- Members are encouraged to use IFS’s media platforms to amplify their voices, provided their content aligns with IFS’s values and principles.

Media Release Guidelines

When preparing a media release, the following protocols must be observed:

- Use IFS letterhead and keep content concise (one page).

- Address the five W's—what, where, when, who, and why—in the first two paragraphs.
- Avoid jargon, acronyms, or technical language unfamiliar to the general public.
- Include high-quality, relevant images where possible.
- Ensure all facts and quotations are accurate and properly attributed.
- Obtain permission before listing contact details.

Digital and Social Media

- Social media is a key platform for IFS's media engagement. Staff and members are encouraged to use these platforms responsibly, adhering to IFS's values and guidelines for online communication.
- IFS will monitor social media activity to ensure alignment with its principles and address any issues promptly.

Partnerships and Collaborations

- When engaging in joint media efforts with partners, IFS will coordinate to ensure consistency, alignment, and mutual respect for each organisation's values and priorities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- IFS will regularly review its media engagements and this policy to ensure alignment with strategic priorities, values, and the evolving needs of the network.
- Feedback from media engagements will be used to improve future efforts and refine the policy as needed.

6. Language and Accessibility

- IFS will strive to make media materials accessible by translating key content into relevant languages and ensuring cultural sensitivity in messaging.
- Accessibility will be prioritised **within available resources and means** to ensure inclusivity without overextending capacity.

7. Related Documents

- IFS Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct
- IFS Privacy Policy
- IFS Social Media Policy