

Political campaigning, electioneering, marketing and post-truth. Codes of conduct for political parties

[00:00:18] **Speaker 1** Welcome back to the money and the legal experts for UNDP, the role for policy and program support in New York. And pleased to meet you online to introduce you to the second part of the module for. The previous presentation of this online course have illustrated the work, journalists, media and interpretation of institutions in seizing the opportunity of the digital era when addressing the much higher prevalence of unverified information manipulation and information pollution in today's information ecosystem. In this context and political leaders in a key position at the heart of the competition to help create a constructive online ecosystem. In what some call the post-truth era, a new era in which feelings will matter more than facts. Is this real estate? What are the experiences, risk and opportunities when political leaders adopt a specific legal framework as legislator? Well, let's look at the preliminary consideration on some of these questions. I would like to start first with a reference document for UN electoral assistance, the 2021 U.N. Secretary General Report on enhancing and denying election. The report encourages member states to consider ways in which candidates and other political leaders from across the spectrum can voluntarily commit to responsible behaviors during electoral processes. The report also specified that this would also apply with regard to online activities and that the U.N. is ready to work with member states if they were to request it. You find these reports in the introductory material with an overview of humanitarian assistance, as well as a view of how the U.N. processes request for technical assistance. Secondly, I'd like to focus on what the content and contribution of voluntary commitments from political leaders have been. Traditionally, voluntary commitments have ranged from specific concern of political campaign or specific period commitments, such as requesting to put an attitude on campaign posters to more aspirational issues, such as not to resort to intimidation and violence in the digital era. Recent commitments of political leaders increasingly include promises to use verified and official sources of information or to use political advertising in a responsible manner. They also aim at preventing practices by voluntarily prescribing the use of leaked or stolen digital material or refraining from knowingly conveying false or misleading information. In our practice, we receive feedback on this type of voluntary agreements when they truly reflect pluralistic views. They can, in the short term, impact positively the environment of digital campaign. The voluntary commitments have also had cover legal gaps and prevent overregulation in the long run. The commitments can also help test and calibrate measures before legislators consider putting them into laws. In sum, they can be useful. However, they do require a credible report on the implementation of the commitments for voters to be able to make an informed choice on whether a candidate is trustworthy and whether he or she wants to support him or her. The reporting would be established by an impartial electoral observation by civil society and through credible reporting from Germany in media. The leaders would in turn either change their behavior, distance themselves, or ensure that their supporters use restraint partly because of their concern that this would otherwise cause them. In the digital era. We heard earlier about the difficulty of identifying credible reports, and this affects the capacity of citizens to understand whether leaders do adhere to the voluntary commitments or not. As we just heard, civil society organizations and journalists are increasing their monitoring and fact checking online to hold leaders accountable. Social media companies have also developed moderation processes and are called upon strengthening them, for instance, by preventing algorithm from supporting emotions more than facts to responsibly manage political advertising and to provide the needed transparency on the functioning of the platform for voters. In some, a healthy online ecosystem is required. Let's move to a second action which political leaders are involved in as legislators? The regulation. A recent report by the Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights, which feature which is available in reference to this report, states that many legislations regarding hate speech disinformation remain ambiguous and that these legislations create a broad scope for such interventions to be arbitrary or to be used for political or other inappropriate ends. The document, published in May 2022, also reports 931 Internet shutdowns in 74 countries between 2016 and 2021 and 52 elections affected by shutdown in the same period. These have been documented by a coalition of 224 CISOs olds to keep it on coalition. The Witch Theater report reminds us that the Human Rights Committee in 2012 and the Human Rights Council in 2016, as well as special procedure amended holders and appeals from regional organizations. Ordinance incompatibility accordance with human rights law. In sum, the report reminds Member States and legislators that they need to be extremely careful when limitations of the freedom of expression is at stake and that they need to meet the criteria set by human rights law. As you interview, we set the ambitious objective of governance research framework to support legislative and regulatory measures to advance all fundamental freedoms together. Freedoms related to civic space, to civic engagement, and to the integrity of information ecosystem belong together. Now in seven countries where there is a tradition of regulation of media access during the regular campaign, this has been established to foster pluralism and a level playing field. So in those countries, the legislature and media regulatory authority need nowadays to address the online dimension of the electoral campaign. I will hand over to our next speaker, who will present in more details the experience of the French authorities in establishing a more structured dialog with social media companies, candidates and voters based on the recent legislation. Thank you for your time. These were some of the preliminary consideration aiming at feeding into the wider force in dispute. In sum, there is no panacea, no single stakeholder. Not even leaders who can fix this issue. It takes our joint efforts across disciplines and across expertize to support a healthy online.