INFORMATION INTEGRITY AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As shown, threats to information integrity can have a negative impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1 NO POVERTY — Mis- and disinformation continue to have implications for poverty eradication efforts and the global economy. Economic hardship can also fuel the spread of polarizing and hateful lies, including about marginalized groups. The cost-of-living crisis has been particularly fertile ground for the dissemination of disinformation falsely blaming the switch to renewable energy for soaring energy costs or job losses, for instance.

2 ZERO HUNGER — Threats to information integrity can compound global hunger, including by exacerbating conflict, climate change, disasters, poverty and inequality. Disinformation can deflect attention and distract from the challenges to global food security posed by conflicts.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING — During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, an infodemic of related mis- and disinformation undermined public health measures and vaccination drives. The threat to children's health and well-being resulting from exposure to harmful content persists.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION — Mis- and disinformation and hate speech can have an adverse impact on access to quality education, in particular for marginalized groups, including young women and girls. Access to information and digital media literacy drives to increase resilience will play a key role in limiting the societal impact of online harms.

5 GENDER EQUALITY — Gender-based hate speech and disinformation seek to systematically subjugate women by silencing them and pushing them out of the public sphere. They can have devastating consequences, from suppressing women's voices and fuelling self-censorship, to causing professional and reputational damage and inciting physical violence.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION — Two billion people live without safely managed drinking water services. Mis- and disinformation about the safety of drinking water and sanitation can have dangerous health consequences.[a]

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY — Climate mis- and disinformation, much of it seeded by the fossil fuel industry, are undermining the urgent transition to cleaner forms of energy production, narrowing the closing window to deliver a sustainable future for all.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH — Research has pointed to the detrimental impacts of mis- and disinformation and hate speech on the economy.[b]

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE — Mis- and disinformation and hate speech, and overbroad responses to these phenomena, can have a detrimental impact on innovation, including by limiting the potential of marginalized groups and making digital spaces less equal and inclusive.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES — Mis- and disinformation and hate speech spread online are polarizing societies and targeting already marginalized and vulnerable communities, and can result in their further social, economic and political exclusion.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES — Efforts to make cities and communities more sustainable can be undermined by disinformation that denies or deflects attention away from the impacts of human activity on the environment.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION — Activists behind initiatives to foster a circular economy and boost zero-waste practices have been targeted through online hate speech and disinformation.

13 CLIMATE ACTION — Climate disinformation, and the inertia that it encourages, is undermining efforts to take urgent action to address the climate crisis, including by impeding the crucial shift from polluting fossil fuels to renewable energy and urgent investments in climate resilience.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER — Mis- and disinformation can have a negative impact on efforts to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

15 LIFE ON LAND — Environmental activists working to protect life on land have been targeted by online hate and disinformation campaigns, with real-life consequences. Climate mis- and disinformation are undermining climate action efforts.[c]

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS — Disinformation and hate speech have been used to influence elections and public narratives and sow confusion. They have been used to undermine adversaries, thwart peacemaking efforts, incite violence, prolong conflict and damage trust in the rule of law. Efforts to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, and the role of the United Nations in supporting peace and security, have been seriously affected as a result.[d]

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS — Mis- and disinformation and hate speech can hinder meaningful partnerships to achieve the Goals, while resources diverted to address the problem can weaken efforts to leave no one behind.

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a World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Progress on Household Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene 2000–2020: Five Years into the SDGs* (Geneva, 2021).

b See Roberto Cavazos and CHEQ, "The economic cost of bad actors on the Internet: fake news, 2019"; and London Economics, "The cost of lies: assessing the human and financial impact of COVID-19 related online misinformation on the UK", December 2020.

c Global Witness, *Last Line of Defence: The Industries Causing the Climate Crisis and Attacks against Land and Environmental Defenders* (2021).

d A/77/288.