

## **Information and Participation**

- Relevant information on the COVID-19 pandemic and response should reach all people, without exception. This requires making information available in readily understandable formats and languages, including indigenous languages and those of national, ethnic and religious minorities, and adapting information for people with specific needs, including the visually- and hearing-impaired, and reaching those with limited or no ability to read or with no internet access.
- Internet access is essential to ensuring that information reaches those affected by the virus. Governments should end any existing internet disruptions or shutdowns and keep the internet on. States should also work to ensure the broadest possible access to internet service by taking steps to bridge digital divides, including the gender digital divide
- People have a right to participate in decision-making that affects their lives. Being open and transparent, and involving those affected in decision-making is key to ensuring people participate in measures designed to protect their own health and that of the wider population, and that those measures also reflect their specific situations and needs.
- Medical professionals and relevant experts, must be able to speak freely and share information with each other and the public. Journalists and the media should be able to report on the pandemic, including coverage that is critical of government responses, without fear or censorship. Concerted efforts should be made at the international and national levels to counter false or misleading information that fuels fear and prejudice.
- Incorporating the perspectives, voices and knowledge of women in outbreak preparedness and response is essential, including ensuring their representation, participation and leadership roles in global, regional and national COVID-19 spaces.