



Secretariat

ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.2*

17 December 1985

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services
and Special Assignments

Subject: REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Addendum

DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTS, MEETING RECORDS, OFFICIAL RECORDS AND PUBLICATIONS

I. DISTRIBUTION SECTION - DEPARTMENT OF CONFERENCE SERVICES

1. The Distribution Section of the Department of Conference Services is responsible at Headquarters, like its counterparts at other duty stations, for distributing and maintaining an adequate stock of official documentation in order to provide for the needs of permanent missions, ministries, governmental agencies and observers; conference room services; the Secretariat; specialized agencies; offices away from Headquarters; parliamentary, depository and exchange libraries; non-governmental organizations; intergovernmental organizations; and the press.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS

A. DEFINITIONS

Document

2. A document is a text submitted to a principal organ or a subsidiary organ of the United Nations for consideration by it, usually in connection with item(s) on

* This instruction supersedes administrative instructions ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.1 of 1 February 1973 and ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.1/Amend.1 of 3 September 1982.

its agenda. For distribution purposes an official bulletin, instruction or circular addressed to the members of the staff by the Administration can be considered a document.

Meeting records

3. Meeting records are provided for the plenary meetings of principal organs, for meetings of certain of their main and sessional committees and, on a limited and selective basis, for meetings of certain other bodies. Meeting records may take the form of verbatim records (PVs) or of summary records (SRs). Verbatim records cover the proceedings in extenso, utilizing interpretations for languages other than the original. Summary records cover the proceedings in a concise, abbreviated form. They are not intended to include each intervention, or to reproduce statements textually.

Publications

4. The term "United Nations publication" refers to any written material which is issued by or for the United Nations to the general public, normally under the authorization of the Publications Board. Such publications, which are usually offered for sale by the Sales Section in New York or the Sales Unit in Geneva, include major studies, reports, statistical compilations and the proceedings of certain conferences, seminars and symposia, as well as such serial publications as yearbooks, the Official Records of the principal organs of the United Nations, the United Nations Treaty Series and technical journals and bulletins.

+ new letters part of publication information

Official Records

5. The Official Records are a series of printed publications relating to the proceedings of the principal organs of the United Nations or certain United Nations conferences; they include verbatim or summary records of the meetings of the organ concerned, annexes and supplements.

B. SYMBOLS

6. Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures, usually Arabic numerals. When Roman numerals are used they usually indicate the number of the session of the body concerned. Each document bears the same symbol and date in all language versions. Documents relating to two or more organs may bear two or more symbols, one for each organ. 1/ When a document is issued solely as a sales publication it bears only a sales number. If a mimeographed document is reissued in the printed Official Records or as a sales publication, it retains its original symbol. In addition to a symbol, a sales publication carries a sales number indicating the language, the subject-matter of the publication and its number in the series of publications or that particular subject previously issued that year, an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and/or an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN); 2/ an Official Record also bears the number of the session or year and the supplement number. The symbol, which identifies the organ or subsidiary organ and sometimes also the nature of the

/...

document, a modification of the text and the distribution category, is assigned by the originating department after consultation with the Documents Control Section, at Headquarters, or its equivalent at other duty stations.

III. CATEGORIES OF DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENTS AND MEETING RECORDS

7. For distribution purposes, documents and meeting records are classified in the following categories, each indicating the pattern and scope of distribution: (a) GENERAL; (b) LIMITED; and (c) RESTRICTED. The distribution pattern for these categories follows:

(a) The designation GENERAL is used on basic documents and meeting records, including agendas, studies and reports previously requested, communications from Governments and adopted resolutions and other decisions of main organs. Documents in this category are given the widest distribution appropriate to the body concerned. The texts of documents issued in the GENERAL series should not be included in, or annexed to, subsequent documents, as they are easily accessible to all interested parties.

(b) The designation LIMITED is used on documents of a temporary nature such as draft resolutions and amendments thereto, draft reports and other action documents, and papers dealing with the order in which items will be discussed and other ephemeral matters. The primary distribution of documents in this category is limited to those likely to be immediately interested in the work of the body concerned. The substance of limited documents may, as appropriate and reasonable, be referred to or included in, or annexed to, the report of the body in which they were discussed. Limited documents bear the letter "L" before the serial number.

(c) The designation RESTRICTED is used on documents and meeting records whose contents require at the time of issuance that they not be made public. The distribution of these documents and records is determined by the originating office. Such documents bear the letter "R" before the serial number in the symbol.

IV. PROVISIONAL TEXTS OF DOCUMENTS AND MEETING RECORDS

8. Documents the text of which is of a provisional nature are issued first in a limited run. Such documents comprise unrevised translations circulated in the course of a meeting and certain meeting records that will later be issued in corrected form. They bear the word "PROVISIONAL" above the document symbol. In bodies with limited membership provisional documents may also bear the instruction "FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY".

V. INFORMAL CONFERENCE ROOM AND WORKING PAPERS

9. Conference room papers and working papers, identified by the letters "CRP" or "WP" before the serial number in the symbol, are not official documents but informal papers in one or more languages considered to be of concern primarily to

/...

the members of an organ. As such, they are not issued in the normal way as documents in one of the categories specified in section III above, and it is the responsibility of the secretariat of the organ concerned to see to their distribution to the members of the organ.

VI. OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTION LISTS

10. Documents, meeting records, Official Records and publications are distributed free of charge by the Distribution Section of the Publishing Division at Headquarters or the equivalent unit at other duty stations in accordance with the general distribution policies set by the Publications Board and, where applicable, after consultation with the originating and/or responsible departments or offices, to the following:

(a) Recipients on external lists (distribution by surface mail and/or by pouch):

GV (i) Ministries, embassies and other governmental addresses;

IG (ii) Intergovernmental organizations;

NG (iii) Non-governmental organizations in consultative status;

SA (iv) Specialized agencies;

UN (v) United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Vienna, United Nations Environment Programme (Nairobi), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Nairobi), United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, regional commissions, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Geneva);

FI (vi) Information centres;

IL (vii) Depository libraries;

(b) Recipients on internal lists (distribution at Headquarters):

(i) Permanent missions;

(ii) Permanent observers;

(iii) Press;

(iv) Secretariat;

(v) Meeting service and conference requirements;

(vi) Sales;

(vii) Stock.

VII. NUMBER OF COPIES

11. The number of copies of documents, meeting records, Official Records, publications and "provisional" texts that are normally distributed to recipients, on the lists referred to in section VI above, is indicated in the attached distribution chart and language versions are provided according to the specified request of the recipient.

VIII. CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

12. The General Assembly, in its resolution 36/117 B of 10 December 1981, decided that "documents (should) be given effective simultaneous distribution in sufficient time in the official and working languages of the organs of the United Nations". Accordingly, documents are not distributed until all the language versions have been reproduced.

13. In accordance with the guidelines on the control and limitation of documentation, the Publishing Division at Headquarters, or the equivalent office at other duty stations, requests departments that issue documents to make an annual review of their standing orders in order to update roll figures for various series symbols and thus ensure a strict control of the number of documents reproduced.

14. In addition to the free distribution to the official recipients described in section VI, established under the authority and control of the Department of Conference Services and the Department of Public Information, at Headquarters, or their counterparts at other duty stations within their respective spheres of competence, the substantive departments of the Secretariat are also permitted to maintain distribution lists for their own publications. Those lists are maintained either by the department itself or by the Publishing Division of the Department of Conference Services at Headquarters, or its counterpart at other duty stations.

15. According to a decision taken by the Publications Board at its 223rd meeting, departmental lists (either permanent or ad hoc) may include:

(a) Persons or bodies who, in the view of the head of the department, have rendered specific service, worthy of recognition, in the preparation of the publication or publications to be distributed;

(b) Persons or organizations who, in the view of the head of the department, are of continuing and substantial assistance to the work of the department;

(c) Persons of eminence in the field dealt with in the publication or publications to be distributed, whose interest it is important, in the view of the head of the department, to enlist or retain.

In order to avoid possible duplication with the list of official recipients and to ensure compliance with the criteria established by the Publications Board, all departmental lists, either permanent or ad hoc, are subject to examination by the Publishing Division of the Department of Conference Services at Headquarters, or its counterpart at other duty stations.

/...

IX. DAILY LIST OF DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED AT HEADQUARTERS

16. The "Daily list of documents distributed at Headquarters" is compiled and issued at Headquarters by the Publishing Division, Department of Conference Services. Its function is to enable the recipients listed in paragraph 10 above to check the list of documents issued daily, to see if what they receive is in conformity with their requests, and to make a selection of the documents which they do not receive in full series.

X. AVAILABILITY OF OLD DOCUMENTS, MEETING RECORDS AND OFFICIAL RECORDS

17. A stock of documents, meeting records and Official Records is maintained in accordance with the guidelines outlined in administrative instruction ST/AI/189/Add.5/Rev.1. Documents are normally available for two years after the original date of issue. Official Records (verbatim and summary records, annexes and supplements) and documents issued in final form are normally available for five years, with the exception of resolutions, which are stocked on a continuing basis. It should be noted that all United Nations documents and Official Records may be consulted at the Document Reference and Bibliography Section of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at Headquarters. At other duty stations the reference desk of the Library may be consulted.

Notes

1/ For details see "List of United Nations document series symbols", the current issue of which is found in document ST/LIB/Ser.B/5/Rev.3.

2/ For a description of the ISBN and ISSN systems and the procedures to be followed in using them, see administrative instruction ST/AI/189/Add.24.

DISTRIBUTION CHART AT HEADQUARTERS

RECIPIENTS	DOCUMENTS AND MEETING RECORDS				OFFICIAL RECORDS		UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS	
	General	Limited	Restricted	Provisional ^a	Verbatim records, fascicles, annex fascicles, supplements, bound annex fascicles	Bound verbatim records, bound annex fascicles	All publications with sales number, except yearbooks	Yearbooks ^b
MINISTRIES, EMBASSIES AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ADDRESSES	10 ^c	0	0	0	10 ^c	0	See note ^d	See note ^d
INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	5	0	0	0	5	0	1	1
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	5	0	0	1 upon request	5	0	3	1
CATEGORY I AND ROSTER	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES	25 ^e	Upon request	Upon request	Upon request	25 ^e	1	30	5
UN OFFICE AT GENEVA, UN OFFICE AT VIENNA, REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS, UNEP, UN CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLE- MENTS, UNCTAD AND UNU	I AWR	Reference copies only	Reference copies only	Upon request	I AWR	5	I AWR	I AWR
INFORMATION CENTRES	I AWR	0	0	Upon request	I AWR	1	I AWR	I AWR
DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
PERMANENT MISSIONS	I AWR	I AWR ^f	I AWR ^g	I AWR	I AWR	1	30 ^d	5 ^d
PERMANENT OBSERVERS	5 ^h	See note ⁱ	0	Upon request	5	1	5	2
PRESS	I AWR	Reference copies only	0	Upon request from DPI	I AWR	1	I AWR	Reference copy only
SECRETARIAT, HEADQUARTERS	I AWR	See note ^j	I AWR	I AWR	I AWR	Reference copies	I AWR	I AWR
MEETING SERVICE AND CONFER- ENCE REQUIREMENTS	I AWR	I AWR	I AWR	I AWR	I AWR	0	I AWR	I AWR
SALES	See note ^k	0	0	0	I AWR	I AWR	I AWR	I AWR
STOCK	I AWR	Minimum	Retained by departments	Minimum	I AWR	Minimum	I AWR	I AWR

Notes:

I AWR — In accordance with requirements.

^a Except in cases where distribution is explicitly limited to participants in a given meeting.

^b Including the *Yearbook of the United Nations*.

^c A maximum of 25 copies may be provided upon written request.

^d The number of copies given for permanent missions represents the combined total entitlement for permanent missions, ministries and other governmental agencies.

^e Additional copies up to a maximum of 25 copies of specific documents and official records may be provided on request.

^f A maximum of 10 copies may be provided to the members of the body concerned.

^g Does not pertain to the "Restricted" documents withheld from regular distribution by the body concerned.

^h More copies may be provided upon written request.

ⁱ Observers participating in the work of the body concerned may receive up to 3 copies.

^j As certified by the executive officer of each department or office.

^k Only to paid subscribers for designated series.