



UN-HABITAT



UN-HABITAT Archives and Records Management Policy

Section 1 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all UN-HABITAT activities; decisions and transactions are created and managed to preserve the organization's institutional memory. The policy also seeks to implement the elements of the UN Reform relating to information and knowledge management and ensure UN-HABITAT's adherence to United Nations policies on archives and records management.

Implementation of the policy will promote organizational learning, meet the organization's legal, accountability and research requirements, and the United Nation's requirements relating to archives and records management. An Archives and Records Management System (ARMS) will be established to support this new policy.

The policy is also in line with UN-Habitat's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan which calls for strengthening "enhanced ICT support for information management and sharing and collaborative work practices,... and crucial programme management functions such as knowledge management to strengthen the linkages between lessons-learned, resource mobilization and resource allocation".

Section 2 Policy Statement

UN-HABITAT recognizes that efficient management of its records is necessary to support the operational and administrative needs of its core functions, as set out in its mission and goals. Information is vital to the organization in its current and future programme operations, for purposes of accountability, awareness, and understanding of its history and procedures. The organization is committed to institution wide compliance with records management policies and procedures. In keeping with this commitment, it is important that all staff understand and support the Records Management Policy.

Section 3 Definition of a Record

Within this context records refers to any data or information regardless of its form or medium maintained by UN-HABITAT, as evidence of a transaction.

Section 4 Scope

The Records Management Policy covers all records as described above in both paper, electronic, and audio visual format, which have been created, received or maintained by UN-HABITAT staff members in the performance of their duties at its Headquarters, Regional Offices and Field Offices. All staff members are reminded that such records are the property of the organization, and will be managed in their active life in accordance with the laid down procedures to ensure efficiency and accountability, maintained in the offices as long as they are needed, moved to inactive storage when appropriate, and disposed of in accordance with the UN-HABITAT Records Management Policy and Procedures.

Section 5 Aims and Objectives

5.1 To contribute to, and support the aims and objectives of UN-HABITAT as set out in its mission and goals, through preservation of institutional memory, and information sharing that

would lead to informed decisions, to facilitate actions by both current and future staff members.

- 5.2 To ensure that the organization has full information that is needed to form a reconstruction of activities or transactions that have taken place for accountability, provide evidence of the decision and activities, and to meet legal and research requirements.
- 5.3 To ensure that records vital to the realization, success, aims and objectives of the organization are easily identified, and accessible whilst remaining secure, accurate and relevant.
- 5.4 To ensure that suitable records are created with relevant content, context and structure are accessible, retrievable, conform to a regulatory framework and promote a consistent and coherent regime of records management processes and practices throughout the record's life cycle.
- 5.5 To ensure that confidential records created or received in whatever medium by staff members of UN-HABITAT are effectively and efficiently managed and protected from unauthorized disclosures, access and undue risk.
- 5.6 To ensure that the increasing number of organization records are captured in electronic format so that they are available to all staff in all locations and are retrievable in an easier and faster way, taking advantage of search features incorporated in electronic document management systems.
- 5.7 To ensure that every staff member takes responsibility for adhering to records management strategy and guidance to promote consistent efficient storage and easy retrieval of information, and contribute to savings in office space.
- 5.8 To guide and monitor the creation, maintenance, version control, storage, retention and disposition of electronic records throughout the organization.

Section 6 Statement of responsibilities

- 6.1 **The Executive Director** endorses this policy to ensure that UN-HABITAT complies with the requirements of legislation affecting management of records, as set out in the Secretary General's Bulletins ST/SGB/2007/5 of 12 February 2007, and ST/SGB/242 of June 1991. (See Annex 2 and 3)
- 6.2 **Managers of divisions, branches, sections and offices** are responsible for ensuring that this policy and its associated requirements are implemented within their business units or section. This includes:
 - 6.2.1 Designating Records Coordinators responsible for overall administration of records of their respective section and incorporating Records Coordinator duties to their annual performance appraisals.
 - 6.2.2 Facilitating ISS Records Management Staff inspection of all records that fall under their respective offices irrespective of the records security classification, in keeping with the requirements of this policy.
 - 6.2.3 Ensuring that all staff members in their section comply with the policy with regard to creation, maintenance, and use of official records, and collaborate with the records coordinators in implementing this policy.
 - 6.2.4 Facilitate the implementation of this policy by approving and authorizing various aspects of their section's records management programme. This includes approving the section's file plan which defines the organization and categorization of official documents for easy retrieval, authorizing requests to transfer records for storage, authorizing requests to access classified records, and endorsing records disposition plans. See ST/SGB/2007/6 (Annex 5)

6.3 Records Coordinators

Each section's Records Coordinator acts in liaison with the Information Management Unit of ISS to effect the Records Management Programme. In particular they:

- 6.3.1 Are responsible for the physical inventory of all office records, maintaining filing system and applying record keeping standards and procedures as outlined the Archives and Records Management Manual.
- 6.3.2 Collaborate with the Information Services Section to prepare, and update their respective section's file plan.
- 6.3.3 Support and train staff members in their section in the agreed records management practices.
- 6.3.4 Request transfer of records that are not frequently referred to by the office to storage and coordinate requests for retrieval or access to records in storage from staff in their respective sections.
- 6.3.5 Ensure that staff, consultants and interns hand over all official paper and electronic records before they separate from the organization.
- 6.3.6 Facilitate disposition procedures for approval when records reach the end of their retention period.

6.4 Members of Staff

All staff is accountable to their supervisors for compliance with this policy and other related policies, standards and guidelines. Staff are further reminded that, all records including electronic and email created or received by them in connection with or as a result of their official work, are the property of the United Nations.

All staff should additionally ensure that;

- 6.4.1 They do not alter, destroy, misplace or render useless any official document, record or file that is intended to be kept as a record of the Organization. Staff members are permitted to destroy documents and records in keeping with the provisions of retention policy guidelines that have been approved by the Archives and Records Management Section at the UN Headquarters.
- 6.4.2 The records they create/receive are properly captured, and filed in accordance with the laid down procedures, and that they strictly comply with the office practice requirements specified in the Records Management Manual and other related documents.
- 6.4.3 Prior to separation from services they make arrangements for transferring to the ISS those records in their possession that are no longer required for business purposes and shall not remove any records from the UN Habitat offices. A Staff member from ISS may inspect all records of a separating staff/intern/consultant prior to separation from the services.

The following categories of records are considered private property of staff members and are not included in item 6.4.3 above;

- Personal notes and diaries
- Surplus copies of United Nations printed documents
- Personal correspondences not connected to staff member's official functions

6.5 Information Services Section (ISS)

ISS is responsible for coordinating the implementation of this policy and all associated requirements through the development of a records management programme, to meet operational business needs and accountability requirements for UN-HABITAT. In this regard, ISS is mandated to:

- 6.5.1 Ensure the agency's compliance with the requirements of legislation affecting management of records, as set out in the Secretary General's Bulletins ST/SGB/2007/5 of 12 February 2007, and ST/SGB/242 of June 1991 (See Annex 2 and 3), to develop policies, objectives and instructional materials governing the organization, maintenance and disposition of all records irrespective of format.
- 6.5.2 Establish, publish and implement internal procedures to support the policy in the form of a Records Management Manual.
- 6.5.3 Provide guidance, advice and training to Management, Records Coordinators and Staff members in all aspects of the records/information management programme, and maintain quality control of all records in the Organization irrespective of format.
- 6.5.4 Establish practice and develop procedures to facilitate the suitable classification, handling and management of confidential records to prevent their unauthorized use and /or disclosure of confidential information.
- 6.5.5 Coordinate programme effort and evaluate programme effectiveness by making periodic surveys of information systems to ensure compliance with the policy, as well as assessment of existing records management systems, and recommend changes or improvements in those systems that do not meet the required standards, for the purposes of upholding this policy. Staff members must afford reasonable co-operation and assistance in the conduct of such reviews.
- 6.5.6 Establish records centers/archives to house records that need to be retained beyond the immediate operational needs, in a cost-effective manner, ensuring that they can be retrieved quickly when necessary. Archive records with permanent value to the organization.
- 6.5.7 Transfer inactive records to secondary storage and assist staff with the retrieval of these records.
- 6.5.8 Manage electronic records through best practice by implementing electronic systems that comply with record keeping requirements ensuring their authenticity, reliability, integrity.
- 6.5.9 Work with UN Headquarters the UN Office in Nairobi (UNON) to implement an electronic records management system (ERMS) to manage UN-HABITAT's electronic records including electronic documents and emails, in line with the requirements of the UN Reform agenda.
- 6.5.10 Contribute in UN-HABITAT wide business continuity and disaster preparedness planning to ensure that the programme's vital records are safeguarded.

Section 7 Access to UN-HABITAT Records

- 7.1 Members of staff may have access to archives and records necessary to the conduct of their official business, except for those subject to restrictions imposed by the Executive Director.
- 7.2 ISS staff who are custodians of the records, are vetted and have signed a non-disclosure agreement, shall have unrestricted access to all UN-HABITAT official records.
- 7.3 Member States may have access to (i) archives and records that were accessible at the time of their creation, (ii) those which are more than 20 years old and not subject to restrictions imposed by the Executive Director, and (iii) those which are less than 20 years old and not subject to restrictions imposed by the Executive Director, on condition that the originating office has given written consent for access.

Section 8 Electronic records

UN-HABITAT electronic records keeping will be guided by the United Nations ST/SGB/2004/15 of 29 November 2004, which provides appropriate uses of information technology and related resources and data. (See annex 4)

UN-HABITAT has been selected by UN Headquarters and UNON/ITS to pilot implementation of the Enterprise Content Management system that is being planned to support the UN Reform Initiative. The requirements outlined in the above sections define the essential framework on which to base management of electronic records.

Section 9 Policy Review

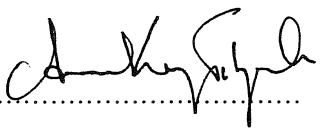
This policy will be reviewed every two years and amended as necessary to maintain its relevance.

Section 10 Related Documents supporting this Policy

- Organization File Plan
- Retention and Disposal Schedule
- Archives and Records Management Manual
- Vital Records Programme
- Disaster Plan

Section 11 Annexes

- 1 Definitions
- 2 ST/SGB/2007/5 of 12 February 2007,
- 3 ST/SGB/242 of 26 June 1991
- 4 ST/SGB/2004/15 of 29 November 2004
- 5 ST/SGB/2007/6 of 12 February 2007

APPROVED  Date 4/4/07

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