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URGENT: **DATE:** 23 October 1997

TO: UNFPA Representatives**
(See Distribution List Below) **FAX NO:**

FROM: Chris Hesling, Chief
Procurement and Administrative Branch
DFPA **FAX NO:** 212-370-0201
UNFPA (New York)

SUBJECT: Filing Systems/Record Management

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Following discussion concerning the policy and procedure manuals it has become apparent that, wherever possible, information included should prove as practical as possible to the intended audience. In this respect, in addition to providing policy statements and supporting narrative it is important to provide practical guidelines and where possible "examples". To this end it has been recommended that the section of the Admin Manual addressing record management includes practical examples.

In this context please find attached details of a proposed model filing system ("A Simplified Filing System for UNFPA", prepared by a colleague currently serving as a UNFPA Representative), to be utilized at the country office level. Prior to including this as an "annex" to the manual we are seeking comments and suggested revisions intended to make the model system both comprehensive and practical. In this respect any suggestions or comments you may offer, particularly regarding the practicality of the proposed system will be greatly appreciated.

It is stressed that the "model system" is not proposed as mandatory but is rather intended to provide an example and guidance to country office personnel either setting-up or revising existing filing systems. In addition to this "model system" please also find attached the current draft narrative included within the main body of the manual on the subject of archiving and records management ("Archives and Records Management Procedures" and "Listing of Permanent Records at Headquarters").

Any feedback or comments you may be able to offer should be provided by **10 November** in order that these may be incorporated in the document submitted to the PPC review.

With kind regards.

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A SIMPLIFIED FILING SYSTEM FOR UNFPA

Introduction:

An efficient and simple filing system is very important for the smooth functioning of an office. Among other things, it enables the manager and other staff of the organization to store and retrieve documents easily and fast. Simplicity, in terms of logical set-up and access, are key to a good filing system.

Owing to their original attachment to UNDP, UNFPA field offices have inherited a basically modified version of the UNDP filing system, which continues to be used up to the present day.

While this system may serve well a large organization, it is unnecessarily complicated for UNFPA field offices, to the extent that many Representatives and Country Directors do not understand it, or cannot use it efficiently.

Brief Description of the Present System:

From the structure point of view, the present filing system incorporates four elements, namely

- 1) a broad subject category, defined in 3 digit alphabetical code,
- 2) an intermediate subject category, defined in 3 digit numerical code, (used only in the PRO and ORG files),
- 3) a three letter instructional code, identifying UNFPA, and
- 4) a sequential two or three digit number, identifying the specific file.

Items 2 and 3 are separated by a slash, whereas items 3 and 4 by a dash. A typical file number appears like:

PRO 300/FPA-14, which, in Indonesia, identifies TCDC.

From the subject matter point of view, the present filing system comprises seven main categories, namely:

- PER: Personnel
- PRO: Programme Matters
- ORG: Organizations
- PUB: Public Information
- BUD: Office Budget
- FIN: Programme Finance
- ADM: Administrative Matters

The PRO and ORG files have intermediate category codes, such as PRO 300 for Programming and organizational development,
 PRO 400: for Evaluation,
 ORG 130: for Cooperation and Consultation, and
 ORG 141: for Organization and Management of UNFPA Hqs.

The three digit numerical code is also present in other files, e.g., FIN 211 or ADM 250, though the function of these codes is unclear

The Rationale For a New System:

To function effectively, the senior staff of a field office, including the Representative, must know exactly where to find the information they need, and access it easily. In addition, simplicity of a system ensures filing of a document in the proper location, hence minimizes misplacement of documents.

The existing system, described above, is cumbersome as it contains several unnecessary classification categories and codes. For example, the institutional code FPA is totally redundant, since all files belong to the UNFPA field office. Likewise, the utility of the 3-digit numerical code is also questionable since most of the files have the same code, in which case dropping it would make no difference.

While it is possible to modify the present system, it is proposed that a new, and much simpler, system be adopted for UNFPA field offices. This new system is described below.

The Highlights of a New Filing System:

In terms of structure, the new system has only one element, which is an abbreviated name, comprised of 2-5 letters. The abbreviation refers to the subject matter directly and is chosen for easy recall. For example, "ICPD" and "RH" refer to ICPD and Reproductive Health, respectively.

In terms of broad subject categories, the new system does not have any identifier, since this is not necessary, although the files may be listed under five such categories and kept organized accordingly, on shelves. The broad categories are:

- Field Office (FO) Accounts files
- FO Personnel files
- FO General files
- FO Programme files, and
- FO Manuals/Guidelines.

The list of files resulting from this classification, as currently used in Indonesia, is given in

Annex 1.

It may be noted that the number of files in this list is not constant, nor are the titles the same across field offices. With some exceptions, one field office may have files specific to its own, as in the case of "MPWM"-Meetings with the Ministry of Population Welfare" in Pakistan, whose corresponding file in Indonesia is "BKKM-Meeting with BKKBN".

It should be noted that filing here is strictly by subject matter, and all correspondence, outgoing or incoming, is kept in the same title in a chronological order.

Project Files:

In addition to the above files, each field office needs to maintain its project files in a systematic fashion, to facilitate easy access and ensure safety of the documents.

For each project, it is proposed that three files be created, to cover Reports, General Correspondence and Finance and Equipment matters. The **Reports** file may be further subdivided into Project document, and Evaluation reports. The **Finance** file is subdivided into three sections, one for Forms A and B, one for budget revision, and one for project equipment records. The format of these files would appear as follows:

INS/95/PO2-R	(Report file)
INS/95/PO2-G	(General file)
INS/95/PO2-FE	(Finance and Equipment file)

Display and Storage of Files:

Files should be kept on bookshelves or file racks in an organized way, with their titles clearly visible. One person, preferably the Representative's Secretary, should be overall responsible for their upkeep and display, and for updating the filing system.

It is to be expected that some files will fill up faster than the others, in which case subsequent ones may be numbered as Vol 2, etc. At an appropriate time, the old volumes may be removed from the display and kept in storage.

Type of File Folders to Use:

It is recommended that arch-lever type file folders be used for this system. Arch lever folders are thick (about 7 cm), have durable plastic or cloth covering, and metal lever that can be opened and closed with ease. They are also suitable for display on a bookshelf.

D. Archives and Records Management Procedures

1. Objectives

UNFPA Archives and Records Management procedures are established to ensure that the Organization implements efficient and effective life cycle management of its records. The retention of official documentation is essential for institutional memory and to provide an audit trail.

2. Policy

UNFPA records are the property of the Fund and should not be removed from the office or destroyed. Destruction may be undertaken only in line with record classification policy guidelines set by the organization.

3. Classification of Records

There are two main reasons for the classifying and coding of records:

Information in the form of records is one of the most important assets of an organization. However, unless records containing specific information can be found when needed, the information is of no real value. It is therefore necessary to group together similar information on a common subject, to facilitate retrieval. This is done through the classification and coding of records.

Categorization of records and development of a classification system is the means whereby the appraisal of records for archival value is made possible.

4. Categories of Records

For the purpose of classification, the documentation of the Organization is divided into three main categories: permanent records, non-permanent records and non-records.

5. Permanent Records

Permanent records are those that are necessary to ensure the continuity of the essential functions of the Organization in case of an emergency or disaster. Such records include those needed for the regeneration of the financial and legal positions of the Organization, those related to the employment of staff members and to their interests, those related to the fulfillment of obligations to countries, projects, and other outside interests, and any other records containing additional information of administrative, legal, historical or evidential value. Permanent records may be maintained in the office area up to 5 years. Then they are to be sent to the archives for permanent storage.

6. Non-Permanent or Temporary Records

Non-permanent or temporary records are those that do not meet the above criteria. Examples are reports and documentary materials dealing with policy, procedural or technical matters (e.g., draft documents, interim budget status reports, etc.), which are to be disposed of within a set period. These records may be kept in the office area up to five years and/or at the archives up to ten years prior to their disposal, depending upon the value of the records.

7. Non-Records

Non-records consist mainly of material that is collected for convenience of reference, such as working papers, drafts of reports, transmittal sheets, and correspondence of short-term value. This material is not needed for future reference, and has no historical or other value after the action has been taken, e.g., travel-related telexes on flights, hotels or schedules; brochures; pamphlets; miscellaneous documentation; etc. These should not be retained in the official file after completion of the action. If such material must be held temporarily, it may be retained in a separate file so that it can be easily accessed for disposal purposes. Depending on the special value of the records, these records may be kept up to five years.

For Detailed Record categories established for the Headquarters by Divisions/Branches, see Annex V.

8. Type of Records

There are two type of records in the aforementioned categories: current and non-current.

8. (i) Current Records

Current records are records that are less than three years old and are regularly used for current business. Such records are maintained in the office area.

8 (ii) Non-Current Records

Non-current records (permanent or non-permanent) are those that are more than three years old, containing information no longer regularly referred to for current business. These records do, however, contain information that occasionally may be required for reference. These are sent to the archives for storage.

9. Retirement of Records

It is essential that the retirement of records be systematic, to prevent an unnecessary build-up of file cabinets in limited space, to allow for the storage of current records, and to ensure that information necessary for operational and historical purposes can be easily located.

Files should be closed each year, to facilitate the transfer of non-current records and to provide adequate space for current ones. If necessary and/or feasible, files should be retired quarterly. The minimum period for retirement should be once per calendar year. The Procurement and Administrative Branch is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the transfer of the retired files of the Organization to the Archives.

Records may be retired either in their original format or on microfilm. Microfilmed records may be retired singly or in duplicate; one copy should remain at headquarters in the originating office.

Records must be packed and listed in an orderly manner, so they may be easily retrieved. All records to be transferred to the Archives are to be packed in customized boxes and listed on transfer forms, the boxes and forms for this purpose are available on request from the Procurement and Administrative Branch (see Annexes VI and VII).

Lists must be filled out strictly in accordance with the instructions and the records packed in the boxes -- i.e., the first file on the list should be the first file in the front of the box. For ease of identification and retrieval, records should be packed in the boxes in a manner reflective of the filing system operated by the operational unit in their day to day activities.

Two copies of the completed lists and transfer forms should be sent to the Chief, Procurement and Administrative Branch, and one copy should be retained on file in the division or unit that is retiring the records.

All boxes are to be clearly numbered in consecutive order, with the originating office, room number and box number indicated on the side of the box (see Annex VIII) . The room number should correspond to the room number indicated on the "Request for Transfer of Inactive Records". (See Annex VI).

After receipt by the Procurement and Administrative Branch of all completed forms for transfer of records, the forms will be reviewed and boxes checked to make sure that they are correctly listed and packed. (Changes such as lists to be revised and files to be rearranged in the boxes will be recommended by the Chief, Procurement and Administrative Branch, if necessary.) Afterwards, the forms will be sent to the Archives.

The Procurement and Administrative Branch is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the boxes to be consigned to and retrieved from the Archives.

10. Retrieval of Permanent Records

Request for retrieval of permanent records should be made in writing or by E-mail to the Procurement and Administrative Branch. The requestor must cite the unique identifying number of the box (es) to be retrieved.

11. Retrieval of Non-Permanent Records

Request for retrieval of non-permanent records should be made to the Procurement and Administrative Branch in writing or by E-mail. All non-permanent records must be packed in boxes supplied by the Procurement and Administrative Branch. Labels, also supplied by the Branch are to be placed on the boxes as indicated. A list of records sent to the Archives should be maintained by the division/branch transmitting the records, and a list of records received from the archives should be kept by the Procurement and Administrative Branch.

12. Disposal of Records

At the end of the agreed retention period non-permanent records will be destroyed and disposed of by the archive management company as directed by the submitting office and in consultation with the Chief, Procurement and Administrative Branch.

UNFPA

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PERMANENT RECORDS AT HEADQUARTERS

I. Organization

1. Legal Documents (Headquarters & Field)

- UNFPA agreements with other agencies/organizations, including UNDP

2. Management Documents:

- Legislative Body decisions G.A. - plenary 2nd, 3rd, 5th Committee
ECOSOC - various segments, working group committee
Population commission, commission on sustainable development
- Governing Council sessions, board meetings, bureau meetings, administrative logistics, documentation
- CPC meetings
- CPC-ACC joint meetings, ACC-OC
- CCPOQ, IACSD, IATFAF, CCAQ, IACM
- UNFPA Committees - EC, MC
- Evaluation of UNFPA by donors
- OECD/Development Assistance Committee
- DRSAPs/UNFPA Representative meetings
- Special Studies/Survey (e.g. McKinsy Study)
- Audit documents (external and internal)
- JIU

II. Public Information Activities

- Information policy
- State of world population report
- UNFPA Poster contest
- Population Forum
- Population Award
- International Conferences (Bucharest, Mexico, Amsterdam, Cairo)
- Parliamentarians
- one set of publications, video/films, kits produced
- Executive Director's Bio data
- Executive Director's speeches
- Article contributions to journals, books, pamphlet, etc.

III. Programme

1. Legal Documents

- Signed preparatory assistance; letter of agreement for projects between UNFPA and donor governments/organizations

- Signed project documents (between recipient governments/organizations and UNFPA

- Contracts/agreements with individuals/firms

- Contracts/Agreement with individual donors for multi-bi-projects

2. Management Documents

- Programme Review Committee (PRC) Documents/Minutes

- General policies and procedures

- Technical guidelines, check list, etc.

- Executive Board approved country program documents

3. Programme/project documents:

- Project requests

- Signed Board Sheets

- PRSD reports

- Mid-term review reports

- TPR reports

- Final reports

- Evaluation reports

- PC presentation (documents and minutes)

- Research/studies (background, methodology, findings/recommendations, etc.)

- Seminars/conferences meetings

- annual submission of multi-bi proposals

4. Financial Documents:

- Letter of Approval and allocation of funds

- Approval of budget revisions with related correspondence (i.e., transmission letters from UNFPA Representative to Headquarters, letter of allocation to the executing agencies)

5. Training documents originated by Programme

- Agenda, list of participants, final reports, etc.

IV. Administrative

1. Legal Documents (Headquarters & Field)

- Lease and modifications
- Contracts/agreements - on renovations, constructions of premises, consultants
- Purchase/lease/maintenance contracts on equipment
- Externally funded procurement agreements made with governments and donors

2. Management Documents

- Policy and Procedures (original, amendments and addendum)
- Inventory and Insurance of non-expendable property, including vehicles (Headquarters and Field)
- Disposal of office equipment and property (minutes of HQ and Field Property Survey Board)
- Certifying Officer (pouch)
- Consultant's final reports
- Listing of monthly document issues
- List of records of retired files/documents sent to the UN archives and list of disposed records
- Final printed document related to policy/programme (one copy only)
- Contracts Review Committee records

V. Personnel

1. Legal Documents (Headquarters & Field)

- minutes of appointment and Promotion Board/Panel

2. Management Documents

- Consultants Personnel Files
- Intern's Personnel Files
- Post Classification files
- Personnel Manual
- Circulars
- Management Review Group Records
- Field local staff files, PARs (Prof. & GS)
- JPOs

VI. Financial Management

1. Legal Documents:

- Trust Funds (by donor government agreements)
- United Nations Legal Division
- General agreement on financial reporting on audit requirement with UN Executing Agencies and NGO

2. Management Documents:

- General policies, manuals, guidelines
- External & Internal audit documents
- UN Committees (ACABQ, CCAQ, JCGP, Executive Board, 5th Committee)
- Government Council/Executive Board decisions, correspondence

3. Financial Documents:

- UN Organizational Units
- UNDP Organizational Units
- UN Special agencies
- NGOs
- Biannual Budget (APSS)
- Allotment and revisions and expenditure reports
- Purchase Orders
- Agency statements (quarterly and annual)
- Trust Funds (payment records, financial statements and correspondence)
- UNDP treasury monthly accounts
- All executing agencies (UN agencies, NGOs, Governments) audit reports
- Correspondence with UN missions
- Biennial Financial statements
- Field Office file (by country)
- Budget & Management Analysis (Headquarters & Field)

4. Contributions

- Contributions/Pledges
- Executive Director's statement on pledging conference
- Monthly statements of income and contributions
- Memoranda on annual pledging conference, fund raising, letter to UNFPA Representatives and UNFPA/UNDP Resident Representative (master copies only with notation of all addressees)
- Audit document (external and internal)
- payment records both for general resources and multi-bi projects
- income reports

5. Training Documents (originated by Finance Branch)

- Agenda, list of participants, training material, final reports

VII. Training (Headquarters/field staff, JPO)

- Plans
- Schedule/agenda
- List of Participants
- Evaluation/reports
- one set of training materials produced
- Fellowships
- External training and EAP for each staff member