

# UNITED NATIONS

# NATIONS UNIES

## SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN NO. 43

To: Members of the Staff of the United Nations

Subject: RECORDING OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE AND  
PREPARATION OF OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

### 1. Purpose

This bulletin outlines the procedures for recording and routing incoming mail and for preparing the official correspondence of the Secretariat.

### 2. Incoming Mail

Incoming mail will be divided into two categories - private and official. Private mail will be sent on unopened to the addressee; official will be sub-divided into two categories:

(a) Mail not to be opened in Central Registry. This will consist largely of newspapers, periodicals, parcels, and advertisements, and will be sent unopened to the appropriate department.

(b) Mail which will be registered in Central Registry. This will be dealt with as follows:

(i) If previous correspondence is available, incoming mail will be inserted in the correct file and forwarded to the appropriate office for action. This office will complete the "PA/BF" column on the face of the file as follows:

(1) If action can be completed immediately, the symbol PA will be entered and initialed by the officer directing return of the file to Central Registry. The date on which this is done will also be entered in the "DATE" column.

(2) When final action may be delayed, the symbol BF will be entered in this column, followed by the initials

of the individual taking action, and the "DATE" column, completed to show the date the file is to be returned for completion of action. In those cases files will be returned to the same office on the date requested for final action.

- (11) That portion of incoming correspondence concerning subjects for which no files have been established or for which no previous correspondence is on record in Central Registry will be recorded on a five-part correspondence record form (Form C/2). This form will show the name of the sender, the date of the letter, the date received, a subject digest of contents, file classification, and the name of department or individual to which it is referred for action. Two file copies (blue and white) of the form will be retained in Central Registry. The remaining three copies, namely, follow-up or "BF" copy (yellow), the dictator's copy (light green), and the permanent numerical file copy (pink) will be attached to the incoming mail.

Receiving offices will take the following action on correspondence covered by para. (b) above:

- (a) If final action cannot be taken or a reply prepared immediately, the "Follow-up Date" space on the yellow follow-up file copy of the form C/2 will be filled in to show the date the correspondence is to be brought forward for further action. However, if required, a simple acknowledgement will be sent immediately. The incoming letter, inserted within its file folder and with all three copies of the record form attached, is then to be returned to Central Registry. Central Registry will return the folder to the official concerned on the date specified.
- (b) If action can be taken immediately or if a reply is not required, the yellow follow-up file copy of the form will be detached and thrown away and the remaining forms marked to show the action taken.

The light green dictator's copy may be detached and retained by the office taking action, for future reference. The pink permanent numerical file copy of the form will remain attached to the correspondence. This copy of the card is to be detached only by personnel in Central Registry.

### 3. Time Limit for Files to be Held By Offices

Offices are asked to cooperate by returning files to Central Registry as soon as possible, and in any case within one week after the date of receipt. Retention of files in offices for unreasonable periods deprives other offices of references to them, delays action on correspondence subsequently received, and creates an accumulation of loose material in Central Registry which cannot be filed until the related case folder is returned. These conditions operate further to the disadvantage of offices holding the files in that current material on the same subject may not have been filed within the folder for reference.

### 4. Outgoing Mail

All official letter mail of the United Nations will be prepared for mailing or delivery according to the following procedure:

#### (a) Preparation

All letter mail will be prepared on official letterhead paper and will indicate in the upper left margin following "In reply refer to" the file number followed by the drafter's initials in capital letters, e.g. 204-3-7/ABC. When there is no previous correspondence available from which a file number may be obtained, the drafter will request a number from Central Registry. Signatures will show the typed name and title of the signer. On file copies, on the lower left margin, will be typed the stenographer's initials and the date of drafting. When correspondence is received bearing the notation "In reply refer to (subject or number)", the reply should make reference to this symbol for the convenience of the correspondent.

(b) Copies of Outgoing Mail

Official correspondence will be prepared to provide the following copies for Central Registry:

Original (letterhead paper)

Manifold copy, yellow (Central Registry subject file copy)

Manifold copy, salmon (Central Registry chronological file)

Office copies, information copies for other departments and other extra copies of correspondence should be prepared on white manifold paper.

(c) Assembly of Mail for Clearance and Signature

Official correspondence should be assembled for clearance and signature in the following order:

(i) Yellow manifold (subject file) copy on top. All approvals and initials will be made on this copy.

(ii) Original.

(iii) Envelope, properly addressed, with flap folded over the Original (plus enclosures, if any are sent).

(iv) Salmon manifold copy.

(v) Extra copies for distribution to other offices. (Note: all extra copies for distribution to other offices must be marked with names and room numbers.)

The assembly will then be secured to the case folder and transmitted to the proper officials for clearance and signature.

5. Review of Official Correspondence Prior to Mailing

It will be the responsibility of the Mail and Messenger Section, Mail and Dispatch Unit, to see that all official mail is prepared in accordance with these regulations. In case any of the above requirements are omitted in the preparation of official mail, the office concerned will be notified of the required corrections.

6. Mailing Outgoing Correspondence

All official correspondence, after signature, will be collected by the

Messenger Service and taken to the Mail and Messenger Section. The Mail and Messenger Section will mail the original and distribute the file and information copies directly to addressees.

7. Inter-Office Memoranda.

All Inter-office Memoranda will be prepared on Inter-office Memorandum paper to show the name, title and room number of the addressee and the name and title of the signing officer. Copies will be prepared as follows:

- (a) The Original memorandum (form).
- (b) Manifold copy, white (to be dispatched with the original).
- (c) Manifold copy, yellow (Central Registry subject file).

The yellow manifold copy must be detached and transmitted to Central Registry after signature of the original. After addressees have taken the required action, the originals of Inter-office Memoranda must be forwarded to the Central Registry together with file copies of replies.

8. Assignment and Control of File Numbers.

The Central Registry will be responsible for assigning all subject file numbers used by the United Nations. These will be assigned in consultation with offices of the Secretariat.

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