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Title

Use of Electronic Mail

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Notes

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Upasana		4

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To: Regional Directors/Representatives/Assistant Representatives
               Directors: Copenhagen, Florence, Tokyo
               New York Management Team/Section Chiefs

From: Carol Bellamy
               Executive Director

Subject: **Use of Electronic Mail**

Introduction

The use of electronic mail in UNICEF has increased significantly in the last 12 months as most
offices are now data connected and all Headquarters staff have e-mail facilities. E-mail is a new
form of communication and its use has raised a variety of policy, technical and cultural issues.

This instruction is designed to address policy and practice issues that can be identified at this
time. The Director IRM Office will separately issue any technical instructions or guidelines
necessary within the policy framework. I encourage feedback on this EXD, directed to the IRM
Director, especially on behavioral and cultural implications of the use of e-mail which may
necessitate additional guidelines or training packages.

Importance of e-mail

UNICEF must be prepared to operate into the next century in the most efficient and effective
manner possible. Electronic mail (e-mail), when successfully deployed, facilitates and speeds up
communication directly between interlocutors at lower cost than other forms of communication.
An organizational operational goal is to have all UNICEF desk staff worldwide connected
together by e-mail by the year 2000. This will help position UNICEF as a knowledge based
organization where information can be shared with minimum constraints of geography and time.

The attainment of the above goal requires that offices develop the required infrastructure in terms
of PCs, local networks linking separate PCs and connections to the UNICEF wide area network.
Such infrastructure is needed not only for e-mail but also for support of other initiatives such as
the Programme Manager System (PROMS) which is to be implemented in all UNICEF offices
by 1998.

E-mail is an organizational application that supports not only internal office but also inter-office
work. All offices must observe the e-mail standard set by IRM Office which at present is

cc:mail.

Offices must ensure not only that the technical infrastructure for e-mail is implemented but also that it is maintained to be available in a reliable manner so that interlocutors have the confidence that e-mail sent will be delivered to its destination.

E-mail privileges

Staff should be granted e-mail facilities as a basic working tool. Where an office has a LAN, an e-mail account should be given to each staff member on the LAN.

E-mail empowers staff and bypasses traditional hierarchical structures and it generally defeats the purpose of e-mail to have it cleared prior to release from the office. Staff must observe guidelines on authorized and appropriate use of e-mail without further control before sending individual messages. An office may specify some types of messages to some interlocutors which require clearance of content.

Staff are given e-mail privileges for UNICEF business purposes. Staff are absolutely not to use e-mail for any personal commercial purpose. Since the cost of individual e-mail is generally extremely low (i.e. a few cents a message), then it is generally not cost effective to institute controls and attempt to collect costs from staff for personal use of e-mail. Staff should be advised not to abuse this privilege and keep personal use of e-mail to very low volumes.

Staff should be held accountable for unauthorized and inappropriate use of e-mail on a post factum basis.

Appropriate uses of e-mail

E-mail is the preferred form of communication for almost all day to day internal message-based communications. It is far less expensive than other forms of messaging and is more direct. Exceptions to this principle are mentioned below. Even though most offices now have e-mail connectivity, fax traffic worldwide is increasing. Offices should take steps to replace inter-office fax communication with less expensive and more flexible e-mail except if an image copy of a document is involved.

Communications involving financial/contractual or legal commitments on the part of the organization to third parties require authorized signatures which at this time must continue to be applied to paper. These communications should constitute a very small minority of all office messages.

In order to avoid message congestion, staff should be judicious in cc. of e-mail and when responding to a message should not automatically respond to all those originally cc.ed.

Messages broadcast to all staff should be used very rarely again to avoid message congestion. Every office should establish e-mail bulletin boards so that staff may post special interest messages and establish a process of administration of such bulletin boards including elimination of messages after a period of time.

E-mail is often a more informal means of messaging than traditional alternatives. However, staff should be mindful of the need to be polite, avoid abusive or insulting language and generally comport themselves correctly in the content of their e-mail messages. For courtesy and clarity, inter-office e-mail messages should always end with the name and office of the correspondent. This practice can also avoid confusion with forwarded e-mails.

All offices should now use e-mail to attach their regular submission of GFSS transactional data to Headquarters (Reference CF/AI/96-001 Guideline for Data Exchange using E-Mail). This reduces the lags of recording office data in headquarters systems and enables more timely reconciliation of accounts between HQ and offices. The great majority of offices now have e-mail capability, and if they have not already done so, should plan to implement this electronic transmission of GFSS data by 31 December 1996. E-mail will be the means by which Programme Manager System (ProMS) transmits data between offices.

For further details on e-mail etiquette, refer to CF/IC/1996-017 "A Guideline on Using cc:mail" issued February 1996. IRM Office will continue to issue its e-mail tips bulletins to each office. Offices should integrate these guidelines into the office training plan.

Security

Each office should have an appointed security administrator for electronic systems; this will normally be the IRM Officer for those offices having such a function.

The security administrator will provide staff with e-mail access by issuing them an id and password. The password must not be shared with other staff and staff are asked to change their passwords at least every quarter.

Filing

At present, e-mail is not universally recognized as a statutory record of the message. Thus messages that need to be retained for official record or archive purposes should be printed out and filed in the office record filing system. Such messages include policy, procedural or decision making related matters. As noted above, messages involving financial or legal commitments on behalf of the organization should be conveyed in paper with an authorized signature. These should represent a very small proportion of all messages.

For the time being, cc:mail electronic folders and message logs are considered as part of the Personal Information Management environment of staff and do not constitute the official records of the organization. This is likely to change in the future as technological possibilities allow.

Office e-mail needs administration to ensure that the volume of messages does not lead to large and expensive storage requirements and a slow down in performance. Offices should formulate a process to periodically delete messages in Inbox or Transmission Log. Staff should therefore ensure that they file messages they wish to retain in their current cc:mail into folders. Staff can also archive to their PC hard drives the contents of Transmission Logs that they wish to retain.

When out of office

Offices are encouraged to provide staff with laptops and cc:mobile access to e-mail while away from the office where work needs make this useful and within budget limitations.

When staff are away from the office and do not pick up their e-mail by means of cc:mobile, then they must make arrangements to pick up important messages in their absence. Until cc:mail upgrades allow automatic routing of messages to another staff member, it is necessary to arrange for secretaries/assistants to logon to the absent staff member's cc:mail and review and route important messages for action by another staff member. In such cases, staff members should change their passwords for this purpose and a strong element of trust in the secretaries/assistants is implied.