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Administrative Instruction # 355 Personal Files and Official Status Files "all confidential files are henceforth abolished in UNICEF" Staff member has access to both Personal and Official Status File with right to comment.[PDF Version]

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A. K. KUFFS
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UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
New York Headquarters

Administrative Instruction No. 355

5 April 1983

To: All Staff Members

From: Lars Byttinen *Lars Byttinen*
Officer-in-Charge, Division of Personnel and Administration

Subject: Personal Files and Official Status Files

1. Further to Information Bulletin 82/61 of 3 December 1982 and with the advice of the UNICEF working group established to review the policy and procedures concerning confidential files, this instruction introduces with immediate effect the following policy and procedures.
2. Following the UN Secretary General's announcement last year to abolish Confidential Files in the UN Secretariat, all confidential files are henceforth abolished in UNICEF. From this date, UNICEF will continue to maintain the "Official Status File", and in addition will create a "Personal File" and staff members will have access to both files.
3. The objective of abolishing Confidential Files is to create a fair and equitable system whereby all staff members have access to and the right to comment on all relevant material pertaining to their performance and career. Therefore, any correspondence and reports commenting on a staff member's performance and/or career will not be accepted by the Organization and will be returned to the originator, unless they are copied to the staff member concerned. This will include any adverse reports or comments made by Supervisory, Technical and Advisory personnel at the end of their visits or missions, unless their findings have been fully shared with the staff member concerned.

It is recognized that the new system requires the active cooperation of all staff to refrain from using "off-the-record" verbal communications relating to staff members' performance and career. Such communications undermine the principle of sharing in full with staff members any difficulties and obstacles pertaining to their performance and career.

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4. The "Personal File" will contain material which is strictly related to staff members' personal matters (See Annex I). Material which has been filed until now in the non-privileged part of the staff member's confidential file (i.e. same as described in Annex I except for designation of beneficiaries Form P-2) will be transferred to his/her personal file. However, adverse material originating from Governments will be treated in accordance with paragraph 4 of the UN/ST/AI/292 of 15 July 1982 circulated on 12 October 1982 under UNICEF/AI/343 (i.e. it will be returned to the Government unless it can be shared with the staff member concerned for comment).

The staff member concerned and a strictly limited number of officials may have access to the personal file (See Annex I). This file should remain at all times in the respective Personnel Records Unit. Since the file contains strictly personal material, it will not be made available to any Committee or Official of UNICEF for purposes of reviewing the staff member's performance or career.

5. The "official status file" will contain material which is related to the staff member's official status as well as his/her career development in UNICEF (See Annex II).

Since the official status file will contain past and future APC and Senior Staff Review (SSR) minutes, and in case these minutes also cover the review of other staff, the information which is relevant to the staff member will be extracted and placed in his/her official status file. If necessary, a member of the APC/SSR will certify that the excerpt from the minutes is correct and complete. Material which has been filed until now in the privileged part of the staff member's confidential file (i.e. recommendations on contractual status review, APC and SSR minutes, correspondence on the staff member's performance and conduct) will become a part of the Official Status File.

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In principle, official status files should not be removed from the personnel offices. Officials who need to review a staff member's official status file in conjunction with any review or reassignment, may do so in the personnel offices concerned. However, it may be necessary in large offices to dispatch these files outside the personnel offices. In such cases, they can be issued in a sealed envelope only to a limited number of authorized officials who should return them also in a sealed envelope (See Annex II). If other officials in the Office/Division need to consult the file, they may do so in the authorized official's office. The status file should be kept for a minimum period of time outside the personnel offices concerned and in no case for more than two weeks. Under no circumstances can it be taken away from the United Nations premises.

6. Staff members may request inclusion of material in their personnel records provided it relates to the contents listed in Annexes I and II.

7. Proper security arrangements should be instituted in all personnel offices to insure confidentiality. A log/charge-out form will be attached to each file to show when it was taken out and by whom. Whenever the personal file is consulted, the reason should also be recorded on the log/charge-out form. No other officials than those responsible in the personnel offices concerned can place any papers on the staff member's file or remove such papers. All documents/correspondence issued as of 1 May 1983 should carry consecutive numbering when filed.

8. Material which will not form a part of personal files nor official status files:

- Existing interview reports, on staff who applied for vacancies (These reports will be destroyed). Future reports will also be destroyed following the appointment of the successful candidate.
- Existing letters of reference will not be included and will also be destroyed. Letters of reference on newcomers will likewise be destroyed following their appointment.

9. Staff members will have access to all parts of their personnel records upon written request to their Personnel Officer. This will be arranged on a first come, first served basis. The same facility will be extended to internationally recruited staff who are stationed in the Field and are administered by New York. Copies of any material which was filed in their confidential file and was not made available to them in the past, will be pouched to them upon request. However, in view of the costs involved in copying and pouching this material, staff members who have an opportunity to visit New York either on official mission or on home leave/personal travel may wish to consult their files while in New York.

After examining their files, staff may submit written statements to their Personnel Officer, commenting on any information they believe to be inaccurate or incomplete. These written statements will be included in their official status file or personal file depending on the nature of the comments.

ANNEX I

A) OFFICIALS HAVING ACCESS TO "PERSONAL FILES"

For staff administered in New York:

- Executive Director
- Deputy Executive Director (Operations)
- Director, Division of Personnel and Administration
- Assistant Director, Division of Personnel and Administration
- Chief, Personnel Services.
- Personnel Officer
- Personnel Clerk

For staff administered in offices outside New York:

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- Regional Director
 - UNICEF Representative/Director of Office
 - Regional Personnel Officer
 - Personnel Officer (or Administrative Officer in offices where there is no Personnel Officer).
 - Personnel/Administrative Clerk

B) Contents of "Personal File"

- Emergency Salary Advances/Grants for personal/family reasons.
- Requests for UN/UNICEF assistance in the collection of Debts incurred by the staff member.
- Designation of Beneficiaries (Form P-2).
- Matters concerning personal/family situations.
- Adverse Material from outside sources.

ANNEX II

A) OFFICIALS HAVING ACCESS TO "OFFICIAL STATUS FILES"

For staff administered in New York:

- Executive Director
- Deputy Executive Director (Operations)
- Deputy Executive Director (Programmes)
- Director/Assistant Director, Division of Personnel and Administration
- Division Directors (and Deputy or Assistant Directors)
- Chief, Recruitment and Placement*
- Chief, Personnel Services*
- Chief, Training

- For staff administered in offices outside New York:

- Regional Director
- UNICEF Representative/Director of Office (in large offices, a limited number of senior officials may be designated by the Representative)
- Head of Office/Liaison Officer in sub-Offices/Liaison Offices
- Regional Personnel Officer
- Personnel Officer (or Administrative Officer in offices where there is no Personnel Officer.)*

* As well as specifically authorized Personnel Assistants and Clerical staff in the performance of their usual personnel functions.

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B) Contents of "Official Status File"

Official Status Files contain all other material which are considered official and do not form a part of the "Personal File". These files should be divided into six parts, containing the following material (each local office may either follow exactly this division or may find it necessary to use it as a guideline and adapt a system which is more suitable to its local needs):

PART I

Background and Summary of Career

Personal History (P.11), Diplomas, Curriculum Vitae and Performance Evaluation Reports Summaries, Job Descriptions, Check lists for Appointment/Transfer and Separation, Personnel Action Forms, Letters of Appointment.

PART II

Personnel Status

Performance Evaluation Reports, Notification of within grade increment, Oath of Office, Correspondence on Post Classification/Post Adjustment/Promotion Transfer/New Assignment/Change in Type of duration of Appointment, Five-Year Review, Certification of Employment, P-1 Form (Induction Questionnaire), Change in Nationality or Residence Status, Charges and Comments on the staff member's official conduct and performance and rebuttals, Termination of Appointment.

PART III

Medical and Pension

Medical clearances, Medical Insurances, Medical Evacuation, Life Insurance, Sick Leave, Pension Fund, Claims based on Health or Accident including service incurred accident or illness.

PART IV

Financial

Dependancy Allowance (and related correspondence such as birth, marriage and adoption certificates), Education Grant and related documents and certificates, Installation Grant, Per diem, Salary Advances other than personal emergency, Authorization to deposit cheques, Travel Claims, Housing Rental Subsidy.

PART V

Leave, Travel and Passes

Home Leave for staff member and family members, Annual leave, Special Leave except Study Leave see Part VI, Requests for Travel Authorization, Travel Documents, Visas, Laissez-Passer, UN Grounds Pass.

PART VI

Training, Career Status and Career Development

APC and Senior Staff Review Minutes relevant to the staff member.
Training and Education, Study Leave, Receipt of Honours and Outside Activities.

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