



19 May 2022

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## Administrative instruction

### United Nations website publishing

The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, in accordance with the procedures for the promulgation of administrative issuances set out in the Secretary-General's bulletin [ST/SGB/2009/4](#), promulgates the following:

#### Section 1

##### Purpose and scope

The purpose of the present administrative instruction is to provide a legal and operational framework governing the establishment and publication of content on United Nations websites.

#### Section 2

##### Definitions

2.1 For the purposes of present administrative instruction, the following definitions apply:

(a) *United Nations website*: a public website authorized and published by an author entity of the Secretariat for public information and communications purposes, that is published under the Internet domain name “un.org” or any of its subdomains, or under any other Internet domain name obtained or utilized by the author entity. Public means that the website can be accessed by the general public;

(b) *Content*: any material, whether text, photograph, graphic, map, video, audio or any other format that will be accessible via a United Nations website to any user of the website, or any material with which any user can interact on the United Nations website;

(c) *United Nations website publishing*: the provision of content on United Nations websites;

(d) *Author entity*: any Secretariat department or office, including an office away from Headquarters; the secretariat of a regional commission; a special political or peacekeeping mission; the office of a resident coordinator; or any other unit of the Secretariat tasked with programmed activities that produces and publishes content on a United Nations website;

(e) *Website and applications registry*: a central registry, available at <https://uniteapps.un.org>, that lists all United Nations applications and websites,



including their details, names of focal points and compliance status with established standards. The Office of Information and Communications Technology is the custodian of the application and website registry;

(f) *Website portfolio*: a portfolio that contains the details of all United Nations websites; names of focal points, including those with access and posting rights; and compliance status with regard to established standards for branding, multilingualism, accessibility,<sup>1</sup> analytics tracking, domain usage and the long-term preservation of content. The Department of Global Communications is the custodian of the website portfolio.

### **Section 3** **United Nations websites**

#### *General principles*

3.1 United Nations websites shall reflect core United Nations values: integrity, independence, impartiality, respect for diversity, multilingualism and the equality and inviolable dignity of all persons irrespective of, inter alia, race, gender, religion, language, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability.

#### *Role and responsibilities of the Department of Global Communications*

3.2 The Department of Global Communications is responsible for establishing and maintaining guidelines on the governance of United Nations websites with regard to standards on branding, including the emblem and name of the United Nations and any abbreviations thereof, multilingualism, accessibility, mobile responsive design, analytics tracking, domain usage, access and posting rights and the long-term preservation of content. It is also responsible for publishing and updating the main United Nations website ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)),<sup>2</sup> and associated top-level pages, which are regularly updated to reflect the priorities and the work of the United Nations system. The Department is subject to the responsibilities applied to all author entities as described in sections 3.9 to 3.17 below when it publishes content for its own work programmes and campaigns.

3.3 Guidelines and standards for website publishing are established by the Department in accordance with section 3.2 above. The guidelines and standards pertaining to multilingualism are established in consultation with the Coordinator for Multilingualism.<sup>3</sup> All guidelines and standards can be found on the Department's website.<sup>4</sup>

3.4 Specifically, the Department of Global Communications is responsible for:

(a) Approving the usage of the domain name "un.org" by author entities for United Nations websites and any exceptions to the use of non-"un.org" domain names (see sect. 5.3 below);

<sup>1</sup> See para. 95 (on multilingualism) and para. 96 (on accessibility) of General Assembly resolution [75/101](#) A–B.

<sup>2</sup> The General Assembly, in paragraph 94 of its resolution [75/101](#) A–B, reaffirmed that the United Nations website is an essential tool for the Member States, the general public, the media, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions, and in that regard reiterated the continued need for strengthened efforts by the Department of Global Communications to regularly maintain, update and improve it.

<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [69/250](#), [70/9](#) and [71/262](#), the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management is assigned as Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.un.org/en/webguidelines/](http://www.un.org/en/webguidelines/).

(b) Reporting overall and disaggregated United Nations website usage statistics to Member States. All United Nations websites must use the common tracking code established by the Department;<sup>5</sup>

(c) Convening the United Nations system-wide group of focal points for online communications and maintaining an ongoing dialogue to ensure that the key aspects of the work of the United Nations system are covered on the main United Nations website.

*Role and responsibilities of the Office of Information and Communications Technology*

3.5 The Office of Information and Communications Technology is responsible for establishing and maintaining the technology standards and mandatory minimum requirements for information security of United Nations websites. All related technical procedures and guidelines are made available through iSeek, the United Nations intranet.

3.6 The Office provides and supports the enterprise web content management platform, which is compliant with the technology standards and mandatory minimum requirements for information security of United Nations websites.

3.7 United Nations website hosting must be compliant with the Office's technology standards and mandatory minimum requirements for information security of United Nations websites and other established policies and guidelines.

3.8 The Office monitors compliance of United Nations websites with technology standards and mandatory minimum requirements for information security based on: (a) attestations by author entities recorded in the central website and applications registry (see sect. 2.1 (e) above); and (b) independent assessments. The Office may require the deployment of mitigating controls to ensure adequate information security protections. Taking into account the possible risk to website functioning and to the wider information and communications technology infrastructure and systems, the Office may temporarily disconnect non-compliant websites if deemed necessary.

*Role and responsibilities of United Nations author entities*

3.9 Author entities may establish and maintain a United Nations website to communicate their own specific work programmes, priorities, campaigns and other relevant information to online audiences. Before establishing a new website, author entities must conduct a survey of the United Nations system to discover whether a similar website already exists to avoid the fragmentation or duplication of United Nations website content.

3.10 Author entities must ensure that United Nations websites conform to the guidelines and standards for website branding, including with regard to the emblem and name of the United Nations and any abbreviations thereof, multilingualism, accessibility, mobile responsive design and analytics tracking set by the Department of Global Communications (see sect. 3.2 above).

3.11 Author entities must also ensure that their websites comply with the technology standards and mandatory minimum requirements for information security of United Nations websites as defined by the Office of Information and Communications Technology (see sects. 3.5 to 3.7 above) and provide attestation in the website and applications registry, as defined in section 2.1 (e) above and in accordance with section 3.13 below. Author entities are required to identify and deploy mitigating controls for non-compliant sites that are approved by the Office. Failure to deploy

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

such controls may result in the temporary disconnection of non-compliant sites (see sect. 3.8 above).

3.12 Author entities are responsible for authoring, editing and updating the content of their websites and coordinating content with other related United Nations websites. Author entities are also responsible for archiving the content from their retiring websites in accordance with [ST/SGB/2007/5](#) on record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives, and with [ST/AI/189/Add.12/Rev.1](#) on regulations for the control and limitation of documentation, in accordance with sections 8.10 to 8.13 below.

3.13 Author entities must assign business and technical focal points, along with alternate focal points, for their website presence, and ensure that the names and contact details of these focal points, including those with access and posting rights, are communicated to the Department of Global Communications to be recorded in the website portfolio, as defined in section 2.1 (f) above and in accordance with section 4.4 below, as well as entered by the author entity in the website and applications registry, as defined in section 2.1 (e) above.

3.14 Author entities should incorporate adequate budgetary provisions for online publishing activities into their work programmes and proposed programme budgets. Financial planning for United Nations websites should include provisions for server hosting and maintenance, website coding and development, website design, content production and management, and the translation and maintenance of content in all six official languages of the United Nations.<sup>6</sup> Author entities must request a waiver from the focal point for multilingualism of the Department of Global Communications if their websites are not established and maintained in the six official languages of the United Nations.

3.15 Author entities are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the analytics tracking of their websites in order to ensure that their communications objectives are being achieved and the target audience is being reached.

3.16 In order to allow for accurate data collection and analytics tracking, author entities must include on their websites the standard tracking code as provided by the Department of Global Communications. Author entities may also use their own tracking codes for in-depth analysis, but must include the standard tracking code to ensure consistent reporting to Member States (see also sect. 3.4 (b) above).

3.17 The use of data derived from user tracking analytics must be limited to the scope described in the United Nations privacy notice, which can be accessed via the footer of every United Nations website. Any additional use of such data must be transparently announced to visitors to the respective website and should require their informed consent.

## **Section 4**

### **Authorization to establish United Nations websites**

4.1 All author entities must request a “un.org” uniform resource locator (URL) (as further defined in sect. 5) to register a new United Nations website, and must request secure access and posting rights by providing the information and approvals required

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<sup>6</sup> In para. 33 of its resolution [75/101](#) A–B, the General Assembly stated that multilingualism was a core value of the United Nations, including at all United Nations duty stations and offices away from Headquarters. In para. 97 of the same resolution, the Assembly urged the Secretary-General to take actions to achieve full parity among the six official languages on all United Nations websites, and to strengthen efforts to develop, maintain and update multilingual United Nations websites by all Secretariat entities.

in forms DGC.8 and DGC.7, respectively, available on the website of the Web Services Section in iSeek.<sup>7</sup>

4.2 Author entities determine the people within their entity who will be granted the necessary authority to post content under the mandate of that entity. Access will be granted by the Office of Information and Communications Technology and will utilize standard authentication protocols in use by the Organization. Where necessary, the Office of Information and Communications Technology will consult with the Department of Global Communications with regard to the authorization of access and posting rights.

4.3 Author entities shall withdraw authority to access websites and post content upon staff members' separation or reassignment from the Organization or entity, respectively.

4.4 Within two calendar months of the issuance of this administrative instruction, author entities shall ensure that a DGC.8 form has been submitted to the Department of Global Communications for every website maintained by the author entity. Author entities must also update contact details, in accordance with section 3.13 above, within 10 working days of any changes to the contact details submitted in the original DGC.8 form.

4.5 Author entities must also inform the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Global Communications about the deactivation of their websites, in order to record the deactivation in the website and applications registry and the website portfolio, respectively.

## **Section 5**

### **Format of uniform resource locators**

5.1 All author entities wishing to establish a United Nations website must do so under the domain name "un.org".

5.2 Websites using the domain name "un.org" must employ a URL format expressed in the form of a directory path (e.g. "un.org/xyz") or a subdomain (e.g. "xyz.un.org"). From a communications perspective, directory paths indicate a section within an existing website, whereas subdomains indicate a separate entity underneath the main domain. For author entities, use of the directory path format is strongly encouraged in order to convey to the public a singular integrated organization.

5.3 Domain names other than "un.org" shall not be used for any United Nations public website, as this would represent a reputational and/or information security risk for the Organization. However, a request for an exception may be submitted to the Department of Global Communications, using the registration form for non-"un.org" domain names.<sup>8</sup> Should such an exception be approved, the requirements applicable to "un.org" websites as set forth in the present instruction shall also apply to non-"un.org" websites.

## **Section 6**

### **Intellectual property of materials on United Nations websites**

#### *General provisions on copyrights*

6.1 All published materials of the Organization are copyrighted, with the exception of parliamentary documentation and public information material not offered for sale. Copyrighted materials include all intellectual property in the form of text,

<sup>7</sup> See <https://iseek.un.org/Web-Services>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://iseek.un.org/content/non-unorg-domain-name-registration-form>.

photographs and captions, maps and labels, databases, directories, copyrighted public information materials, headline and summary feeds, software, audiovisual materials and documentation. The author entity shall be responsible for ensuring that the United Nations has obtained the respective rights and licences from the rights holders to publish materials owned by third parties on United Nations websites.

6.2 All United Nations websites should have a link from their footer to the copyright notice and the terms of use links that can be accessed via the footer of the homepage of the main United Nations website.

6.3 Any request for permission to reprint, copy, license or disseminate any copyrighted United Nations publications<sup>9</sup> published on United Nations websites must be referred to the secretariat of the Publications Board. The secretariat of the Publications Board shall consult with the Office of Legal Affairs, as needed. All other website content may be reused subject to the copyright notice and the terms of use.

#### *Use of maps*

6.4 Clearance must be obtained from the Geospatial Information Section prior to the publication of any map on any United Nations website. The provisions of administrative instruction [ST/AI/189/Add.25/Rev.1](#), entitled “Guidelines for the publication of maps”, shall apply to the publication and dissemination of maps in electronic formats including the required use of a disclaimer, as set forth in those guidelines and the annex thereto.

6.5 If maps are taken from non-United Nations sources, author entities shall be responsible for obtaining the necessary and appropriate permissions for reproduction from their respective rights holders, as well as clearance as required in accordance with section 6.4 above.

6.6 Each map should be accompanied by an attribution and/or copyright notice.

#### *Use of photographs*

6.7 Author entities may publish photographs on their websites. The use of United Nations photographs<sup>10</sup> is permitted with proper attribution (i.e. “UN Photo/name of photographer”) and captioning for each photograph used. This includes United Nations photographs used in design elements. For non-United Nations photographs, necessary rights and permissions must be obtained by author entities through a written agreement with the respective rights holder prior to publication that provides for the full scope of usage of the photograph required by the author entity. This agreement should be retained on file. Publication of non-United Nations photographs should also include proper attribution (either “Source/name of photographer”, or “Source”), and captioning.

#### *Use of audiovisual and social media content*

6.8 Where informational content relies heavily on graphics or audiovisual formats, an alternative text-only set of pages should be considered for ease of access by users with disabilities or who have slower Internet connections.

6.9 When embedding videos, author entities shall ensure that no advertisements or content suggestions are shown when using external video hosting platforms. Whenever possible, videos should be embedded from UN WebTV.

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<sup>9</sup> See footnote 1 of [ST/SGB/2012/2](#), sect. 1.1 (a), for the definition of a United Nations publication.

<sup>10</sup> A United Nations photograph is a photograph of which the rights are fully owned by the United Nations.

6.10 Social media content can be embedded in United Nations websites only from: (a) United Nations institutional social media accounts that have been approved in accordance with [ST/SGB/2019/5](#) on the institutional use of social media; and (b) the authorized social media accounts of other United Nations system organizations.

6.11 For non-United Nations audiovisual and social media content and other non-United Nations content, necessary rights and permissions must be obtained by author entities through a written agreement with the respective rights holder prior to placement of the content on a United Nations website, with such rights and permissions providing for the full scope of usage of the content required by the author entity. All such agreements should be retained on file. Publication of non-United Nations content should also include proper attribution (either “Source/name of content provider”, or “Source”), and captioning.

## **Section 7**

### **Editorial style**

7.1 Online communications encourage the use of less formal styles of presentation and language than are normally used in United Nations publications. Author entities should use concise, direct language in their online content in order to meet the needs of their online audience and provide clarity and directness, including for those whose primary language is not the language used in the content. Slang, jargon and idiomatic phrases should be avoided, and abbreviations, acronyms and technical terminology should be used with discretion, and only where widely recognizable. Where abbreviations, acronyms and technical terminology are used, such terms should be explained clearly.

7.2 Content published on United Nations websites should be gender-inclusive and supportive of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Author entities should be aware of gender stereotypes and should avoid perpetuating them.<sup>11</sup>

7.3 Author entities are responsible for ensuring high standards of editorial quality and presentation, and for applying to their websites relevant United Nations guidelines (such as the online United Nations Editorial Manual).

7.4 All content referenced on United Nations websites must follow source citation instructions. In particular:

(a) All citations to United Nations content must include the document symbol or other identifying number and sales number, if applicable;

(b) All other source citations must include at least the author, publisher and date and place of publication.

7.5 In addition, where content is not officially edited, the author entity has final responsibility for checking the accuracy of all quotations and citations against the original sources and including specific page, paragraph, table and/or figure numbers in the citation as applicable.

7.6 The Dag Hammarskjöld Library should be consulted regarding citation options for referenced online content.

<sup>11</sup> Guidance on gender inclusive language for all six official languages of the United Nations is available at [www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/](http://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/).

## Section 8

### General provisions

#### *Links to other websites*

8.1 Links from United Nations websites to external websites shall be limited to websites of entities within the United Nations system. In limited circumstances, United Nations websites may link to other external websites that: (a) provide information about the activities of non-United Nations system intergovernmental organizations; (b) republish original United Nations content (in situations where the external entity concerned is a non-governmental or not-for-profit entity, media entity or an academic institution); or (c) belong to external entities that operate programmes or conduct activities consistent with the policies, aims, purposes and activities of the United Nations. In addition to the above limited circumstances, United Nations websites may link to other external websites only if such links are required to facilitate the use of United Nations websites, provided that these external websites do not advertise or sell commercial products or services. Each author entity is responsible for ensuring periodically that the information on the external website that the United Nations website links to is correct and up-to-date. Author entities are also responsible for removing links to external websites should those respective external websites no longer comply with the requirements contained in the present section.

8.2 Author entities may provide URLs as citations to relevant content on external websites in line with the rules specified in section 8.1 above.

8.3 Author entities shall ensure that links, citations or other references to external websites will not be seen as an endorsement on the part of the United Nations of external organizations not part of the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, or of commercial products or services.

#### *Posting of United Nations documents and other content*

8.4 United Nations official documents,<sup>12</sup> as well as other content<sup>13</sup> released through a United Nations website by author entities, must be posted in accordance with [ST/AI/189/Add.28](#). Advance text and unedited drafts or incomplete versions of such content shall not be disseminated on United Nations websites, except in consultation with the chairperson of the concerned body and its secretary or the author entity that produced the content, with an appropriate disclaimer.

8.5 All United Nations official documents posted on United Nations websites must carry the official United Nations document symbol and be sourced from an official document service. If annexes to official documents are not available or cannot readily be converted to an Internet file format, this should also be indicated on the web page hosting the official document. All summarized official documents should include a hyperlink to the organizational link resolver,<sup>14</sup> while other summarized digital materials should include a hyperlink to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library's electronic repository standard identifier, where in both cases the full text can be obtained, if available, or a citation if not. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library will provide guidance as needed.

<sup>12</sup> According to [ST/AI/189/Add.3/Rev.2](#), "a document is a text submitted to a principal organ or a subsidiary organ of the United Nations for consideration by it, usually in connection with item(s) on its agenda".

<sup>13</sup> Other content includes United Nations publications as defined by [ST/SGB/2012/2](#), as well as public documents, maps, research, background and working papers, studies, reports, public papers of United Nations officials and any such content of research value, subject to [ST/AI/189/Add.28](#).

<sup>14</sup> In the format "https://undocs.org/[Document Symbol]".



8.6 As stated in the administrative instruction on guidelines for publishing in an electronic format (ST/AI/189/Add.28), no changes may be introduced to the content, presentation or language of the printed official document without the approval of the entity that produced the document and editorial services.

8.7 All unofficial documents posted on United Nations websites should carry at a minimum the title and date of the document and, where feasible, the number of the latest revision, a series identifier (for working papers and newsletters) and a statement of author responsibility.

8.8 Further guidance on official symbols and document numbers is contained in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library's publication entitled "United Nations Documentation: A Brief Guide" (ST/LIB/34/Rev.2, ST/LIB/34/Rev.2/Corr.1 and ST/LIB/34/Rev.2/Corr.2).<sup>15</sup>

#### *Navigation and search tools*

8.9 Each United Nations website should provide a search mechanism that is in line with the design, layout and functionality of the primary search engine used by the main United Nations web site ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)). Such tools should be used in a uniform way across the various homepages of the website concerned, and detailed instructions for users should be available from all homepages using a search tool.

#### *Archiving and preservation of content from retired United Nations websites*

8.10 The United Nations shall maintain an archive of the content from its retired websites.<sup>16</sup> United Nations official documents and other content<sup>17</sup> released through a website must be deposited with United Nations libraries when a United Nations website is retired for cataloguing, digital preservation and permanent public access in accordance with ST/AI/189/Add.12/Rev.1.

8.11 When a United Nations website is retired, author entities shall deposit a copy of all United Nations official documents as well as other content produced exclusively for United Nations websites in portable document format:

(a) In New York with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the official depository for all United Nations-produced content, in line with ST/AI/189/Add.12/Rev.1;

(b) For Geneva-produced website content, with the United Nations Library and Archives at Geneva.

Website content produced outside of New York or Geneva must be archived and deposited in accordance with ST/SGB/2007/5 and ST/AI/189/Add.12/Rev.1. Author entities producing website content outside of New York or Geneva may consult the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Archives and Records Management Section, the Library and Archives at Geneva or the libraries of regional commissions for further advice. This ensures the long-term preservation of globally accessible, comprehensive and authoritative records on the work of the Organization. Author entities should also maintain parallel electronic records for their own reference.

8.12 The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Library and Archives at Geneva or the Archives and Records Management Section should be consulted regarding

<sup>15</sup> See also <http://research.un.org/en/docs>.

<sup>16</sup> A retired website is one that has been permanently taken down.

<sup>17</sup> "Other content" is described in footnote 13.

preservation options<sup>18</sup> for retiring websites. Author entities producing website content away from New York or Geneva may also consult the libraries of regional commissions about archiving and preserving content from websites that are to be retired.

8.13 All original multimedia content, including audio, photographic and video content, produced exclusively for United Nations websites that has long-term archival value as determined by author entities should be archived within United Nations-owned and -managed information and communications technology standard media asset management systems. The Department of Global Communications should be consulted regarding preservation guidelines and standards for the multimedia content of websites.

*Use of United Nations emblem and the words “United Nations”*

8.14 Use and display of the United Nations emblem is limited to the Organization’s official activities. All United Nations websites are required to display the United Nations emblem prominently in the website masthead. The words “United Nations” must also appear in the masthead. In addition, United Nations websites shall not display logos of non-United Nations entities, including, in particular, logos of commercial entities. Consistent with these provisions, the published website branding guidelines of the Department of Global Communications<sup>19</sup> include guidance on the use of the United Nations emblem and co-branding.

*Use of content feeds*

8.15 Where content feeds are used, author entities shall not allow content to be republished verbatim, neither shall they disseminate full content sets externally without the full execution of a licensing agreement with the external entity wishing to use such content. The Office of Legal Affairs should be consulted in this regard. Headline and summary feeds are permissible subject to the copyright notice and terms of use in order to drive traffic back to United Nations websites.

*Sensitive, confidential and strictly confidential information*

8.16 United Nations websites shall not include information that is sensitive, confidential or strictly confidential, as classified in accordance with [ST/SGB/2007/6](#) on information sensitivity, classification and handling. Author entities shall comply with relevant regulations, rules, policies and procedures concerning the security and safety of United Nations personnel when placing various materials on United Nations websites.

## **Section 9**

### **Final provisions**

9.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

<sup>18</sup> “Preservation options” refers to a series of policies and managed activities undertaken by the United Nations libraries and archives (i.e. the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the United Nations Library and Archives at Geneva, the Archives and Records Management Section and the libraries of the regional commissions) to ensure enduring access to digital materials. Archiving ensures perpetual digital content preservation mainly for the Organization; preservation secures permanent public access for digital content produced by the Organization, within or outside the official publishing cycle.

<sup>19</sup> See [www.un.org/en/webguidelines/](http://www.un.org/en/webguidelines/).

9.2 It supersedes the administrative instruction [ST/AI/2001/5](#) of 22 August 2001, entitled “United Nations Internet publishing”, which is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Catherine **Pollard**  
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