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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTROLE INTERNE

TO: Mr. Azouz Ennifar
A: Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General
United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea

DATE: 11 December 2007

REFERENCE: AUD-7-5:21 (07- 00792)

FROM: Dagfinn Knutsen, Director
DE: Internal Audit Division, OIOS



SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2007/624/02: Documents management in**
OBJET: **UNMEE**

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit, which was conducted in January and February 2007. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

2. Based on your comments dated 29 October 2007, we are pleased to inform you that we will close recommendations 2, 4 and 5 in the OIOS recommendations database as indicated in Annex 1. In order for us to close the remaining recommendations, we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and also summarized in Annex 1.

3. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as critical (i.e., recommendations 2, 4, 5 and 6), in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

4. IAD is assessing the overall quality of its audit process and kindly requests that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors and complete the attached client satisfaction survey form.

I. INTRODUCTION

5. The International Standard on records management, ISO 15489:2001 defines records management as "The field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records".

6. A June 2003 study by the UNHQ Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS) at MONUC noted that field records from peacekeeping operations comprise 20 per cent of the United Nations archives and, along with the Secretaries-General records, are its most used resource. The study, however, noted the huge gaps in the institutional memory of peacekeeping operations launched by the United Nations since only a fraction of field records with archival value had been preserved. According to the study, records

received from 24 completed missions have often been transferred in a haphazard and inconsistent manner, and are unreliable and incomplete.

7. Recognizing the need to improve its recordkeeping capability, effective June 2006, the ARMS developed a peacekeeping taxonomy as well as peacekeeping operations retention schedules and a recordkeeping toolkit, which will guide peacekeeping missions in managing their records. In 2003, the Mission's Mail and Pouch and Archives Unit introduced a records classification scheme as part of its mandate for "establishing and maintaining a records management system and archives programme; scanning substantive documents for posterity; instructing and supervising other Sections and Offices in preserving theirs through scanning".

8. Comments made by UNMEE are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

9. The main objectives of the audit were to determine whether:

(a) The Mission has an adequate records management system in compliance with records management policies particularly with respect to records classification, storage while in the possession offices/sections/units, security, semi-active storage at the local archives unit, retention and disposition; and

(b) Records with high or sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation are properly stored at the local archives unit and can be readily shipped to the ARMS or transferred to another location.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

10. The audit involved coordinating with the ARMS at UN headquarters, reviewing UN regulations related to records management and interviewing Mission section chiefs and staff of both administrative and substantive offices including the military. Interviews focused on how records are maintained and disposed of and how they are classified (confidential, substantive, administrative). Inspections were performed to determine how records, particularly confidential records are stored by the sections and by the Archives Unit. The audit did not cover the Mission's Addis Ababa facilities and instead focused on Asmara where the main operations are based.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

11. The audit showed the need for a more efficient records management system in the Mission. Physical records are not filed systematically in accordance with a uniform classification system consistent with the Taxonomy for Recordkeeping in Field Missions of UN Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO Taxonomy); not classified by security/sensitivity to limit access to certain records; and not properly stored, particularly those records of staff who have left the mission. Staff are not aware of records keeping guidelines related to paper and electronic filing, retention and disposition hence cannot be expected to comply with them. The Archives Unit does not maintain a database for semi-active stored paper records and has not established a retention period. Locally-archived files are

not properly stored and substantive offices files, which may contain confidential information, can be easily accessed by unauthorized persons.

V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Uniform classification system

12. The DPKO Taxonomy released on June 2006 by the ARMS consists of a classification structure of categories and sub-categories reflecting the functions and activities in field missions. It serves as the starting point for developing and implementing file plans. In an established mission, where a file plan has already been developed as in UNMEE, the Taxonomy should be used as a “benchmark to review, improve and support this existing file plan.”

13. The Mission’s Uniform Classification System was introduced in late 2002 by the present OIC General Services Section who had used the same system another mission. The system involves the culling of titles and subjects and assigning unique reference numbers, which are later used to classify documents, records and files. Focal persons identified by sections/offices and units are introduced to the system in groups of two to four or in one-on-one tutorials conducted by the OIC General Services Section who stated that people were felt freer to ask questions in such settings.”

14. While some sections used a system in the past as evidenced by the numbering of closed files, none of the sections, units or offices were using the prescribed system either because the current administrative staff have not been tutored on how to use it or they prefer to use their own filing systems (see Annex 2 of this report).

15. According to the OIC, General Services, the problem is more office-specific. While the records manager may visit each office to emphasize the importance of proper filing and storage, the responsibility is ultimately with the office staff to ensure that they follow the records manager’s instructions since they are accessing and using the files. Also, when there are staff changes, the filing system is maintained, through periodic consultations with the records manager when necessary. OIOS noted that since tutorials are mainly attended by administrative staff other issues such as the need to coordinate with the General Services Section concerning the guidelines on records management and training new focal persons have not been communicated to heads of offices/sections/units.

16. The new system was not introduced for military recordkeeping. The OIC, General Services Section advised that he had introduced the print format of the archiving system to the Personnel Section of the military a few years ago, but the military was uncomfortable with civilians gaining access to their files/documents. It should be noted that the present Force Commander is willing to adopt the system and has instructed his Military Adviser to coordinate with General Services with respect to training military focal persons.

Recommendations 1 and 2

The UNMEE Administration should ensure that:

(1) The Mission's Uniform Classification system is modified using the DPKO Taxonomy as a benchmark and that a circular is issued concerning the use of a uniform classification system and the records management roles and responsibilities of the Archives Unit, the office/section/unit heads and focal persons; and

(2) Training is provided for present recordkeeping focal persons assigned to both civilian and military sectors concerning the Uniform Classification System as well as the proper filing and archiving of records. Focal persons should also be encouraged to refer to the e-learning application on the Archives and Records Management Section website to improve staff capacity on recordkeeping.

17. *The UNMEE Administration accepted recommendation 1 and stated that an Administrative Circular in this regard was issued in October 2007. UNMEE will adopt its Uniform Classification System starting with the current files. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of documentation from UNMEE showing the actual use of the Uniform Classification System.*

18. *The UNMEE Administration accepted recommendation 2 and stated that civilian staff have been trained since 2003 and that training will continue on a periodic basis. UNMEE intends to train both civilian and military personnel dealing with record-keeping. Relevant publications specific to the classification system will continue to be provided to the staff. Focal persons will also be encouraged to take advantage of the e-learning applications on the ARMS website. Based on the action taken by the Mission, recommendation 2 has been closed.*

B. Management of physical records

19. Proper records management ensures that complete records are maintained, records can be located when needed; official records, non-record materials and personal papers are maintained separately and the identification and retention of permanent records are facilitated.

20. Interviews showed that Mission staff appreciate the need for effective and efficient records management, but are not aware of how their records should be stored and archived. Most sections have no file listings which can facilitate records classification (i.e., confidential, substantive, administrative, among others), and have not separated closed from current records nor archived closed records locally resulting in cramped storage spaces for current records, among others (see Annex 2 which summarizes the audit inspections performed).

21. The audit also showed that there was a need for proper records turnover procedures and simplified guidelines on records management. A major concern posed by poor records management is the ease with which confidential information on mission

operations can be leaked since such records are not well kept and disposed of. OIOS' audit results can be summarized as follows:

- Food rations records maintained by a Supply Section staff who resigned nine months ago are not part of the food rations records maintained by the administrative staff since these are considered as personal records.
- The Military Food Cell Officer, who took over the responsibilities from another officer almost 6 months ago, conceded that she did not know the purpose of the numerous supply files. She noted that she never opened any of the files as she has her own personal working files.
- The area previously occupied by the now disbanded Civilian Military Coordinating Unit, which had taken charge of quick impact projects in the field, still contains files and records placed on open shelves. These should have been turned over to the Archives Unit for proper disposal.
- Records, which were in disarray, were left behind unattended in the 4th floor cubicles previously occupied by UNMOS who have since left Asmara.

22. Some interviewees considered their working files as personal files which can be shredded or burned as they deem fit. The SRSG's Office, the MACC and the Communications Center destroy code cables after reading them or after one year, while the CAO, D/OSRSG, Legal and Human Rights offices store and subsequently archive them. The Military section and the Geo Cell shred confidential documents.

23. Multiple physical files of similar documents and records are maintained. The Procurement Section maintains three separate files for purchase orders while the Transport Section maintains different files on the same vehicles in all of its units. Movement of personnel forms and budget documents are archived by five offices, audit reports and memoranda of understanding, by three offices and code cables by numerous substantive offices.

24. Sections and offices classify and treat similar or the same documents differently. A Military Sector Head did not allow the auditor access to filing cabinets containing sensitive documents such as situation reports. However, we found that local staff cleaner had shredded extra copies of situation reports and troop movements for year 2007 in another military sector.

25. The MOVCON, Finance, Medical Unit, Engineering, UNV, MACC, GeoCell maintain their own archives and records may not be turned-over to the Archives Unit. The Legal and Personnel offices do not turnover non-current confidential records to the Archives Unit. The UN Volunteers and the Mine Action Coordination Center forward their files to their Headquarters agencies and not to the Mission Archives Unit. The MACC emphasized that it maintains substantive files data on Mission mining activities but these are sent to UNMAS, DPKO.

26. While there are available DPKO and UN guidelines on records management, the Mission should clarify:

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- The difference between personal and official files as well as confidential and non-confidential documents and substantive and administrative files;
 - The modes of file disposition and the required procedures, particularly the need for approval before disposition;
 - The need for a localized registry in an office to prevent the maintenance of multiple files;
 - The provisions related to storage of semi-active records in individual offices and in the Archives unit to address the issue of offices maintaining their own archives;
 - Whether the UNV and MACC need to forward specific records to the Mission archives or if they can retain the present practice of turning over documents to their Headquarters agencies.

Recommendation 3

(3) The UNMEE Administration should issue clear guidelines regarding the turn-over, maintenance, preservation and disposal of current and closed paper records with emphasis on issues such as the preparation of file listings, deciding what constitutes critical, substantive, administrative, confidential records, and identifying disposition policies and retention periods.

27. *The UNMEE Administration accepted recommendation 3 and stated that clear guidelines were issued to section focal points. Presentations on what constitutes administrative and substantive records, retention and disposal of records will be given to UNMEE staff. The Archives Unit will continue to issue reference materials to the staff, in the form of guidelines concerning the filing and disposition of records. However, procedures on the preservation and destruction of records should rest with the Archives Unit for uniformity and accountability purposes, consistent with the practice in UNMEE and with the ARMS guidelines. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt from the Mission of a copy of the issued guidelines.*

C. Management of electronic records

28. E-mail has become an important business communication tool with an estimated two-thirds of business decisions being made based on e-mail messages according to the ARMS/HQ. This means that email messages recording these decisions should either be saved into an ARMS-approved electronic data records management system (EDRMS) as “born digital records” or printed as the paper files.

29. The e-Archiving system used by the Mission allows for the capture of paper documents through scanning as well as of “born digital” records. The Archives Unit aims to scan all paper records received from the various offices and sections although currently only Finance and CAO records have been scanned. Born digital records on the other hand are not captured for the Mission’s official files since no training has been conducted by

the CITS on how these records can be archived apart from the one-hour tutorials which some staff participated in previously.

30. Section 4 of Recordkeeping Toolkit for Peacekeeping Operations, emphasizes that: “until the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system is rolled out across the organizations or unless the Mission has an electronic records management system, the official record format is paper. Only records in electronic document and records management (ERM) systems which meet ARMS standards can be relied upon as evidence of the Urn’s work and actions.” Section 11 of the same Toolkit states that decisions to digitize existing paper records by scanning them should only be taken where there is a proven business benefit and efficiencies to be gained because scanning is very resource intensive and may consume any savings that may have resulted from having the records available electronically.

Recommendation 4

(4) The UNMEE Administration should: (a) obtain clearance from the Archives and Records Management Section before it fully implements the e-Archiving system, including the projects related to e-Archiving particularly scanning of paper documents; and (b) once such approval is obtained, ensure that the Communications and Information Technology Section in coordination with the Archives Unit offer training of Mission staff on the documentation of their “born digital” files through the approved system.

31. *The UNMEE Administration accepted recommendation 4 and stated that since UNMEE received ARMS’ approval for the Electronic Archiving System (EASY) in 2004, no further clearance is needed. The Archives Unit, together with UNMEE’s Information Technology Unit, will continue training focal points on the system’s features. Based on the action taken by the Mission, recommendation 4 has been closed.*

D. Archiving of paper records

32. Archival records are those records, irrespective of format which are to be permanently stored due to their administrative, legal, historical or informational value. According to the ARMS, these represent less than 10 per cent of the Organization’s total records and need special treatment both in terms of their logical or intellectual organization and their physical management.

33. OIOS found that the Mission’s Archives’ Unit can be regarded as a storage area for semi-active records and not an archive. Records, regardless of their security or sensitivity classification, or nature (administrative or substantive) originating in both substantive and administrative offices are stored together. The Unit is manned by two local staff, who cannot be supervised by the Head of the Mail and Pouch and Archives Unit since he is currently the officer-in-charge of the General Services Section. The Unit’s failure to segregate archival records and the security/sensitive records from other records and the lack of close supervision over the Unit’s activities by an international staff member pose a serious security risk. Also, the Mission had experienced some information leaks. This explains the military sector’s hesitance to forward their own records for semi-storage and its insistence on maintaining its own archives unit.

34. The Archives Unit shares a one-story building inside the Kenyan Camp with the Cashiering Unit manned by two non-UN personnel from the Commercial Bank of Eritrea. Records from both substantive (SRSG, Force Commander, Security, Legal, PIO, Human Rights) and administrative offices (CAO, Engineering, Procurement, Personnel, Finance, others) are stored inside two containers in one part of the building designated as the Archives Unit storeroom. According to the Unit staff, records inside the containers can be properly stored including the segregation of substantive and administrative records only if they are provided enough storage space. OIOS found that certain unused offices in the Green Building could be used to house the Cashiering Unit so that the space it presently occupies can be used for archiving records.

35. Transferring the Cashiering Unit to the Green Building will also reduce the time spent by UNMEE staff in collecting their pay and the risk of staff losing their money while passing through a usually crowded bus stop and walking along the road. The Mission Cashier noted that while he supports this proposal, his concern is that the commercial bank's requirement that its staff be provided utmost security while they are based in UNMEE premises.

36. The status of stored records also needs to be monitored through a spreadsheet which can identify who has stored records, when they were stored, the retention period, how the records are classified and how they should be disposed of. The spreadsheet should also show who approved the disposition and the mode of disposition.

Recommendation 5

(5) The UNMEE Administration should: (a) ensure the proper classification, storage, control, disposition and security of records stored in the Archives Unit, and address the lack of international staff to closely supervise storage operations; and (b) require the segregation and protection of archival and confidential records, the development of a stored records database, and the provision of adequate storage space.

37. *The UNMEE Administration accepted recommendation 5 and stated that UNMEE documents are classified, by subject, then with reference numbers to reflect their respective headings and whether they are substantive or administrative. Records are also stored and controlled in the Archives Unit, in a secured building in an UNMEE military camp, close to the Mission HQs. The Unit has an international staff supervisor, as well as standards for security, adopted from ARMS, which are strictly followed. Based on the explanation provided by the Mission, recommendation 5 has been closed.*

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

38. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNMEE for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

cc: Mr. Lebohang Moleko, DSRSG for Asmara, UNMEE
Mr. Maurice Critchley, CAO, UNMEE
Mr. Philip Cooper, Director, DFS
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Mr. Jonathan Childerley, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Programme Officer, OIOS

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	C/O¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date²
1	O	Submission to OIOS of documentation showing the actual use of the Uniform Classification System	1 October 2007
2	C	Action completed	Implemented
3	O	Submission to OIOS of a copy of the issued guidelines regarding the turn-over, maintenance, preservation and disposal of current and closed paper records	September 2007
4	C	Action completed	Implemented
5	C	Action completed	Implemented

¹ C = closed, O = open

² Date provided by UNMEE in response to recommendations

Section (by inspection date)	Are current and closed files separated?		Are files classified as confidential, admin, substantive?		Is the Uniform Classification system used?		Are current files listed according to records officer of each office?		Are closed files listed?		Are closed files archived?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
UNV Support Unit		x		x		x		x		x		x
Transport		x		x		x		x		x		x
Engineering		x		x		x		x		x		x
Medical		x		x		x	x		x			x
Security		x	x			x		x		x		x
G3		x		x		x		x		x		x
OMC		x		x		x		x		x		x

Estimated unutilized office space in the Green Building

No.	Section	Total Floor Area in sq. meters (Section Chief- 14 sq meters) Staff- 7sqm per staff)	Standard number of staff considering existing floor space	Present number of staff occupying floor space Including section chief	Total actually used by present staff	Unutilized space
1	Engineering	180	17	11	112	68
2	Supply	80	12	7	49	31
3	Procurement	163	13	1	7	156
4	CITS	180	20	9	84	96
5	CIMIC	60		0	0	60
6	GEOCell	86	8	3	43	43
7	CMS	106	11	4	42	62
8	G4 Logistics Cell	33.6	4	0	0	33
9	Sao/PIO	91.11		0	0	91

UNITED NATIONS



OIOS Client Satisfaction Survey

Audit of: Documents management in UNMEE

(AP2007/624/02)

	1	2	3	4	5
By checking the appropriate box, please rate:	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. The extent to which the audit addressed your concerns as a manager.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The audit staff's understanding of your operations and objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Professionalism of the audit staff (demeanour, communication and responsiveness).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The quality of the Audit Report in terms of:					
• Accuracy and validity of findings and conclusions;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Clarity and conciseness;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Balance and objectivity;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Timeliness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The extent to which the audit recommendations were appropriate and helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The extent to which the auditors considered your comments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your overall satisfaction with the conduct of the audit and its results.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any further comments you may have on the audit process to let us know what we are doing well and what can be improved.

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

*Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Please send the completed survey as soon as possible to:
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