

Chris Palazzolo (cpalazz@emory.edu)  
Political Science and International Documents Librarian  
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## **I. Finding UN Materials**

### **Print Indexes**

The *Yearbook of the United Nations* (JX1977.A37 Y4—Gov-UN) covers most aspects of UN activity over the past year and provides relevant documents for research. A great place to start if you have a general idea/subject area you would like to explore. Includes a very nice subject index!

Another source is the *UN Documents Index*. The official *UN Documents Index* has changed names several times over the years. All indices (such as the “Checklist”) are in the same area (Z6481.U44 Gov-UN) and contain an annual list of all available UN documents. There are author and subject indices available.

Each session of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and Security Council is accompanied by several indices and supplements (special reports, check-list of documents). The *Index to Proceedings*, which includes Resolutions/Decisions, a subject index, an index to speeches by corporate names/countries and subject, and index to speeches by speaker, is of particular importance. There are also “agenda reports” in the *Annexes* for the General Assembly which list all items under General Assembly consideration and their history. Many documents with the designation of “SR” can be located here in print.

Another place to begin your research is the *Annual Review of United Nations Affairs* (REF JX1977.A1 A5). Review also provides rather comprehensive descriptions and overviews of the five key organs of the UN. Here you can find major decisions, resolutions, statements and voting patterns for these bodies.

The UN Treaty Index is also available in print on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. It is accompanied by the electronic database version, available on the Information Gateway.

## **II. Finding UN Materials**

### **Electronic Resources**

#### **United Nations Online Document System**

**<http://documents.un.org/welcome.asp?language=E>**

New (January 2005), rather comprehensive, public system for retrieving official full-text UN documents since 1993. Currently contains over 800,000 files, primarily in PDF format. Resolutions from 1946-present are also present here (as in several other

locations—see below). There is a simple and advanced search available. There is also very useful full-text searching.

**United Nations—Main Website  
Documentation Centre**  
<http://www.un.org/documents/>

The Documentation Centre has the following full-text items:

**General Assembly**

- Verbatim Record from the 55<sup>th</sup> to 58<sup>th</sup> sessions
- Documents from the 55<sup>th</sup> to 58<sup>th</sup> sessions
- Resolutions from 1946-2003
- “Landmark” Documents
- Selected Press Releases

**Security Council**

- Resolutions from 1946-present
- Presidential Statements from 1994-present
- Meeting Records from 1994-present
- Selected Other Documents and Reports

**Economic and Social Council**

- All current year documents (2004)
- Documents 1994-2003
- Resolutions 1994-2002
- Decisions 1994-2002
- For some reason, 2003 documents and resolutions are missing. However, one can locate these (in full-text) in other databases such as the USBisNET site (Dag Hammarskjöld Library)

**Major Documents from the UN Secretariat**

- There is also a link to the **International Court of Justice** (<http://www.icj-cij.org/>), where one can locate basic documents and decisions. Many of these decisions and cases are also available in the Readex Microfiche collection.

**AccessUN (on the Information Gateway)**

- AccessUN is your portal for documents located in the Microfiche Collection. The database provides access to current and retrospective UN documents and publications from 1946 to the present from the six main bodies of the United

Nations—General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, Security Council, Secretariat, and International Court of Justice.

- AccessUN also indexes documents from other associated organs such as the Environmental and Developmental Programmes (although there is a separate Readex database available for just Environmental Programme documents [on the Information Gateway])
- In addition to bibliographic records, there are also many full-text documents from the principal bodies/organs (such as verbatim records and resolutions) that are available here. You can perform simple or advanced searches based on several criteria (subject, session, author, title, country, text, document number, etc.). You may also designate whether or not you wish to limit your search to full-text documents.
- Also indexes bilateral and multilateral treaties in the UN Treaty Series

### **UN BisNET (United Nations Bibliographic Information System)**

- Catalogs UN documents from 1979-document, many in full-text
- Also indexes resolutions for the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Security Council and Trusteeship Council since 1945
- Also includes non-UN publications held in the collection of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library; occasionally has links to full-text documents of other international organizations (such as the World Bank).
- Voting Records (with links to resolutions), whether by recorded vote, without vote, or by recall by the General Assembly (1983-present) and by the Security Council (1946-present)
- Citations to speeches made in the General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council (1983-present); Trusteeship since 1982.
- Useful thesaurus and browse/keyword options
- Bibliographic Records can be searched on numerous fields including title, author, acting body, etc. and can be limited to type of material and language.
- Speeches can be similarly searched and limited
- Voting Records can be limited by action body and vote type.

## **UN Treaty Series**

- Online database of popular print series. Can search by country, subject, etc.

## **Other Online Sources**

Also, many of the subsidiary organs also have their own websites, where many documents are available for free. As an example, visit the United Nations Development Programme at <http://www.undp.org> and choose “publications.”

### **III. Finding UN materials**

#### **Microfiche**

The UN microfiche is arranged basically by a combination of letters and numbers—the letters representing the major bodies and the numbers representing the session, committee number, document number, etc. To understand the filing of the microfiche collection, it is best to have a review of the UN’s basic organization.

Remember, there are five principal organs of the UN:

A/ General Assembly  
 E/ Economic and Social Council  
 S/ Security Council  
 T/ Trusteeship Council  
 ST/ Secretariat

There are also some special symbols that have been designated for new programs:

DP/ Development Programme  
 TD/ Trade and Development Board

There are several “subsidiary” organs that fall under each of the main bodies. Examples include:

-/AC . . ./- Ad Hoc Committee  
 -/C . . ./- Standing, Permanent, or Main Committee  
 -/CN . . ./- Commission  
 -/CONF . . ./- Conference  
 -/WG . . ./- Working Group  
 -/WP . . ./- Working Party

There are also specific subsidiary organ names that may follow the principal organ, e.g. E/ECE (Economic Commission for Europe” under the Economic and Social Council).

Other elements included in the symbol may denote the nature of the document:

-/INF . . . Information Series  
 -/PV . . . Verbatim Record (Procès-Verbal)  
 -/SR . . . Summary Record  
 -/RES . . . Resolutions

There are also elements indicating additions to the text:

-/Add (Addendum)  
 -/Amend (Amendment)

-/Corr (Corrigendum)

-/Rev (Revision)

With all these elements, some documents can possess very complex numbering systems.

E/ECE/WP.4/INF. 109-110/Corr.1

The above classification indicates a document from the European Commission of Europe, which is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The document is a corrigendum of a working paper in the 109-110 informational series.

- The basic classification scheme is as follows:

**Issuing Body**

**Numbers**

**Years**

**Letters**

**Roman Numerals**

Here is an example of correctly filed UN microfiche:

A/23

A/35/PV. 1-5

A/35/supp.45

A/36/supp.45

A/65

A/1123

A/AC.86/40

A/C.1/44/1-7

A/C.6/55/L.1

E/43s/supp.5-50

E/56s/supp.3

E/354

E/878

E/ECA/45

E/ECE/45

ST/ECA/104

ST/ECE/AIR POLL/1

ST/ECE/Coal/1

ST/ESA/1

ST/STAT/SER.M/46

ST/STAT/SER.W/46

T/9s/supp.1

TD/B/13s/supp.1

T/3

TD/B/6  
TD/33  
TD/33/rev.1  
TD/STAT/2

Specific publications of the UN (such as the Journal of the UN and Documents from the International Criminal Court) are located in the final cabinet, in the last two drawers and are arranged alphabetically.

There is a special exception (as always seems the case) for General Assembly Documents.

Originally, these documents were numbered consecutively, regardless of session (of which there is usually one per year). These documents are arranged consecutively and increase by year, e.g., 1969 ends with A/1000 and 1970 begins with document number A/1001. However, as of 1975, they began to be assigned a session number, so document numbers may look more like the following: A/35/RES . . .

One other exception (you know I could not get away with just one!)

Up to 1975, documents with letters appear after the year in which the document appeared, e.g.

A/10089 [1975]  
A/INF. 1 [1975]  
A/100090

The Economic and Social Council apparently did the same thing for a while. The same rules apply for their classification.

Also, there is a special rule for ICJ cases, which are located in the bottom drawer of the final cabinet. These are arranged in alphabetical order.