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To/à: All Staff Members in the Field

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Subject/objet: Field Guides

The objective of the UNHCR records management and archives program* is to enable staff members to create, maintain and access UNHCR records efficiently and to preserve and make available for research use UNHCR records with long-term value. UNHCR records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, are the property of the organization.

The decentralized operation of UNHCR offices places special responsibility on field offices for the management of records. All permanently valuable records should be shipped to the UNHCR Archives in Geneva when they are no longer needed for the current business of the creating office, but most records will be created, maintained, and destroyed in the field. To assist offices in managing their non-permanent records, the UNHCR Archives is developing a series of field guides. These guides are issued as an interim measure until the chapter on records in the UNHCR Manual is revised.

The first such guide, developed with Headquarters Financial Services and covering the management of monthly accounts, was issued in 1999 as FOM/68. This FOM includes four more field guides: managing project files, applying records schedules, managing records centers (off-site records storage areas), and identifying and shipping permanent records to the UNHCR archives.

Any questions relating to the guides, or to the management of records generally, should be sent to archives@unhcr.ch.

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* Note:
Records are any papers, publications, maps, audiovisual materials, electronic data, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which are created or received by UNHCR within the framework of its official activities. Records management relates to the creation, use and maintenance of current records in a systematic manner. Archives management deals with the preservation, maintenance, and use of non-current records on a temporary or permanent basis.