

International Standard for Archival Description

1.1 Reference code	UNHCR 13
1.2 Title	Records of the Office of the High Commissioner
1.3 Dates of creation	1957-2005
1.4 Level	Fonds
1.5 Extent (quantity)	95.5 m

2.2 Administrative/Biographical history In December 1949 the General Assembly voted to establish the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for an initial period of three years starting on January 1, 1951. The High Commissioner is elected by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary General. The terms of the appointment are proposed by the Secretary General and approved by the General Assembly.

Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart from the Netherlands was elected High Commissioner by secret ballot in the General Assembly. Dr. van Heuven Goedhart was succeeded by the Swiss diplomat Auguste Lindt on December 10, 1956. In December 1960, Felix Schnyder, also of Switzerland, was elected as the third High Commissioner by the General Assembly. Mr. Schnyder served from 1961 to 1965, when he was succeeded by former Deputy High Commissioner, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Sadruddin Aga Khan served as High Commissioner until 1977 at which time he was replaced by Poul Hartling of Denmark. Jean-Pierre Hocke of Switzerland served from 1986 until his resignation in October 1989. In November, Thorvald Stoltenberg of Norway was elected to the Office of High Commissioner. He served only one year before rejoining the Norwegian government. Sadako Ogata of Japan was subsequently elected by the General Assembly in December 1990. She was re-elected in November 1993 and in September 1998. Her term ended in December 2000, when Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands was elected to the Office. Mr. Lubbers served until 2005.

2.3 Archival history

In December 2000, High Commissioner Ogata transferred her papers and materials to UNHCR Archives, stipulating that it was her wish that they be opened for research in accordance with the Access Policy of the Archives. In early 2004 the Princess Catherine Aga Khan conveyed to UNHCR Archives several linear meters of records originating in the offices of UNHCR during the career of the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan as High Commissioner.

Thanks to funding from the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN), in 2008 a project was completed by the Programme for the Study of Global Migration of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (Geneva) that described the Records of the Office of the High Commissioner (Fonds 13/1 to Fonds 13/4 and Fonds 13/7). An online catalogue is available on the UNHCR Archives web site.

During this process, a binder containing documents related to High Commissioner August Lindt was placed in a new sub-fonds created to incorporate this body of documents: Fonds 13, Sub-fonds 7 (13/7): August Lindt, 1957-1960.

3.1 Scope and content	<p>The records of the first three High Commissioners were not maintained apart from the Central Registry. At the time of a change in command, files from the High Commissioner's office were passed on to the successor, filed with the Central Registry or, in some cases, kept as personal records by the departing High Commissioner.</p> <p>The records serve to document the wide ranging work of the Office of the High Commissioner, and include extensive material on missions, speeches, correspondence and briefs.</p>
3.3 Accruals	Accruals are expected
3.4 Arrangement	<p>The records are arranged in seven sub-fonds</p> <p>Sub-fonds 1 Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, 1958-1991 (predominant 1966-1977)</p> <p>Sub-fonds 2 Poul Hartling, 1968-1987 (predominant 1977-1985)</p> <p>Sub-fonds 3 Jean-Pierre Hocke, 1982-1989 (predominant 1986-1989)</p> <p>Sub-fonds 4 Thorvald Stoltenberg, 1988-1990 (predominant 1990)</p> <p>Sub-fonds 5 Sadako Ogata, 1991-2000</p> <p>Sub-fonds 6 Ruud Lubbers, 2001-2005</p> <p>Sub-fonds 7 August Lindt, 1957-1960.</p>
4.1 Conditions governing access	Records are subject to the General Restriction Policy of the UNHCR Archives
4.2 Conditions governing reproduction	Records are subject to the Copyright Policy of UNHCR
7.2 Rules or conventions	Internal UNHCR rules
7.3 Date of description	2006; 2008