

## INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Reference code** UNHCR 11  
**1.2 Title** Records of the Central Registry  
**1.3 Dates of creation** 1946-1995 (predominant 1951-1994)  
**1.4 Level** Fonds  
**1.5 Extent (quantity)** 1475 m; 11,000 microfiche

**2.2 Administrative/Biographical history** UNHCR established a Central Registry in 1951, with the responsibility for opening and routing the mail and filing the official records of the entire Headquarters staff. Throughout its history the Registry was part of the administrative office of UNHCR.

The Central Registry was responsible for filing various types of documents during its nearly half century of operation. The two basic series were classified subject files and documents of specific projects funded or operated by UNHCR. Projects, in turn, were either specific projects with control numbers, which were filed by year, or were general files on "material assistance" for a country, filed alphabetically by country. In addition, the Registry maintained chronological files of incoming and outgoing mail and cables, and until 1987 it filed the "Individual Cases" of refugees (see Fonds 17).

The classified subject files had four distinct periods. The first, which ended in 1970, was characterised by filing in a numeric-alphabetical file. When an entirely new decimal file system was adopted in 1969, the Registry entered a second stage. It continued to file records of some on-going operations in the former series; conversely, the Registry staff also took some files from the first series and physically moved them into the new decimal file. In 1984 the Registry decided to cease filing paper and to microfiche all current, incoming documents. This system failed quickly, and on 1 January 1986 it returned to paper, using the same filing scheme as the previous classified subject file. This filing scheme was closed at the beginning of 1995, when the Central Registry was abolished.

**3.1 Scope and content** The records of the Central Registry are the starting point for any research in the period 1951-1995. Virtually any subject of concern to UNHCR can be found reflected in these records.

**3.2 Appraisal, destruction, scheduling** Many parts of the Registry classified subject files from the first period (1951-1970) were destroyed in this mid-1980s; all records in eight file codes were completely eliminated, and many others now consist of only fragmentary records. Many files from the second period of classified subject files (1971-1984) were microfilmed and the paper then destroyed, although usually the paper records from 1983 and 1984 remain.

The numerical project files prior to 1984 were also largely destroyed, retaining in most files only the basic documents (agreed project plan, called a letter of instruction; final financial report; final descriptive report). Certain significant operations, such as that in South Sudan, were saved in whole. In accordance with UNHCR Records Schedule 8 on Project Files, the numerical project files from 1984 and subsequent years are also reduced to the basic documents.

The Registry destroyed the chronological files when they were about six years old. With the introduction of the microfiche program in the mid-1980s, the Registry fished the existing chronological file (1975 to

1983) and then continued to fiche incoming and outgoing mail. The Archives destroyed the chronological microfiche in 2001.

**3.3 Accruals** Accruals are not expected.

**3.4 Arrangement** Arranged in six series:

1. Classified subject files. 1951-1970
2. Classified subject files. 1971-1985
3. Classified subject files. 1986-1995
4. Classified project files. 1955-1977
5. Classified project files. 1978-1995
6. Material assistance files.

**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

**4.3 Language/scripts** Principally English and French

**4.5 Finding aids** See series descriptions

**7.1 Archivist's note** Trudy Huskamp Peterson

**7.2 Rules or conventions** Internal UNHCR rules

**7.3 Date of description** 2 August 2001