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***BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FORMER UNITED NATIONS CIVIL SERVANTS***

***(BAFUNCS)***

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**INFORMATION NOTE 9**

**UNITED NATIONS CAREER RECORDS PROJECT (UNCRP)**

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**Guidance Note on contributing to the UNCRP as of January 2025**

This note is to inform and support members in determining to make and how to complete a contribution to the UN Career Records Project (UNCRP) of BAFUNCS.

The UNCRP has been in operation since 1989 and is currently in its third phase of sending over 500 members’ contributions for retention and use at the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, where it is one of about 400 archives maintained by the library and made available to research staff and students. At Annex 1 is a more elaborate information note on the purpose, history, and management of the project.

**1. Request for contributions**

Contributions of historical and personal records, preferably in English, are requested from time to time by BAFUNCS from all former UN staff and their spouses/partners, and especially upon retirement. The project is promoted also in the newsletter and at annual reunions, with updates reported to the AGM by the coordinator. Information is available in the UNCRP section of the BAFUNCS website.

The project seeks contributions from both Professional and General Service staff who have worked for the UN system (the UN Secretariat, the UN Funds and Programmes, UN Specialised Agencies, and related organisations), as well as those in diplomatic, technical, military, or non-governmental organisation service linked to the UN system. The experiences of spouses/partners are also particularly appreciated. Not all the contributors are British, although the majority are. The contributions provide a substantial source of information of practical on-the-ground UN experience over the years.

Contributions may take many forms, and to guide members in determining the contribution they wish to make, an initial step is to complete the questionnaire, which is provided at Annex 2. It can be adapted as necessary to reflect personal circumstances, and those parts which do not apply can be omitted. An initial submission of the questionnaire provides the coordinator with the opportunity to then engage with contributors in answering questions and providing further guidance on how to provide archival material, for example by writing stories about their career experiences and to draw out lessons based on that experience.

Contributors may consider providing any of the following as part of the archive:

* Curriculum Vitae (CV) or similar biographical note
* Memoirs and personal reflections, in any style, format or length
* Photos and other media materials
* Unpublished papers (manuscripts, letters, diaries, reports, etc.)
* Oral history/interview recordings (tape, CD)

The questionnaire can be completed on line ([bafuncs.org/uncrp-online-questionnaire](https://bafuncs.org/uncrp-online-questionnaire/)), downloaded from the UNCRP section of the BAFUNCS website (<http://bafuncs.org/united-nations-career-records-project-uncrp-rev>)or received from the UNCRP Coordinator (career.records@bafuncs.org). Completed questionnaires may be sent to the same email address.

**2. Management of contributions**

Contributions should preferably be submitted electronically, but hard copy material is accepted by the library and is most welcome. To assist with cataloguing, it will be helpful if a list of submitted materials is provided as well, highlighting key words (e.g. countries of service, thematic/technical areas of assignments and/or expertise, UN agency and relevant departments, dates, etc.).

Contributors may stipulate that papers may be closed for a period of years on the grounds of confidentiality. The Bodleian Library may decide to impose one independently if it is felt that all the relevant factors, especially in relation to third parties and current privacy laws, have not been fully taken into consideration. Contributors and their descendants retain ownership of their personal copyright even while donating their material for use by the library. Contributors should indicate if they are willing for researchers to create copies of their submission for research purposes and whether they would be willing for the Bodleian Library to publish the information online (see Annex 2 Part VI.2).

The information provided by contributors is initially stored as electronic or scanned pdf/jpeg documents with the UNCRP Coordinator, who will then forward it to the Bodleian Library for long-term preservation and use by researchers. Extensive hard copy material will be organised and made ready for transfer to the library. In both cases, accession numbers will be allocated by the library and reflected in the Guide to contributions produced by BAFUNCS from time to time.

**3. Management arrangements and BAFUNCS support**

The UNCRP is managed by a volunteer coordinator - currently Nicholas Rosellini - who replaced Michael Askwith in 2021. The coordinator is a member of the BAFUNCS executive committee and is responsible for the use of a modest budget provided to support the archival process and for liaison with the Bodleian Library in ensuring the successful archival of members’ contributions. The coordinator is supported by an editor - presently Terry Jones - who replaced Bill Jackson in September 2024.

There is a dedicated section in the BAFUNCS website to the UNCRP, which includes access to the Guide for Researchers (see Annex 1) and to the Review of UNCRP Activities under Phase I (1989-95) and Phase II (2003 -2021), Part I Results and Recommendations by Michael Askwith.

**4. Financing of cataloguing the archives**

The earlier stages of UNCRP benefitted from small grants provided by foundations to cover the cost of cataloguing and archiving the materials. At present the BAFUNCS budget can provide only modest support and does not cover existing requirements. Some members have made generous contributions to support archiving costs. Please indicate if you would be willing to donate to the costs of cataloguing contributions to the UNCRP, through the Bodleian Library.

***Annex 1: information note on UNCRP.***

**Purpose of the UNCRP**

The overall purpose of the UNCRP is to support members in archiving - for use of researchers and students - their experience of working for the United Nations. It is designed to provide an incentive to members to make a contribution that may satisfy any of these purposes:

1. Historical: To document the contributions of former UN staff to the UN system, which can be stored in the Bodleian Library, and used by future researchers

2. Professional: To provide an opportunity for former UN staff to reflect on their careers, and to highlight what they consider as their main professional and personal contributions to the organizations and countries in which they served

3. Personal: To provide personal insights into the careers of former UN staff, of events and incidents in which they were involved - both anecdotal and otherwise - of the people they met, and of the countries where they worked and lived

4. Family: To provide summaries of the lives of former UN staff, which could be of interest to their own families and future generations.

**History of the UNCRP and results**

***(a) UNCRP Stage 1***

From 1989 to 1992 a first stage of the United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP) was carried out under the direction of Richard Symonds, who had served with the UN and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 25 years. Based at St. Antony’s College, Oxford, and working closely with the Bodleian Library, the project involved the distribution of questionnaires to a total of more than eight hundred people who had been directly employed by UN agencies. A total of 233 responses (28 per cent) were received, as well as many papers. Stage I benefitted from a small grant from the Ford Foundation.

A Report, entitled ‘The United Nations Careers Records Project: Final Report of First Stage 1989-92’ was published by Richard Symonds in 1992. A catalogue of the UNCRP papers by then in the Bodleian Library was compiled by Martin Jennings and put online in 1995.

***(b) UNCRP Stage 2***

After a gap of 11 years a second stage was started in 2003 under the coordination of Michael Askwith, a newly retired UNDP staff member. The role of editor and liaison with the Bodleian Library was performed by Bill Jackson. The UNCRP Stage 2 was designed to continue the work carried out under StageI and to collect career records of those who had retired since the end of Stage I.

Other activities carried out during Stage 2 included the organization of a Witness Seminar in 2005 to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations (see [www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/modpol/uncrp.htm](http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/modpol/uncrp.htm)); a consultation on the UNCRP at Ditchley Park in May 2009; a Witness Seminar at the Rothschild Institute, London, in collaboration with King’s College, London on “The UN in Crisis Situations” in October 2009 featuring the experiences of Dame Margaret Anstee and Alan Doss; and the collection of obituaries and memoirs, including of former United Nations Association UK (UNA-UK) volunteers.

UNCRP materials have been used, for example, in the research of Dr Teresa Tomás Rangil on the UN and the Congo Crisis, (ref <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/weston/our-work/seminars/amm2013/uncrp>), and that of Eva Maria Muschik on decolonization, trusteeship and self-determination. The UNCRP is also a leading source of first-hand information on the early work of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).

***(c) UNCRP Stage 3***

Stages 1 and 2 were merged in 2015 to eliminate the distinctions in time between the two stages and emphasize that the UNCRP represents a continuous process of records collection.

This coincided with the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the UN in 2015 and the implementation of two complementary activities:

1) UN at 70 Witness Seminar Programme:

This programme comprised three separate but interconnected seminars:

* ***Development Cooperation***, in conjunction with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and UNA–UK, King’s College, London, and the Bodleian Library, held at the University of Sussex (12-14 May 2015)
* ***Humanitarian Action***, in conjunction with the Bodleian Library, All Souls College, Oxford, King’s College, London, and UNA-UK and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), held at the new Weston (Bodleian) Library, Oxford (16 October 2015)
* ***Peace and Security***, in conjunction with UNA-UK, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, King’s College, London, held at Church House, Westminster (11 January 2016)

These three Witness Seminars were followed by the publication of:

* [***IDS Evidence Report, no 205 (October 2016)***](https://bafuncs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/UNat70_OnlineReport.pdf)on “*The UN at 70, and the UK: Development Cooperation, Humanitarian Action and Peace and Security - Lessons from Experience and Policy Recommendations*"

This was co-edited by Sir Richard Jolly and Michael Askwith and consists of a selection of articles and policy recommendations deriving from each of the witness seminars. It was launched at the House of Lords on 20 October 2016.

2) [A Guide for Researchers to the United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP)](https://bafuncs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/UNCRP-Guide-for-Researchers-2016-30-9-17.pdf)

This comprised an updated inventory of summaries of UNCRP career records and was prepared by Bill Jackson - primarily as an e-book - and is readily accessible on the BAFUNCS website. The *Guide* contains short biodata, brief summaries of the material contributed and shelf mark reference numbers to 506 contributors since the inception of the Project, thus covering both Stages I and 2.

[**Supplements numbered 1**](https://bafuncs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UNCRP-Researchers-Guide-Supplement-1-2017-2018.pdf) (2017/18), [**2** (2019/20),](https://bafuncs.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/UNCRP-Supplement-2-May-2021.pdf) and **3** (2021 to 2023, forthcoming) summarise additional contributions since the publication of the Guide.

**Annex 2 Questionnaire**

**The questionnaire can be completed directly online (preferred) at:**

[**bafuncs.org/uncrp-online-questionnaire**](https://bafuncs.org/uncrp-online-questionnaire/)

**OR**

**downloaded from the UNCRP section of the BAFUNCS website**

 **(under 'Request for Contributions'):**

[**http://bafuncs.org/united-nations-career-records-project-uncrp-rev**](http://bafuncs.org/united-nations-career-records-project-uncrp-rev)

**OR**

**A hard copy can be received from the UNCRP Coordinator:**

**career.records@bafuncs.org**

**Online completion is preferred. If this is not possible, the questionnaire can be completed manually and sent to:****career.records@bafuncs.org**