

AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

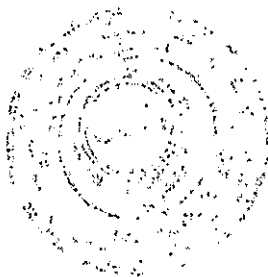
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AFRICAN UNION ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY ON ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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Definitions

Active Records: Records which are referred to constantly for current use, and which need to be retained and maintained in office space and equipment close to users.

African Union Archives: The place where records of the African Union with archival value are stored and preserved permanently, the African Union Repository.

African Union Commission: The Secretariat of the African Union.

Appraisal: The procedure to determine the value of records before their disposal. This evaluation is based on their current administrative, fiscal, and legal use, and on their value as an evidence or an information source

Archival Records: Records of enduring value that are preserved for reference and research purposes because they reflect significant events or documents of the history and development of the Organisation.

Archivist: Manager of the African Union Archives

Capture: All of the processes involved in getting a record into an Electronic Records Management System (ERMS), namely registration, classification, addition of metadata and fixing the contents of the source document.

Chief of Administrative Services: The manager responsible for creation, storage, management and disposal of records of the Commission.

Custody: The control of records based upon their physical possession.

Disposal authority: A written authority issued by the Chief of Administrative Services and signed by the Disposal Ad Hoc Committee, specifying which records should be transferred to archives and which ones should be destroyed or permanently disposed of.

Disposal: The action of either destroying, deleting, or transferring a record into archival custody.

Electronic record: A record which is in electronic form, either as a result of having been created by application software or as a result of digitization, e.g. by scanning. Official e-mails are electronic records.

File plan: A pre-determined classification plan by which records are filed and/or electronically indexed to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records.

Filing system: The collective noun for a storage system (like files, boxes, shelves or electronic applications and storage systems) in which records are stored in a systematic manner according to a file plan.



Inactive Records: Records for which the active and semi-active retention periods have lapsed and which are no longer required to carry out the functions for which they were created.

Metadata: Data that describes a record, such as the information relating to its context, content, structure and management over time.

Presumption in Favour of Disclosure: Being forth coming with information whenever possible

Record: Information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. A record may incorporate one or several documents, and may be on any medium in any format.

Records Management: A field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the process for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Retention: The function of preserving and maintaining records for continuing use.

Retention period: The length of time that records should be retained before they are either transferred into archival custody or destroyed/deleted.

Retention Schedule: An official document showing all actions to be taken in relation to the disposition of records. The schedule enumerates the record title, number, office of record, and disposition schedule. A control mechanism for records, which contains a description and the disposal instructions and retention periods of all other records.

Semi-active Records: Records which are referred to infrequently and active records that are removed from office space to lower cost off-site storage until they are no longer needed.

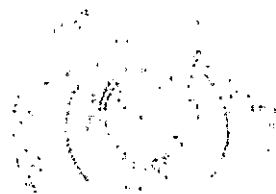


1. Introduction

- 1.1 The African Union (AU) creates and receives records in the course of its daily activities. These records are valuable assets of the AU; they provide evidence of decisions, actions and transactions, and so have administrative, legal, fiscal or historical value.
- 1.2 AU has adopted this *Archives and Records Management Policy* to guide, in a broad sense, the procedures, processes and practices for controlling and managing AU records, throughout their life cycle. This policy applies to all AU records, including hardcopy and electronic (including e-mails) and any other media based records.
- 1.3 The policy is expected to enhance efficiency, improve accessibility of information, and promote transparency and compliance with obligations set out in legal instruments of the AU and international law, such as data protection and access to information.
- 1.4 Records contain information in a fixed form. Information is a resource that is as important to an organisation as others including human *and* financial resources and facilities. Therefore, the information resources of the AU must be properly managed, as with other valuable assets. Good records management facilitates:
 - easy and comprehensive access to the right information
 - successful and efficient performance of organisational functions
 - adherence to legal and accountability requirements
 - institutional memory and provision of continuity in the event of a disaster
 - documentation of the organization's activities, development and achievements
- 1.5 Effective records management ensures adequate use and management of organisational knowledge. It also facilitates the presentation of evidence in the event of legal and financial challenges.

2. Scope and audience

- 2.1 This policy applies to all the records created, produced, received or maintained by all staff of the AU in the course of carrying out their official roles and functions. The policy applies to all formats of records including both paper and electronic/digital based records.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all the institutions and organs of the AU, wherever they may be located.
- 3.3 This policy impacts upon the AU's work practices for all personnel and other persons who:
 - create any form of records, including digital records;



- have access to records;
- play any role in the storage and maintenance of records;
- manage staff that are engaged in records management activities, including all staff responsible for designing information technology infrastructure.

3.4 This policy, therefore, applies to all staff members of AU, Organs, as well as any persons that may generate or use AU records in the course of business. It covers all records, regardless of format, medium or age.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1 All records created and received by the AU are the property of the AU and as such shall be managed in accordance with the AU rules and procedures. All electronic and hardcopy records shall be managed in strict compliance with the principles enshrined in the AU Archives and Records Management Policy.
- 3.2 AU follows sound, approved procedures for the creation, maintenance, retention and disposal of all records, including electronic records. All records management procedures shall comply with applicable legal requirements. Approved security procedures shall be adhered to in order to protect the records.

4. Policy objectives

4.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework for the management of records of the AU; paper and electronic, active, semi-active and inactive so that they are managed in such a way as to classify their value to the organisation and to identify and eventually transfer to the AU Archives for permanent preservation, those with archival and historical value.

4.2 The policy also aims to ensure that electronic/digital and other technology dependent records which have archival value are generated and maintained in a manner that guarantees their authenticity, accessibility and usability as archives.

4.3 The policy seeks to establish the role of the AU Archives at the AU Headquarters as the central depository for all institutions of the AU and also to mandate the Archives at the AUC to actively seek, acquire and archive documents and other memorabilia from persons who have played a prominent part or been closely associated with the African Union or the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

5. Relationship with other policies

5.1 The *AU Archives and Records Management Policy* exists within the context of and is aligned to international standards and practices as well as the AU internal systems for the generation, usage and management of records.



5.2 International Standards

This Policy is based on and is aligned to the standards of the International Council on Archives (ICA); the Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records (Moreq); and to the International Records Management Standard ISO 15489 for which certification should be sought in the near future.

5.3 AU Policies and Systems for the Management of AU Records

The *Archives and Records Management Policy* is built on and is intended to support the several systems and procedures that are used for managing the records of the AU. These include the following:

- The use and management of e-mail
- E-mail Archiving and Retention Policy
- AU Knowledge Management System (AUKMS)
- Document imaging;
- Internet use;
- Web content management;
- Intellectual property;
- Whistleblowing;
- Information security;
- Promotion of access to information;
- Privacy and data protection.

6.4 The AU Archives and Records Management Policy shall also be read with the AU Financial Rules and Regulations and Staff Regulations and Rules.

6. Legal framework

6.1 By managing all its records well, the AU strives to ensure the accountability, transparency and service delivery values contained in the legal framework established by:

- Constitutive Act, 2000
- AU Decisions and Resolutions
 - Anti-corruption
 - Good Governance
 - Administrative Justice of Information
 - ICT
 - E-Government and Recruitment
 - Strategic Plan
 - Financial Rules and Regulations
 - Staff Regulations and Rules
 - Regulation 3.3 (f) Staff Duties and Obligations)
 - Rule 64 (Obligations relating to Information Dissemination)



7. Responsibilities

7.1 General Responsibilities

7.1.1 This policy relates to all documents generated or received and used as part of or in relation to all activities of the AU.

7.1.2 All AU staff are responsible for the management of records, which should be done in compliance with this policy and any procedural guidelines issued for the management of records.

7.1.3 All persons working with the AU, will upon separation from AU declare and transfer all records and documents in their Custody to the Archives according to the Archives Transfer Procedure.

7.1.4 All persons separating from AU will clear with the Registry and Archives.

7.1.5 Every staff member shall ensure the careful handling and preservation of records, decisions, actions and transactions in their custody, created while conducting official business and shall act in good faith to securely maintain AU records.

7.1.6 All employees and users of AU records shall be aware that both paper and electronic records have potential archival value, have the same status, are bound by the same legal, regulatory, statutory and best practice requirements and must be accorded appropriate care, confidentiality and protection in order to protect their value as archives.

7.1.7 All Directorates, Representations, Offices and Organs of the AU shall, from the point of records creation, identify and recognize (through the records appraisal process), records with archival value and shall ensure that such records are managed and transferred to the AU Archives or institutional archives in as complete and usable form as possible.

7.2 Specific Responsibilities

7.2.1 The coordination and implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of the Chief of Administrative Services and the AU Archivist.

7.3 **Director of Administration and Human Resource Management (AHRM) or the Officer responsible for Administration of AU Organ**

7.3.1 The AUC Director of AHRM and the Officer responsible for Administration at each AU Organ will be ultimately accountable for the records and the records management practices within their respective organs.

7.3.2 Head of Administration and Facilities Management



7.3.3 The Head of Administration and Facilities Management shall ensure that good records management practices are implemented and maintained.

7.4 Heads of Divisions and Units

7.4.1 Heads of Divisions and Units are responsible for the implementation of this policy in their respective divisions and units. They shall lead by example, by maintaining good records management practices.

7.4.2 Heads of Divisions and Units shall sensitize all their staff members of their records protection responsibilities and obligations. They shall ensure that the protection of records, including e-mail, is a responsibility in the performance indicators of all their staff.

7.4.3 Heads of Divisions and Units shall ensure that an original and authentic copy of any document (that does not form part of Registry Records) generated or received and used as part of or in relation to any activity concluded by the AU is deposited to the Archives.

7.5 Chief of Administrative Services or Officer responsible for Records Management

7.5.1 The Chief of Administrative Services who is the Active Records Manager of the AU, in collaboration with the Archivist, shall:

- i. Support the implementation of this policy and the management of all Active AU records.
- ii. Oversee the preparation of records management procedures, guidelines, tools and other materials that are necessary to support the implementation of this policy.
- iii. Promote this policy and sensitise staff to its application.
- iv. From time to time, initiate circulars and instructions regarding the records management practices of the AU, to ensure consistent and constant compliance by all.
- v. Ensure that all records created and received by the AU are classified according to the approved file plan and that appropriate disposal provisions are in place for such records.
- vi. Ensure that all active records are kept in conducive and good standard records environments.



- vii. Ensure the transfer of inactive records of ongoing value to the Archives.
- viii. In his/her capacity as the records manager for the AU, be responsible for the operations and management of the Main Registry and the Departmental Registries and ensure that the Registry staff, regardless of location, are suitably trained.

7.6 Archivist shall:

- i. Be responsible for the custody and preservation of the archival records of the AU.
- ii. Oversee the appraisal, organisation, cataloguing and preservation of all records pertaining to the OAU/AU heritage and disseminate to the right audience such information as it holds.
- iii. Provide adequate facilities for the retention and preservation of records of the OAU and AU.

7.7 AU Registry Services

7.7.1 The AU Registry shall be responsible for managing the current and semi-current records of the AU in a manner that assures and protects the archival quality of the records. In particular, it will be important to ensure that arrangements for the safety and preservation of electronic records with archival value are made early in the life cycle of the records.

7.7.2 Registry Staff

Under the guidance of the Records Officer, the Senior Records Assistants who shall be the staff of the Main Registry and the Departmental Registries shall be responsible for:

- Management of records within AU Registries, according to approved procedures.
- Receiving, registering and classifying records.
- Management of incoming and outgoing mail.
- Control of all records created by their departments.

7.8 Archives

The African Union Archives is the central the depository for all documents and records with archival value.

7.8.1 Archives Staff

The Archives staff shall manage all documents and records transferred to the Archives according to this policy and approved procedures.



7.9 Management Information Systems (MIS)

7.9.1 The Management Information Systems (MIS) Division shall:

- i. Be responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the electronic systems that store records. MIS shall liaise with the Chief of Administrative Services or the officer in charge of records at organs to ensure that official electronic records are properly managed, protected and preserved.
- ii. Ensure that clear, user-friendly systems, technical manuals and systems procedures manuals are compiled for SharePoint and will liaise with the Chief of Administrative Services to ensure that SharePoint captures appropriate metadata and audit trail data for all electronic records to ensure authenticity and reliability.
- iii. As and when necessary, migrate records to new systems in order to ensure accessibility.
- iv. Ensure that all data, metadata, audit trail data, operating systems and application software are backed up on a daily, weekly and monthly basis and that such backups are stored in secure, including virus free, offsite environments to enable the recovery of authentic, reliable and accessible records in case of disaster.

7.10 The Security and Safety Services Division

7.10.1 In as much as the Security and Safety Division is mandated to take responsibility for the physical security and safety of all African Union assets, the Division is also responsible for the security of physical records and their storage areas. The Security and Safety Services Division shall screen and stamp all in-coming mail that is received by the Union.

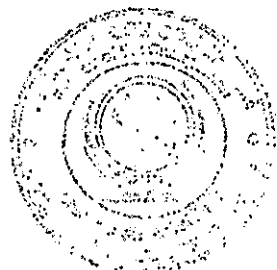
7.11 Office of the Legal Counsel

7.11.1 The Office of the Legal Counsel shall keep the Chief of Administrative Services and the Head of Administration and Facilities Management informed of developments in the legal and statutory environment that may impact on the records management practices of the AU.

8. Records filing and storage

8.1 All records shall be classified according to the AU file plan. The file plan shall be used for the classification of both hardcopy and electronic records.

8.2 The Chief of Administrative Services shall be contacted when a relevant subject does not exist in the approved file plan. Any staff member needing to make an addition to the file plan should contact the Chief of Administrative Services.



- 8.3 All active hardcopy records shall be housed in the departmental registries. All these records will be under the management of the Director of the department, who has the mandate to ensure that they are managed properly.
- 8.4 The registries shall be restricted in secure storage areas. Only Registry staff shall be allowed in the records storage area. Other staff members that need access to files in the Registry shall place a request for the files at the counter of the relevant Registry. The Registry shall be locked at all times when it is not in operation.
- 8.5 The Chief of Administrative Services shall maintain a schedule of all records. The schedule shall contain a description of each set of records and indicate the storage location and retention periods of the records, regardless of format. Should records be created/received that are not listed in the schedule, the Chief of Administrative Services shall be contacted to add the records to the schedule.
- 8.6 The officers in charge of records at the organs will liaise with the Chief of Administrative Services to obtain the schedule of all records and to ensure that they always have the latest version.

9. Retention and disposal of records

- 9.1 The Chief of Administrative Services shall oversee the disposal of AU records according to the *AU Retention and Disposal Schedule and Procedure*. No AU records shall be destroyed, erased, deleted or otherwise disposed of without prior written authorisation from the Director, Head of Mission or Executive Secretary of the department, organ or office concerned.
- 9.2 The Chief of Administrative Services shall consult with the AU Archivist to ensure that records appraisal looks beyond the administrative and operational needs of the organisation to the research and historical needs of future generations as well as to ensure that there are no other circumstances that may have arisen and that merit the retention of the records as archives.
- 9.3 All disposal actions shall be authorised by an *ad hoc committee* consisting of the Chief of Administrative services, the Director of AHRM, The Director of the Department or organ concerned and the Archivist prior to their execution to ensure that records that have archival value are not destroyed inadvertently.
- 9.4 Retention periods indicated on the schedule as Annex shall be determined taking into account the AU's legal obligations and functional needs. Should a staff member disagree with the allocated retention periods, the Chief of Administrative Services shall be contacted to discuss a more appropriate



retention period.

- 9.5 Hardcopy archival records shall be safely kept in Semi-Active Reference Unit until they are due for transfer to the Archives Repository.

10. Access and security

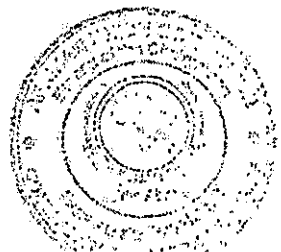
- 10.1 Records shall, at all times, be protected against unauthorised access and/or tampering to protect their authenticity and reliability as evidence of the business and activities of the AU.
- 10.2 No staff member shall remove records that are not available in the public domain from the premises of the AU without the explicit permission of the Director of AHRM.
- 10.3 No staff member shall provide information or records that have not been released to the public domain. All confidential records will be signed off by the Director or Head of the office or organ to be accessed. No copy of any kind shall be taken of the confidential records except with an express written consent by the DCP.
- 10.4 Personnel information shall be managed in accordance to the terms of Rule 65 of the *Staff Regulations and Rules on Personnel Records*.
- 10.5 For all electronic records, an audit trail shall be logged for any attempts to alter/edit electronic records or their metadata.
- 10.6 Records storage areas shall at all times be protected against unauthorised access. The following shall apply:
- Registry and other records storage areas shall be locked when not in use.
 - Access to server rooms and storage areas for electronic records media shall be managed with security access codes.

11. Archives policy principles

- 11.1 The AU Archives Access Policy shall be guided by the following principles:

11.1.1 A Presumption in Favour of Disclosure

AU recognizes and endorses the "presumption in favour of disclosure" principle in terms of granting access to its archives. In pursuance of this principle, it is AU's objective to make as much information as possible available, at the earliest possible moment.



11.1.2 Protection of Confidentiality

As the AU recognizes and acknowledges that it has an obligation to protect information that is deemed to be confidential, the AU Archives access policy shall balance the needs of AU's stakeholders and the public for access to information with the obligation to protect and respect confidential information.

The AU Archives, shall therefore, from time to time, specify the categories and types of information which are open to the stakeholders and the general public and those categories of information to which access is restricted.

11.1.3 Conformity with AU's Operational Rules and Procedures

The access policy of the AU Archives shall be aligned to, support and reinforce the AU's operational policies, rules and procedures and shall aim at encouraging transparency and accountability by providing access to those archives and information arising from implementation of AU's administrative policies, rules and procedures.

11.1.4 Respect for Legislation of Member States Governing Access to Public Records

The AU Archives access policy shall seek to be in harmony with the practices of the Member States of the AU in relation to their national legislation and laws relating to access to information generated by public institutions. The policy shall therefore respect the legislation and laws of Member States particularly in relation to access to information and data held in public institutions that are required to share data with the AU.

12. Legal admissibility and evidential weight

12.1 The staff of the AU shall do everything possible to preserve the authenticity of AU records, as reliable evidence of organisational activities.

12.2 No records shall be removed from hardcopy archive files without the explicit permission of the Chief of Administrative Services or the Officer in Charge of records at organs and autonomous offices. Records placed on files shall not be edited or altered in any way.

12.3 Should evidence be obtained of tampering with records, the staff member involved shall be subject to disciplinary action.

12.4 The AU shall use systems that ensure that its electronic records are:

- authentic;
- not altered or tampered with;



- auditable; and
- produced in systems that utilize security measures to ensure their integrity and readability in the long term

13. Monitoring and review


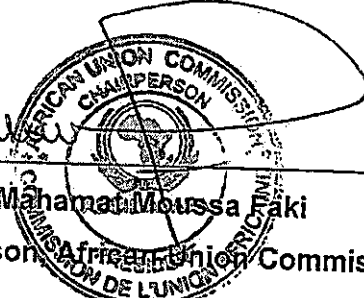
13.1 The Chief of Administrative Services and the Archivist, in consultation with the Head of Administration and Facilities Management and working with other stakeholders when necessary, shall review the records management practices of the AU regularly and adapt them appropriately to ensure that they meet the business and service delivery requirements of the AU.

13.2 This policy shall be reviewed every four (4) years or more frequently if needed, and shall be adapted appropriately to ensure that it stays in line with the activities and service of the AU.

14. Entry into force

14.1 This Policy shall enter into force on approval by the Commission and signature by the Chairperson.

Signed on this 07 Day of October 2019



Mahamat Moussa Faki
Chairperson, African Union Commission