

III. Conference services

Meetings services

The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is responsible for providing meetings services, including interpretation, the provision of meeting records and the editing, translation, reproduction and distribution of documents.

General inquiries regarding meetings services may be made to the Meetings Control Section (room S-1537, ext. 3.6540); inquiries regarding documents may be made to Documents Control (room S-1552, ext. 3.6579).

Programme of meetings

The Meetings Servicing Unit prepares daily a programme of meetings for the following day. The programme is printed in the *Journal*, giving the conference rooms and other relevant information concerning the meetings. Queries regarding the schedule of meetings may be addressed to the Meetings Servicing Unit (ext. 3.7348).

Duration of meetings

Normally, morning meetings are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and afternoon meetings from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Owing to the heavy demand for meetings and the limited facilities available, it is essential that meetings should start on time and that the above schedule be respected to the fullest extent possible. Therefore, delegations are urged to be present at the meetings on time. It is also advisable to schedule related meetings consecutively whenever possible to ensure the

maximum utilization of available services. For ease of transition, however, there should be a short gap between unrelated meetings.

Meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States and other informal meetings can be accommodated only if and when services originally earmarked for meetings of charter or mandated bodies are released.

Use of UN electronic equipment

It should be noted that in conference rooms where simultaneous interpretation audio systems are installed, care should be taken in utilizing microphones, channel selectors, voting switches and audio earphones as these are sensitive electronic devices. Delegates and other meeting participants are requested not to place water and/or other liquids on tables or surfaces where spillages might occur and come into contact with these devices and/or other electronic equipment thus causing serious malfunction.

Seating arrangements

The delegation of Malawi has been chosen by lot to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The delegation of Malawi will, therefore, be seated in the front row at the extreme left (the Secretary-General's side of the podium). Delegations of the other Member States will follow in the English alphabetical order of names, in accordance with established practice. The same seating arrangement applies to meetings of the Main Committees.

Copies of the floor plan showing the seating arrangement are available in the Meetings Servicing Unit (room S-B1-02, ext. 3.7348).

Members of delegations are reminded not to take photographs in the General Assembly Hall and to refrain from accepting cellular phone calls at their delegation tables.

Journal

The *Journal of the United Nations* is issued daily on working days in English and French. During the General Assembly it is issued in the six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The *Journal*, which is available on the UN web site, contains:

- (a) A programme of meetings;
- (b) Agendas for individual meetings;
- (c) Summaries of meetings;
- (d) Announcements;
- (e) Daily list of documents issued at Headquarters.

The *Journal* office is located in room S-2370. Queries may be made from 4.30 p.m. onwards at ext. 3.3888.

Interpretation

Statements made in any of the six official languages of the General Assembly are interpreted into the other official languages. In order to ensure quality interpretation of written speeches, it is essential that the delegations provide interpreters with copies of their speeches and speak at a speed that is interpretable. Any representative may also, in keeping with rule 53 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, make a statement in a language other than the official languages. In such cases, the delegation in question must provide either an interpreter or a written text of the statement in one of the official languages. On the basis of this interpretation or written text, which is accepted by the Secretariat as representing the official text of the statement, it will be interpreted into the other official languages by United Nations interpreters. However, the delegation concerned should make available to the United Nations interpreter someone who knows the language in which the statement is to be delivered and the official language into which it has been translated,

to guide the interpreter throughout the translated text and to ensure synchronization between the speaker and the interpreter.

Written translations of statements delivered in official languages

If written texts are provided in more than one official language, delegations should indicate clearly which of these is to be accepted as the official text. When delegations provide a written translation of their statement, they should specify on the first page of that text whether it should be “read out verbatim” or “checked against delivery”.

If delegations wish their translations to be read out verbatim, any deviation from the text on the part of the speaker, including omissions and additions, are unlikely to be reflected in the interpretation.

If delegations believe that the speaker may deviate from the text, they should opt for “check against delivery” and the interpreters will follow the speaker and not the translation. In this case, delegations should be aware that the interpretation heard by the audience will not necessarily correspond to the translation that they may have distributed to the audience and the press before or during the delivery of the statement.

Representatives who take the floor in conference rooms should bear in mind that the microphone before them is inoperative until they have been called upon to speak by the chairman. In order to ensure the best possible recording and interpretation of their speeches, they should speak directly into the microphones and clearly, particularly when giving figures, quotations or highly technical material, and when reading from a prepared text (see also page 35). Extraneous noises, like tapping on the microphone to test if it is working, turning pages or answering cellular phone calls, should also be avoided.

While delegations are increasingly given a time frame in which to deliver their statements, they are

kindly requested to speak at a normal speed* at all times to enable the interpreters to give an accurate and complete rendition of their statements. When statements are delivered as fast as possible in order to comply with the time limit, the quality of the interpretation suffers.

Records of meetings

Meeting records are provided for the plenary meetings of principal organs, for meetings of the Main Committees of the General Assembly and, on a limited and selective basis, for meetings of certain other bodies. Meeting records may take the form either of verbatim records (PVs) or of summary records (SRs). The records are prepared by the Secretariat and are subject to correction by delegations. However, corrections that add to, or alter the sense of, a statement as actually delivered cannot be accepted.

Verbatim records cover the proceedings *in extenso* utilizing interpretations for languages other than the original.

Delegates are advised that if any portion of a written statement is not actually read out, it will not appear in the record of that meeting.

Summary records cover the proceedings in a concise, abbreviated form. They are not intended to include each intervention, or to reproduce statements textually.

The provision of written records (verbatim or summary) for United Nations bodies is regulated by a number of decisions of the General Assembly and other principal organs.

In addition, sound recordings of meetings are made and may be consulted (see page 73).

* For instance, the normal speed in English is 100 to 120 words per minute.

Corrections to meeting records

Corrections to meeting records should bear the signature of a member of the delegation concerned and should be sent or delivered to the following offices: for verbatim records to Chief, Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A; for summary records to Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-0766, Two United Nations Plaza.

Corrections should be indicated in a memorandum and/or inserted in a copy of the record. If no memorandum is sent, the front page of the corrected record should bear the signature and title of an authorized official of the delegation concerned.

Delegations are requested to make sure that, when the corrections are made by hand, they are written clearly and that the place in which they are to be inserted is indicated precisely.

A. Verbatim records

Corrections to verbatim records (PVs) should be limited to errors and omissions in statements as actually delivered, that is, in the original language. When a request is submitted for a correction, a check is made against the sound recording of the relevant speech.

B. Summary records

Corrections to summary records (SRs) should not cover points of style, nor include lengthy additions that would upset the general balance of the summary record.

The text of a speech should not be submitted in lieu of corrections.

Issuance of corrections

Records of United Nations bodies are reissued as corrected only in certain cases. These include records of meetings of the Security Council and plenary meetings of the Economic and Social Council. For other bodies, including the General Assembly and its Main Committees, records are issued only once and approved

corrections are reflected in a single corrigendum issued periodically. Only in cases of serious errors or omissions materially affecting the course of the proceedings may a correction be issued immediately. In the case of verbatim records, such exceptional corrections will be resorted to only to revise errors or omissions in the original language version of a statement. Other language versions would be brought in conformity, if necessary, with the corrected text in the original language.

Prepared texts of speeches

A minimum of 30 copies of the text of speeches to be delivered in plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees should be given in advance to the conference officer in order to help the Secretariat provide the best possible service. Failing this, delegations are urged to provide six copies for interpreters and record-writers *before* the speaker takes the floor. If films or other visual materials are used, copies of the scripts should also be provided.

The electronic version of the text of speeches, preferably as an MS WORD file attachment, should be sent by e-mail to DPI@un.int for posting on the UN web site.

If delegations wish to have the text of speeches distributed to delegations, specialized agencies, observers, interpreters, record-writers and press officers, 300 copies are required. For distribution in the General Assembly Hall, texts should be delivered to the documents counter on the left side of the Hall or to the conference officer.

Distribution of communications and materials

Distribution of communications and materials in the General Assembly Hall from a delegation must be cleared in advance with the General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division (ext. 3.2332 in room S-2925,

or ext. 3.7787). The distribution must be done by the delegation concerned *before* the meeting starts.

Documents facilities

Translation and reproduction of documents

Delegations wishing to submit documents for consideration by a United Nations body should present them to the Secretary-General or to the secretary of the body concerned. The staff of Documents Control is not authorized to accept documents for translation or reproduction directly from delegations.

The categories of documents are as follows:

- (a) The “General” series;
- (b) The “Limited” series, the serial number of which is preceded by the letter L. This series comprises documents of a temporary nature such as draft resolutions and amendments thereto. When such documents are submitted during a meeting and are required urgently, advance versions marked “Provisional” are translated and reproduced immediately by special arrangements and distributed to participants only. Edited texts and revised translations are issued later;
- (c) The “Restricted” series, the serial number of which is preceded by the letter R. This series contains only those documents whose content requires at the time of issuance that they should not be made public;
- (d) Conference room papers or working papers identified by the letters “CRP” or “WP” before the serial number. These are informal papers, in one or more languages, used in the course of a meeting or meetings and distributed only to participants and other interested recipients attending the meetings at which they are discussed.

Distribution of documents

A list of documents distributed at Headquarters is issued daily. Documentation distributed daily to

delegations in accordance with stated requirements will be available for pick-up at the delegations' pick-up area located at the service entrance to the North Lawn complex from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. on weekdays.

The Delegation Station on the concourse level of the Secretariat building (room S-B1-060, ext. 3.7373) is open for secondary requests during working hours on weekdays.

A limited number of copies of documents containing draft proposals for action during the meetings in progress will be available at the documents counter in the conference rooms.

Special requests for distribution arrangements can be made by writing to or by calling the Chief of the Publishing Section (room NL-340, ext. 3.8044 or 3.8062).

Arrangements for automatic distribution should be made by calling ext. 3.7344; secondary requests should be made in person at S-B1-60 or by calling ext. 3.7373.

Only United Nations documents may be distributed during the meetings.

The United Nations official document system (ODS) contains electronic versions in all official languages of all documents issued in New York, Geneva and Vienna. It can be accessed free of charge by all permanent missions to the United Nations and other government offices. Documents stored in the official document system are indexed following the structure of the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS) and can be searched, retrieved for viewing and printing and downloaded.

Information on the official document system can be requested from extensions 3.6587 or 3.3861.