Standard Operating Procedure

Issuance of United Nations Travel Documents

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A globally recognized and trusted travel document in the hands of staff, especially those serving in the most challenging locations, is invaluable to ensure their protection under the relevant United Nations (UN) and Specialized Agencies (SA) Conventions on Privileges and Immunities.

From the launch of the electronic United Nations Laissez-Passer (UNLP or Laissez-Passer) travel document in 2012, to the publishing of this edition of Standard Operating Procedure for the Issuance of United Nations Travel Documents (formerly referred to as the Guide to the Issuance of United Nations Travel Documents or the “Guide”), the officials who carry this UN travel document have seen the number of states allowing visa-free entry for their official travel increase by over 60%. This is due largely to the high quality of the electronic booklets themselves and the supporting issuance process. In the years leading up to the launch of the new document, and in the years since, the United Nations has taken great strides to increase the integrity of the process, in line with international standards and recommended practices applied to national passports. This effort, combined with a greater outreach to Member States and the adherence to industry best practices, has paid countless dividends to enabling the work of the participating entities around the world by facilitating their travel.

The physical and digital security features employed by electronic travel documents, such as the current United Nations Laissez-Passer, and the e-passports issued by over 100 Member States, have made the documents so difficult to forge that the more common practice for those wishing to illegally obtain such a document is to now falsify their identity and apply through legitimate channels. As the number of states allowing visa free entry for holders of the Laissez-Passer grows, so does the incentive for criminals to obtain one. For that reason, the United Nations has been closely following the lead of the e-passport issuing states with the most rigorous programmes to minimise exceptions and other weaknesses in the application process.

In the day-to-day work of administering UN travel documents, the goal is to design effective administrative processes that do not compromise the integrity of the overall programme and adherence to legal standards, essential to preserving the trust of the Member States. This edition of the SOP strives to provide the requisite guidance to achieve that balance at the United Nations.

The United Nations would like to take this opportunity to thank those officials who play a key part in the United Nations travel documents application process, the document holders themselves, the certifying officers and also the supporting administrative staff for their contributions to ensuring this integrity and to the overall success of the programme.

B. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to ensure the United Nations is operating its travel documents programme consistently across the two issuance offices and their client entities, in accordance with internationally accepted standards and best practices.

2. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) publishes the standard on Machine Readable Travel Documents (ICAO Document 9303) to which all Member States issuing travel documents must adhere. This technical document ensures interoperability of travel documents with border control systems. Standing working groups of technical experts from Member States continually gather feedback and monitor new technologies to improve this standard.
3. Through their work improving the technical standard, those same working groups have also gathered best practices on a variety of related administrative processes that impact the quality of the travel documents produced, which directly impacts their acceptability by states for border crossings.

4. Since the last revision of this document in 2012, the International Civil Aviation Organization has issued updates to its technical standard document as well as issued several best practices documents. The most relevant of these best practice documents being “ICAO Guide on Evidence of Identity” and “ICAO Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Document”

5. In addition to improving alignment with the international standards and best practices, some updates to this document seek to clarify a number of recurring administrative questions related to eligibility, as well as streamlining the exceptions procedures in accordance with the delegated authority principals of the Secretary General’s reforms of 2019.

C. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

6. The authority to issue United Nations travel documents to officials of the United Nations and of the Specialized Agencies is based on the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (hereinafter the General Convention) and the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (hereinafter the Specialized Agencies Convention) respectively. Further authority to issue such documents to officials of certain related entities are defined by their respective multilateral instruments conferring privileges and immunities, including the use of the Laissez-Passer, on the entity and its personnel.

7. For the purpose of this document the term ‘entity’ refers to all Departments, Funds, Programmes, Specialized Agencies and other related entities which subscribe to the United Nations travel documents programme.

8. It is considered an international best practice to consolidate the physical production of travel documents to the extent possible, to minimise the transit of blank books/materials and implement a uniform enforcement of policies. In keeping with this practice, while considering the wide geographic distribution of staff and business continuity/disaster recovery needs, the Secretary-General has authorized two Secretariat offices, working in close collaboration, to produce all United Nations travel documents in accordance with the legal instruments and its own administrative policies set out in this SOP. The United Nations Headquarters in New York (UNHQ) and the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) issue United Nations Laissez-Passers, United Nations Certificates and United Nations Family Certificates to officials and other eligible individuals of the United Nations, including its Funds and Programmes, Specialized Agencies and other related entities for the purpose of facilitating official travel. At UNHQ these functions are performed by the Travel Unit of the Travel and Transportation Section, and at the UN Office in Geneva, by the Diplomatic and Client Services team of the Travel and Logistics Unit, Purchase and Transportation Section. United Nations travel documents can only be issued by these offices at UNHQ and UNOG.

9. The Division of Administration (DOA), as part of the Department of Operational Support (DOS) at UNHQ, has the overall responsibility of monitoring and administering the issuance of these documents. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Operational Support has been delegated by the Secretary-General as the official signatory for all UN Laissez-Passers. DOS further retains the overall responsibility for the policy aspects governing their issuance and use, including this SOP.
D. PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF UNITED NATIONS LAISSEZ-PASSER (UNLP)

10. The Laissez-Passer is the official travel document issued to officials who are required to travel internationally on official business.

D.1. Variants

11. There are, in general terms, two series of Laissez-Passers issued by the United Nations:

11.1. Laissez-Passers for officials of the United Nations and other entities pursuant to the General Convention.

11.2. Laissez-Passers for officials of Specialized Agencies, pursuant to the Specialized Agencies Convention.

12. Laissez-Passers issued to officials of certain related entities pursuant to their own multilateral instrument conferring privileges and immunities and agreements with the United Nations in that regard, may normally contain one or more inserts, identifying the holder as an official of such entity and identifying the source and nature of the privileges and immunities the holder enjoys in that capacity.

13. The security print design of each series is identical. The only distinction between books of each series will be found in the pre-printed texts on the relevant interior pages referencing the legal instrument governing the issuance of the Laissez-Passer and the related privileges and immunities to which the bearer is entitled.

D.2. Use

14. The General Convention and Specialized Agencies Convention provide for the issuance of the Laissez-Passer as an official travel document. It identifies the bearer as an official of the United Nations or related entity or of a Specialized Agency. The Laissez-Passer is issued for use only in connection with international official travel, that is, travel paid for or authorized by the respective entity.

15. As an official travel document, the Laissez-Passer should not be used for personal affairs, such as personal travel, banking, requesting tax exemptions, etc. except when required as a result of Member State regulations providing for the use of the Laissez-Passer for residency or identification purposes as described in para. 19 below.

16. The Laissez-Passer does not replace a national passport, but rather complements it and both documents should always be valid (not expired) and carried together when on official travel.

17. The Laissez-Passer must be presented at border crossings when on official travel to signal to immigration officials that the nature of the visit is official and that the holder of the Laissez-Passer is entitled to the privileges and immunities provided for either under the General Convention or the Specialized Agencies Convention, or any other applicable instrument.

D.3. Visas

18. Visas may only be placed in the Laissez-Passer when required for official travel as defined in para. 14 above.
19. Subject to host country requirements, residence visas/permits shall be requested to be placed in the official’s national passport. This minimises the need to present the Laissez-Passer to demonstrate legal entry and exit in connection with non-official travel.

20. The Laissez-Passer must not be presented to national authorities in connection with a request for visa free entry, or other special considerations related to non-official travel except when required by Member State regulations. In such circumstances, where required to present the Laissez-Passer when engaging in non-official travel, the official should be explicit in dealing with border officials that the purpose of the trip is not official and also present their national passport.

21. Visa requirements must always be confirmed with local visa offices well in advance of official travel.

D.4. Eligibility

22. To be eligible to receive a Laissez-Passer, applicants must be an “official” of the United Nations or related entity or of a Specialized Agency. An individual is considered to be an “official” of the United Nations or related entity if given a letter of appointment under the Organization’s staff rules and regulations or are otherwise identified as such by the Secretary-General for the purposes of Section 17 of the General Convention. Under Article VI, Section 18 of the Specialized Agencies Convention, each Specialized Agency is to designate the categories of officials who are eligible to receive a Laissez-Passer and to communicate them in writing to the United Nations.

23. Because eligibility is defined by the international legal instruments under whose authority Laissez-Passers are issued, and is not a matter of administrative discretion, any request for a Laissez-Passer for an individual that does not fall under the category of an “official”, cannot be granted.

24. Officials may be eligible to be issued a Laissez-Passer if the following conditions are met:
   
   24.1. The official is required to travel internationally to perform their official duties, and
   24.2. The official does not already hold an active Laissez-Passer.

25. If the official is holding an active Laissez-Passer, the criteria for eligibility for either a duplicate Laissez-Passer or the re-issuance of a Laissez-Passer described in sections D.15 and D.16 below must be met.

D.5. Persons not entitled to a Laissez-Passer

26. The following are some of the categories of persons employed by, or affiliated with, the United Nations who are not legally considered an official and therefore not entitled to receive a Laissez-Passer:

   26.1. Goodwill Ambassadors
   26.2. Messengers of Peace
   26.3. Consultants of United Nations departments, Funds and Programmes
   26.4. Experts, Individual and Institutional Contractors
   26.5. UN Volunteers
   26.6. Interns

27. However, if they meet eligibility criteria as set out in section E.2 below some of the above categories of persons may be issued a United Nations certificate.
D.6. Types of Laissez-Passers

28. For each series of Laissez-Passers, there are two types of Laissez-Passers as defined by the colour of their covers: blue or red.

29. The position and grade level of applicants determines the eligibility for a blue or red Laissez-Passer.

30. Red Laissez-Passers are issued to officials at the rank of Senior Director (D-2) and higher, as defined by the International Civil Service Commission. Officials at the rank of director (D-1) or at a minimum rank of professional grade five (P-5), may exceptionally be issued red Laissez-Passers without insert under the conditions set forth in section D.9 below.

31. All other officials are issued blue Laissez-Passers.

D.7. Red Laissez-Passers

32. The General Convention and Specialized Agencies Convention envisage that certain senior officials of the Organization are to be accorded diplomatic privileges and immunities and diplomatic facilities when travelling on the business of the United Nations. At the United Nations, related entities and Specialized Agencies, applying the International Civil Service Commission common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service, red Laissez-Passers are issued to officials at the following levels to indicate this distinction:

   32.1. Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and officials of equivalent rank;
   32.2. Senior Directors (D-2).

33. Inserts describing the appropriate level and privileges and immunities, including diplomatic facilities, that ought to be accorded to the holder of the document and the legal basis for it with reference to the applicable instrument are included in the red Laissez-Passer at the time of issuance. These inserts are further described in section D.8 below.

34. Red Laissez-Passers are issued to officials of those Specialized Agencies not subscribing to the International Civil Service Commission common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service in accordance with pre-defined levels that meet the criteria specified in the Specialized Agencies Convention. These job categories are listed in Annex C and Annex D of this document. The annexes may be updated based on information provided by the respective Specialized Agencies.

D.8. Privileges and Immunities

35. Red Laissez-Passers issued to officials entitled to full diplomatic privileges and immunities under Section 19 of Article V of the General Convention as described in para 32.1 above contain an insert with the following statement:

   "DIPLOMATIC"

   "The bearer of this Laissez-Passer is entitled, under section 19 of Article V of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations to the privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities accorded to diplomatic envoys in accordance with international law".

36. Red Laissez-Passers issued to senior directors (D-2) entitled to diplomatic facilities when travelling on the business of the United Nations as described in para. 32.2 above contain an insert with the following statement:
“Diplomatic Facilities”

“The bearer of this Laissez-Passer is a Director and under section 27, Article VII, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations is entitled, when travelling on the business of the United Nations, to the same facilities as are accorded to diplomatic envoys”.

37. Executive Heads of Specialized Agencies, including any official acting on their behalf during their absence from duty, and those senior officials specifically mentioned in the Annexes to the Specialized Agencies Convention to whom privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities are ascribed under Section 21 of Article VI as described in Annex C para. 1 and Annex D para. 1 receive red Laissez-Passers containing the following insert:

“DIPLOMATIC”

“The bearer of this Laissez-Passer is entitled, under section 21 of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, to the privileges and immunities, exemptions and facilities accorded to diplomatic envoys in accordance with international law”.

38. Deputy or Assistant Executive Heads or Directors and other officials of equivalent rank as described in Annex C para. 2 and Annex D para. 2, other than those referred to in para. 37 above entitled to limited diplomatic facilities under the Specialized Agencies Convention when travelling on the business of the Specialized Agency, receive red Laissez-Passers containing the following insert:

“Diplomatic Facilities”

“The bearer of this Laissez-Passer is entitled under section 30 of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, when travelling on the business of the Specialized Agency, to the same facilities as are accorded to diplomatic envoys.”

39. Red Laissez-Passers exceptionally issued to officials who do not fall into the categories described in paras. 35, 36, 37, or 38 above under the conditions set forth in section D.9 below do not contain any inserts because those officials are not entitled to the diplomatic privileges and immunities or diplomatic facilities accorded to the categories of senior officials referred to above.

40. Specific inserts may be produced and attached to Laissez-Passers for the purpose of making reference to the legal instrument conferring privileges and immunities to the officials of a related entity as per section C para. 6 above.

D.9. Red Laissez-Passers Without Insert

41. Red Laissez-Passers, with no specific insert describing the diplomatic privileges and immunities or diplomatic facilities accorded to the categories of senior officials as described in section D.8 above, may be issued on an exceptional basis to officials at the rank of director (D-1) or at the minimum professional P-5 level. These officials must meet the following requirements:

41.1. The official is performing functions at a level equivalent to that of officials at the rank of director (D-2), or above, and;

41.2. The use of a blue Laissez-Passer would entirely halt a mission or endanger staff.

42. Each request for a red Laissez-Passer without insert as specified in para. 41 above must be made by official memo from the head of the requesting entity (i.e. Heads of Departments of the United Nations or Directors-General of Specialized Agencies, Executive Heads of other entities and Registrars of the International Court of Justice and International Tribunals) to the Under-Secretary-
General of the Department of Operational Support. The requesting memo must clearly, and specifically, attest to how both of the above criteria are met for the individual request.

43. Due to the exceptional basis on which such documents are issued, requests for a Red Laissez-Passer without insert endorsed by a lower ranking official than that specified in para. 42 above will not be considered.

44. Given the nature of these exceptional requests and the specificity required to attest to the particular duties and security conditions, requests must be made per individual. “Blanket” exceptions for entire duty stations or regions cannot be considered. Similarly, a positively considered exceptional request for one individual/case, will not be considered as a precedent for future requests and each request will be assessed individually against the criteria referred to.

45. When requests for red Laissez-Passers without inserts are granted, it is the responsibility of the requesting office to ensure that the officials who carry these documents are fully aware that, despite their appearance, these documents do not entitle them to the diplomatic privileges and immunities, or diplomatic facilities accorded to the categories of senior officials as described in section D.7 above.

D.10. Withdrawal of red Laissez-Passers without inserts

46. Red Laissez-Passers issued on an exceptional basis to officials under conditions described in section D.9 above must be withdrawn and cancelled as soon as the bearer completes the designated assignment for which the issuance of a red Laissez-Passer was authorized. Should the official be expected to resume these duties within a year of completion of the designated assignment, the administering office may request that the Laissez-Passer be placed in safekeeping at one of the two issuance offices. A new Laissez-Passer can only be issued to such officials after cancellation or safekeeping of the red Laissez-Passer without insert.

D.11. Blue Laissez-Passers

47. Unless an official is eligible for a red Laissez-Passer under the above provisions, the official is issued a blue Laissez-Passer for use on official travel.

D.12. Application

48. The information submitted by the applicant must be protected during the entire issuance process and also after the travel document is issued. Privacy and protection of data are essential elements in ensuring the security of the travel document issuance process. Offices processing requests for Laissez-Passers should have in place suitable access control systems to ensure that only current members of those offices will have access to the offices and the physical and electronic data held by those offices.

49. An application for the issuance of a Laissez-Passer, complete with one recent passport size photograph (see Annex A for specifications) should be prepared and signed by the official on an “Application for Issuance of United Nations Laissez-Passer” (form TTS.2). The application must be endorsed by the authorized certifying official at the centralized UN travel documents administrative office (further described in para. 54 below) for the requesting entity, confirming the following:

49.1. the applicant is currently an official who is eligible to hold a Laissez-Passer;
49.2. the data was verified and is correct;
49.3. the submitted photo is of the applicant, recent and within standards, as per Annex A.
The original signed application form and photo should then be submitted to the designated issuing offices in UNHQ or UNOG. See Annex B.

A copy of the data page of officials’ valid passport issued by the government of their official nationality, as recognized by their respective entity, shall be affixed to each application for a new Laissez-Passer. As the Laissez-Passer is to be used in conjunction with the national passport, the data of the two documents must be consistent. Similarly, any paper or electronic documentation supporting an applicant’s employment status, identity or travel plans must match the relevant identity data of the official’s national passport. Any discrepancies may result in rejected Laissez-Passer applications and/or difficulties at border crossing stations.

The data page of all passports compliant with international standards for travel documents contains the bearer’s personal details in a human readable format at the top section called the visual zone (VIZ), and copy of this same data in an encoded, optically machine-readable format at the bottom section called the machine-readable zone (MRZ). When there is a discrepancy between the VIZ section and the MRZ section, the MRZ will be used as the basis for the personal details encoded in both the VIZ and the MRZ of the Laissez-Passer. When the official national passport is not compliant with these international standards, the issuance office will determine the best personal details to include on the Laissez-Passer, on a case-by-case basis, in order to minimise the risk to the bearer while travelling. To comply with these international standards, the Laissez-Passer issuance software is restricted to only one data set. Therefore, Laissez-Passers cannot contain different information in the VIZ and the MRZ (unlike some non-international standards compliant national passports of Member States).

The issuing offices may request additional documentation to confirm or clarify eligibility or personal identity details as needed.

**Certification Process**

Individual entities are expected to designate one central physical travel documents administration office (referred to henceforth as the requesting office). This office is typically located at the headquarters location of the entity. Alternatively, the entity may designate one regional location to perform this function for the entire entity instead. All requests for UN travel documents on behalf of an entity must be routed through the requesting office for certification. This ensures uniform application of eligibility checks and minimizes the opportunity for duplicate certified applications for the same individual being submitted to the issuance offices. Each requesting office is assigned to one of the two issuance offices at UNHQ or UNOG. These assignments are mostly determined by the respective entity’s geographical location of the requesting office and are listed in Annex B of this document.

Heads of Departments of the United Nations or Directors-General of Specialized Agencies, Executive Heads of other entities and Registrars of the International Court of Justice and International Tribunals have the authority to certify applications for the issuance of both red and blue Laissez-Passers, United Nations Certificates and Family Certificates. They may, in turn, delegate this authority to other officials as appropriate. To streamline operations, these officials may assign one individual in their entity at a time, who can delegate this certifying authority on their behalf.

The number of certifying officers should in all cases be limited to the absolute minimum in order to maintain the integrity of the application process. All certifying officers are expected to be fully conversant with these guidelines and adhere to the standards in order to protect the integrity of United Nations travel documents across the Common System and to uphold its status as official travel document with Member States.
57. Authority to request the issuance of United Nations travel documents may not be delegated to consultants and other non-staff members.

58. The delegation of certifying authority (DoA) must be communicated to the respective issuance office and sample signatures of all authorised signatories must be provided by submission of original (no copies or scans) form P.86/Travel “Delegation of Authority for UN Travel Documents” (DoA form).

59. By signing the DoA form, certifying officers acknowledge their responsibility to provide accurate and complete UN travel document application forms to the issuing office. By signing each travel document application, they certify that the applicant meets eligibility requirements as described in section D.4 above and all required information and documents (recent photograph, copy of biodata page of national passports, active current travel documents returned, chargeback information) are complete and accurate. All entities are provided with regular reports of Laissez-Passers held by officials of their entity through a secure portal as described in para. 75 below. Those entities which use Umoja should note that the distribution and cancellation of Laissez-Passers are also synched to the “Personal IDs” section of the HR profile of officials directly from the central Laissez-Passer system. Certifying officers should use these tools to verify that the applicant has no outstanding Laissez-Passers before endorsing the application for a new one.

60. Designated certifying officers will be held accountable for any misuse or abuse or negligence of the delegated certifying authority. In extreme cases of misuse or abuse or negligence of this authority, the Division of Administration may revoke the delegated authority of individual officers.

61. Delegation of certifying authority may be granted for the duration of the official’s appointment but may not exceed five years. It can subsequently be renewed.

62. DoA is not transferrable and it ceases to be active when officers are assigned different responsibilities or move to another entity or department. It is the delegating officers’ responsibility to notify the respective issuing office of the termination of delegated authority of individual officers. Failure to do so may result in delays to delegate authority to the successor of the departing certifying officers. DoA may subsequently be reactivated through the officers’ new entity or department by submission of a new P.86/Travel form.

63. Applications for Laissez-Passers for officials who are serving at offices away from headquarters, must be routed through and certified by an authorized certifying officer of the respective entity’s travel documents requesting office.

64. When travel document applications need to be routed from field offices to the central travel document requesting office of an entity, it is strongly recommended that the above method of delegating authority to trained and known officials is replicated at each field office internally within those entities. This allows the designated central certifying officers to trace the applications received from field offices and provides them with confidence that applications meet the required standards before endorsing them.

D.14. Validity

65. Laissez-Passers are issued for use only on official travel during a period of employment. The fixed validity of a Laissez-Passer is five years. Even after a Laissez-Passer has expired or contains no blank pages for visa insertions, it remains active and has the potential for misuse and must therefore promptly be returned to one of the issuing offices for formal cancellation, even if no replacement Laissez-Passer is required.
D.15. Duplicate Laissez-Passers

66. At any given time, an official may only hold one Laissez-Passer. A duplicate Laissez-Passer may be issued, however, only to officials who need to travel between countries that do not allow entry if the original Laissez-Passer contains visas and/or other entry markings of certain other countries. The duplicate Laissez-Passer must be clearly marked as “Duplicate” (the Laissez-Passer number is suffixed by the letter “D”). The reason for requesting a duplicate Laissez-Passer must clearly be explained on the application form or by attached supporting documentation.

D.16. Re-issuance

67. Officials who are holding an active Laissez-Passer, even if it has expired, must meet the following criteria to be eligible to be issued a new Laissez-Passer: The Laissez-Passer they are holding

67.1. contains inaccurate information in any of the following fields:
    • Name
    • Date of Birth
    • Index Number
    • Gender
    • United Nations, Specialized Agency or related entity designation; or
67.2. has expired or will expire within six months of the application; or
67.3. has less than five blank visa pages; and
67.4. the other requirements to be issued a new Laissez-Passer as described in section D.4 above are met.

68. Unless conditions described in section D.17 below are met, the active Laissez-Passer must be surrendered for cancellation along with the application for a new Laissez-Passer.

D.17. Procedure for countries in which the United Nations Department of Safety and Security has determined that a security condition exists

69. In the case that officials are eligible for a new Laissez-Passer under the conditions described in section D.16 above, and they are assigned to a duty station where security conditions require them to have access to a valid Laissez-Passer at all times, their current Laissez-Passer may be retained while a new one is being issued. The old Laissez-Passer must be submitted through the respective entity’s requesting office to their designated issuance office (UNHQ or UNOG) for physical cancellation immediately upon receipt of the newly issued Laissez-Passer, but no later than 30 days after receipt by the holder.

70. Failure to return Laissez-Passers replaced under this provision will result in difficulties and delays for the holder to obtain another UN travel document in the future.

71. The application for a new Laissez-Passer is submitted to the issuing offices in accordance with section D.12 above.

72. The requesting offices have the responsibility to keep records of all active (valid and expired) Laissez-Passers issued to their officials for auditing purposes.

73. Requesting offices will be issued regular reports on outstanding and replaced Laissez-Passers as part of their inventory reconciliation package as described in para. 75 below. If an office has outstanding and replaced documents over three reporting cycles, the office may be suspended.
from the Laissez-Passer programme until the outstanding documents are either returned or reported lost or stolen as described in section D.21 below.

D.18. Inventory Governance

74. Tight controls of the safety and security of the Laissez-Passer from issuance through cancellation has a direct impact on the international respect and acceptance accorded to the document. In this regard, the integrity of Laissez-Passer accounting is paramount.

75. Each entity’s requesting office shall be held responsible for all Laissez-Passer documents requested, received and returned by their office. To support this process, the Division of Administration regularly provides inventory reconciliation reports to the authorized certifying officers of requesting offices through a secure portal. If required, these reports may also be requested between publishing cycles through the issuance offices.

76. Issuance offices will only release Laissez-Passers to the requesting office, or directly to the legitimate bearer of the travel document in person and will not ship or mail Laissez-Passers to any individual official's home address.

77. Requesting offices must ensure that Laissez-Passers released to them by the issuance office are collected by the legitimate bearer of the travel document and the official should be asked to sign a new Laissez-Passer in front of a certifying officer.

D.19. Safekeeping

78. Issuing officials must ensure that blank booklets as well as personalized Laissez-Passers are contained in a secure facility such as a vault or a safe with access limited to authorized individuals.

79. Each issuing office shall maintain a central safekeeping facility to hold personalized Laissez-Passers. Requesting offices or the Laissez-Passer holder may return active Laissez-Passers to the issuing offices for safekeeping by submitting form TTS.7 if they anticipate the holder to return to active duty within one calendar year after separation.

80. Individual entities are advised to require While Actually Employed (WAE) officials and officials on appointments with nominal remuneration to return their Laissez-Passer for centrally organized safekeeping upon completion of official travel.

81. Officials entering into special leave with or without pay (SLWOP) must submit their Laissez-Passer to their administrative offices and possible onforwarding to one of the issuing offices for safekeeping. These documents shall be returned to the officials when they resume their active duties. Officials entering into SLWOP who hold a residency visa in the Laissez-Passer under conditions described in para. 19 above, should consult their local visa and human resources offices for the correct handling of those visas while in SLWOP status.

82. Field offices and other offices away from headquarters are advised to designate at least one official to oversee the local administration of safekeeping facilities.

83. Issuing offices reserve the right to cancel and destroy any documents that expired while in centralized safekeeping or have not been retrieved after one year.

84. Where frequent travellers are allowed to keep their Laissez-Passer, they must be made aware of the value of the document and that it should be given the same attention as their national passport. They should also be advised that the Laissez-Passer remains the property of the United Nations until it is formally cancelled and rendered invalid by one of the issuing offices.
D.20. Cancellation of a Laissez-Passers upon separation

85. Because the Laissez-Passer is an asset of the United Nations and not the property of the holder, all Laissez-Passers must be returned for cancellation by separating officials through their requesting office. This includes all Laissez-Passers that have expired or have no blank pages for visa insertions. The requesting office will submit these documents to one of the issuing offices for physical cancellation to render them invalid.

86. If requested at time of surrender, the Laissez-Passer may be returned to the (former) official after cancellation. Cancelled Laissez-Passers will be distributed through the same channels as newly issued Laissez-Passers as described in para. 76 above. Any cancelled Laissez-Passer that was requested to be returned but was not retrieved from the issuance office after 4 weeks may be destroyed without prior notification to the former holder or the requesting office.

87. It is strongly recommended that final payment/remuneration be withheld from separating officials until all of their Laissez-Passers are returned for formal cancellation.

88. All entities which use Umoja should note that the distribution and cancellation of Laissez-Passers are synched to the “personal IDs” section of the HR profile of officials directly from the central Laissez-Passer system. Umoja should be consulted for outstanding Laissez-Passers as part of standard check-out procedures for separating officials.

89. Each entity will be held responsible to ensure the return of all Laissez-Passers issued to its officials. Lists of active Laissez-Passers are regularly made available, as described in para. 75 above, to support requesting offices in this obligation. Penalties and/or suspension of issuance of Laissez-Passers to officials of the entity may be applied should it become apparent that the retrieval of Laissez-Passers of separating officials is not adequately enforced.

90. Officials who transfer from one United Nations entity to another or are seconded to another entity can retain their Laissez-Passer without prior cancellation provided that:

   90.1. the break in service is equal to or less than 30 days and
   90.2. the index number remains the same and
   90.3. they remain in travel status to perform their duties.

91. All entities which do not use Umoja, must notify one of the issuing offices in writing of the transfer of the official to another entity to ensure uninterrupted tracking of the Laissez-Passer.

92. It is the obligation of the requesting office to submit an incident report to the issuance office for any Laissez-Passers not surrendered by separating officials within 30 days of their separation, unless such officials were allowed to retain the Laissez-Passer in accordance with para. 90 above. Procedures for reporting a loss or theft are further described in section D.21 below.

93. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for the issuing office to hold the Laissez-Passer of a separating official for safekeeping rather than cancellation. This will be decided at the discretion of the issuing office. Certifying officials submitting Laissez-Passers to the issuing office for cancellation shall make it known if the official is likely to return to service within the validity period of the Laissez-Passer by sending the TTS.7 form along with the returned LP.

94. All Laissez-Passers returned to issuance offices for cancellation that are not accompanied by a certified new issuance request, should be submitted with a UN Laissez-Passer Return form (TTS.7) to indicate preferences for safekeeping, return of the cancelled Laissez-Passer or its destruction. Laissez-Passers returned to issuance offices without an accompanying form will be destroyed at the discretion of the issuance office.
95. The Laissez-Passer is an asset of the United Nations and does not belong to the holder. It is provided to travellers solely for the purpose to perform their duties. The attention of holders of Laissez-Passers should be drawn to the importance of this document so that all possible care is taken to prevent its loss or theft. The loss of any travel document should be thoroughly investigated and should be reported to the issuing offices and the Department of Safety and Security at Headquarters for appropriate action, including report of the loss to INTERPOL. If loss or theft occurs, the holder should be advised to take the following steps immediately:

95.1. Report a stolen Laissez-Passer to the local police authorities and obtain an official police report. Follow-up with the local police authorities to the extent possible in an effort to trace the missing Laissez-Passer.

95.2. Report a lost or stolen Laissez-Passer to the local United Nations Security office and obtain an incident report explaining the circumstances of the loss/theft, indicating the number of the document, date of issue, where and when the document was lost/stolen, the circumstances under which it was lost/stolen and the action taken by the official to trace the document.

95.3. Submit the incident report and any locally filed police report, along with an English or French language translation where applicable, to one of the issuance offices through their requesting office for reporting to INTERPOL. If needed, an application for a new Laissez-Passer may be submitted along with the incident and police report.

95.4. Advise the issuing offices immediately if the Laissez-Passer is found.

95.5. Holders should never attempt to use a Laissez-Passer that was found after it was reported as lost or stolen.

96. Once the Laissez-Passer was reported lost or stolen, it must be declared invalid for travel and be immediately deactivated in the database. If the Laissez-Passer is subsequently found, it must be returned to the issuing office for physical cancellation. Individuals travelling on a Laissez-Passer that was previously reported lost or stolen risk delays and possible detention at border crossings.

97. Certifying officers shall inform officials of their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding the travel document they hold and the possible consequences for loss or theft of the document.

98. After three lost Laissez-Passer reports, the charge to the requesting office for subsequent Laissez-Passers issued to that individual shall be twice the normal rate.

D.22. Abuse of Laissez-Passers

99. The Laissez-Passer is the property of the United Nations. It is a valuable document and it must not be altered or mutilated in any manner. No amendments, additions, stamps or statements shall be placed therein unless authenticated by officials of governments in connection with official matters.

E. PROCEDURES FOR UNITED NATIONS CERTIFICATES (UNC)

E.1. Use

100. The United Nations Certificate is not a legal travel document but serves to certify that the holder is travelling on official business on behalf of the United Nations or related entity or Specialized Agency. UN Certificates may only be used in combination with a valid national passport, issued by
the government of the applicant’s official UN or related entity or Specialized Agency recorded nationality.

E.2. Eligibility

101. UN Certificates are issued to individuals who are designated as experts on mission for the United Nations in accordance with Section 22 of the General Convention or other persons who are travelling on the business of the Organization in accordance with Section 26 of the General Convention and with respect to other entities in accordance with their applicable instruments on privileges and immunities.

E.3. Application

102. The “Application for United Nations Certificate”, electronic form PT.64, must be duly completed, printed and signed by the applicant and certified by the appropriate certifying officer in the same manner as Laissez-Passers, as described in section D.12 above. After certification it is submitted to one of the respective issuing offices in UNHQ or UNOG together with the following supporting documentation:

102.1. One recent quality passport size photograph in accordance with the photo guidelines described in Annex A and
102.2. a copy of the data page of the valid national passport, issued by the government of the official UN or related entity or Specialized Agency recorded nationality and
102.3. a copy of the applicant’s service agreement, appointment letter or other appropriate documentation establishing eligibility.

103. Because the UN Certificate accompanies the holder’s national passport, the data of both documents must match. The UN Certificate will reflect the holder’s first, middle and last names as they are reflected in the national passport’s MRZ.

104. The issuing offices may request additional documentation to confirm or clarify eligibility or personal identity details as needed.

E.4. Validity

105. UN Certificates may be issued for the duration of the applicants’ service agreements or duration of their mission for a period not to exceed five years or the expiry date of the applicant’s national passport. If required for official travel purposes, a UN Certificate may be issued with a validity of six months beyond the expiration of the applicants’ service agreement at the discretion of the issuance office. UN Certificates are not renewable. When the eligibility period of the holder is extended beyond the validity of the UN Certificate, a new one may be requested, by submission of a new application form along with the expired UN Certificate for cancellation.

E.5. Cancellation

106. It is essential that ALL (valid and expired) UN Certificates are returned to the issuing offices at UNHQ or UNOG for physical cancellation prior to separation from the Organization.
F. PROCEDURE FOR UNITED NATIONS FAMILY CERTIFICATES (UNFC)

F.1. Use

107. The UN Family Certificate serves to identify the bearer as a recognized spouse or dependent child (up to the age of 21 years old) of the official of the United Nations or related entity or Specialized Agency named therein. It is not an official travel document although it is sometimes accepted for visa purposes. UN Family Certificates may only be used in combination with a valid national passport, issued by the government of the applicant’s official UN or related entity or Specialized Agency recorded nationality.

108. The purpose of the UN Family Certificate is to facilitate the official travel of eligible family members in an area where undue hardship could result from the absence of an official United Nations identification document. Supporting documentation of such hardship shall be submitted with each application for a UN Family Certificate.

109. Some countries have preferred to grant visas on the UN Family Certificate rather than on a national passport. This has occurred, for example, when a country has no established diplomatic relations with the issuing country of the bearer’s national passport.

F.2. Eligibility

110. A UN Family Certificate may be issued to the official’s immediate family members, such as a dependent spouse and/or eligible children (up to age 21) provided that:

   110.1. the official has a valid Laissez-Passer
   110.2. the spouse or dependent child is officially recognised as such by the UN or related entity or Specialized Agency of the official
   110.3. the journey is being made at the expense of the respective entity; and
   110.4. the absence of such document may restrict freedom of movement in connection with authorized travel. Supporting documentation of such hardship shall be submitted with each application for a UN Family Certificate.

F.3. Application

111. An official whose circumstances warrant the issuance of a UN Family Certificate should submit an “Application for United Nations Family Certificate” (Form PT.39) to the designated travel document certifying officer in the same manner as Laissez-Passers, as described in section D.12 above. It is the responsibility of the certifying officer to carefully review the circumstances of the request before certifying the application. The duly completed, printed and signed application form shall be submitted along with the following necessary supporting documentation to the designated issuance office:

   111.1. official travel plans for the family member
   111.2. one recent, quality photograph of the applicant (refer to Annex A)
   111.3. a copy of the family member’s valid national passport issued by the government of the applicant’s official nationality
   111.4. a memo from the official stating the hardship their family members would incur while travelling without a UN Family Certificate.
112. Where an application is made for a UN Family Certificate for two or more members of the same family travelling together but unaccompanied by the official, individual applications and photographs must be submitted for each traveller.

113. The issuing offices may request additional documentation to confirm or clarify eligibility or personal identity details as needed.

F.4. Validity

114. The maximum period of validity of a UN Family Certificate is up to five years. However, it may not exceed the validity of the official’s Laissez-Passer, the expiry date of the applicant’s national passport and/or the duration of the official’s appointment.

F.5. Cancellation

115. Family Certificates are not renewable and when a new one is requested, the previously issued document must be returned for cancellation with the new application.

116. It is essential that ALL (valid and expired) Family Certificates are returned to the issuing offices at UNHQ or UNOG for physical cancellation prior to the official’s separation from the Organization.

G. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

117. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Operational Support is the official signatory for all United Nations travel documents. The Under-Secretary-General is responsible for the policy aspects governing their issuance and use, including this standard operating procedure. As such the Under-Secretary-General retains the authority to grant exceptions to procedures set forth in this document, provided they are not in violation of the legal instruments governing the issuance and use of United Nations Travel Documents.

118. The Division of Administration (DOA), as part of the Department of Operational Support (DOS) at UNHQ, has the overall responsibility of monitoring and administering the issuance of United Nations travel documents.

119. The Issuance Offices issue United Nations travel documents to officials and other eligible individuals of the United Nations, including its Funds and Programmes, Specialized Agencies and other related entities, upon the certified request of those entities. These designated offices are responsible for carrying out these duties in accordance with the relevant legal instruments and its own administrative policies set out in this standard operating procedure.

120. Heads of Departments of the United Nations or Directors-General of Specialized Agencies, Executive Heads of other entities and Registrars of the International Court of Justice and International Tribunals have the overall responsibility to accurately account for and safeguard Laissez-Passers, United Nations Certificates and Family Certificates that have been requested on behalf of their entity. This includes ensuring timely return of United Nations Travel Documents by separating officials, their dependents, as well as consultants.

121. Certifying Officers, as delegated by their head of entity, certify requests for United Nations Travel Documents on behalf of their entity as enumerated in section D.13 above. These delegated officials are responsible to be fully conversant in the procedures set forth in this document.

122. Applicants for United Nations Travel Documents are responsible to provide accurate information and compliant photographs when applying for United Nations Travel Documents.
United Nations Travel Document holders are responsible to safeguard the documents held by themselves and their dependents. They are expected to treat these documents as they would a national passport. Safeguarding documents includes making prompt reports of loss or theft and surrendering the documents to their entity upon separation or upon request.

### H. ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<td>Delegation of Authority</td>
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<td>DOA</td>
<td>Division of Administration</td>
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<td>DOS</td>
<td>Department of Operational Support</td>
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<td>ICAO</td>
<td>International Civil Aviation Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>LP</td>
<td>Laissez -Passer</td>
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<td>MRZ</td>
<td>Machine-Readable Zone</td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>Specialized Agencies</td>
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<td>SLWOP</td>
<td>Special Leave (With or) Without Pay</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNC</td>
<td>United Nations Certificate</td>
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<td>UNFC</td>
<td>United Nations Family Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHQ</td>
<td>United Nations Headquarters in New York</td>
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<td>UNLP</td>
<td>United Nations Laissez -Passer</td>
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<td>UNOG</td>
<td>United Nations office in Geneva</td>
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<td>VIZ</td>
<td>Visual Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAE</td>
<td>While Actually Employed</td>
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<td>WBG</td>
<td>World Bank Group</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entity</td>
<td>All Departments, Funds, Programmes, Specialized Agencies and other related entities which subscribe to the United Nations travel documents programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing Office</td>
<td>Either of the two designated offices where United Nations travel documents can be issued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requesting Office</td>
<td>The designated central travel documents administration office for a particular entity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certifying Officer</td>
<td>An officer at an entity who has been delegated the authority to certify applications for United Nations travel documents by their head of entity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. REFERENCES

124. Normative or superior references:

124.2. Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies
124.3. ICAO Document 9303

125. Related procedures or guidelines:

125.1. ICAO Guide for Assessing Security of Handling and Issuance of Travel Documents
125.2. ICAO TRIP Guide on Evidence of Identity
125.3. ST/IC/2019/16

J. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

126. In their processing of certified applications for United Nations Travel documents, issuance offices may observe instances where the standard operating procedures have not been applied correctly. In such cases the issuance offices will reject the application in question. The issuance office will also communicate the discrepancies to the requesting office so that the application may be resubmitted correctly.

127. If a particular entity has committed a breach of this standard operating procedure (e.g. failure to retrieve United Nations Travel Documents from departing officials, or failure to return replaced Laissez-Passer for more than 6 months, etc.), the head of that entity shall be informed in writing noting the breach, and requesting all efforts be made to rectify the situation as soon as possible.

128. In extreme cases of misuse, abuse or negligence in the certification of applications for United Nations Travel Documents (e.g. certification of verifiable wrong information), the head of that entity shall be informed in writing that the delegated certifying authority of the certifying officer in question is to be revoked.

K. HISTORY

ANNEX A. PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Photographs are a vital part of the application. All photographs submitted with applications for United Nations travel documents must have been taken within six months of the date of the application. Failure to provide photographs that do not comply with these guidelines will result in processing delays. The acceptance of photographs is always at the discretion of the document issuing office.

2. Certifying officers must ensure that the photographs are recent, of the applicant and meet the ICAO standards (as per these guidelines) before the application is forwarded for processing.

3. Photographs must be:
   3.1. In colour
   3.2. Printed on photo quality paper
   3.3. 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) in size
   3.4. Taken within the past 6 months to reflect applicant’s current appearance
   3.5. Taken in front of a plain white background (no shadows may be visible)
   3.6. Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
   3.7. With a neutral facial expression and both eyes open (teeth should not be visible as this will affect the biometric scanning and recognition of the photograph)

4. Subjects must not:
   4.1. Wear hats and other head coverings, unless worn daily for religious purposes (the full face must be visible, and no shadows may be cast on the face)
   4.2. Wear headphones wireless hands-free devices or similar items
   4.3. Wear glasses

5. Photographs will be rejected if they:
   5.1. do not meet above requirements
   5.2. are colour copies
   5.3. are digitally scanned from another document
   5.4. are snapshots, low quality vending machine or mobile phone photos, full-body photographs
   5.5. have visibly been electronically altered

6. It is recommended that all passport photos are taken by professional passport photo services. When photos are taken in private settings, it is almost impossible to achieve the required quality results, unless multiple light sources are used to illuminate the subject. A single flash light will not suffice, to produce sufficient light for a bright, white background and will also cast shadows of the subject.

7. Paper Photo Head Size Template
8. Sample of bad and good quality photo compositions:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAD QUALITY IMAGES</th>
<th>BAD QUALITY IMAGES</th>
<th>GOOD QUALITY IMAGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOO DARK</td>
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[Checkmarks indicating good quality images]
## ANNEX B. CLIENT ENTITIES

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Issuance Office</th>
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<td>Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions</td>
<td>ACABQ</td>
<td>UNHQ</td>
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<td>Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate</td>
<td>CTED</td>
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<td>Department for General Assembly and Conference Affairs</td>
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<td>Department of Operational Support</td>
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ANNEX C. WORLD BANK GROUP

1. The following officials of the World Bank Group (WBG) are eligible to receive red Laissez-Passers, containing an insert in accordance with section D.8 para. 37 of this document:

   1.1. World Bank President (Level L)
   1.2. Executive Vice President, IFC (Level K)
   1.3. Executive Vice President, MIGA (Level K)
   1.4. Director General (Level K)
   1.5. Chief Financial Officer (Level K)
   1.6. Managing Director (Level K)
   1.7. Regional Vice President (Level K)
   1.8. Senior Vice President (Level J)
   1.9. Vice President (Level J)

2. Red Laissez-Passers issued to the following officials contain an insert in accordance with section D.8 para. 38 of this document:

   2.1. Executive Directors, Alternate Executive Directors and Senior Advisors to Executive Directors
   2.2. Staff at Grade Level I
   2.3. Chair, Inspection Panel (Ungraded)
ANNEX D. INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

1. The following officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are eligible to receive red Laissez-Passers, containing an insert in accordance with section D.8 para. 37 of this document:
   
   1.1. Managing Director, Z
   1.2. First Deputy Managing Director, Y

2. Red Laissez-Passers issued to the following officials contain an insert in accordance with section D.8 para. 38 of this document:
   
   2.1. Deputy Managing Directors, X
   2.2. Executive Directors, W
   2.3. Alternate Executive Directors, V

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1 These positions are non-graded. Letters have been assigned with the sole purpose of identifying the individual’s title/function.