

Preparation of Summary Records

I. What are summary records?

- Summary records are official documents constituting the permanent records of the United Nations bodies for which they are authorized. They are intended to provide a clear, concise and accurate picture of the proceedings. **They summarize the views of the speakers and record the decisions taken.** A summary record is not a verbatim record of the proceedings. The names and titles of the speakers are given in the summary records.

II. How are they prepared?

- At UNOG, **90 per cent of summary records are drafted by the English Translation Section (ETS).** For the human rights treaty bodies, the French Translation Section drafts records for meetings at which the State party reports of francophone countries are being considered. Every effort is made to produce a reviser's draft of treaty body summary records within 48 hours of the end of a meeting.
- Teams of **precis-writers draft and revise summary records, listening to the proceedings in the original language** as far as possible in order to ensure that the records are accurate. They verify names, titles, references and information presented by speakers and need to understand the procedures followed by each committee in order to produce records that are coherent and consistent over time. For each of the bodies, ETS has a focal point whose job it is to make sure that relevant information is shared with all parties and any issues are flagged and addressed.
- Precis-writers will leave the room at the end of the normal allotted time for the meeting (with a tolerance for an extra 15 minutes).**
- To work best, sections providing precis-writing services need:**
 - For the **substantive secretariats** to carefully reflect on whether there is a need for SRs for a specific meeting e.g. when no precis writing was requested for a previous session on the same subject;
 - Real time access to written statements and notes in the same way as interpreters do given that speakers often deliver statements at top speed, many times reading from their laptops (**Substantive Secretariats**);
 - Clear information about meeting times, the programme of work and changes to the programme of work. Last-minute changes to the programme of work with unclear or confused communication of new requests should be avoided. Any new information should be communicated to the UNOG Meetings Management Section (MMS) as soon as possible (**Substantive Secretariats through MMS**);
 - A reliable list of speakers' names (**Division of Conference Management, Meeting Room Attendants**);
 - An indication of who to ask about procedural and other matters that may arise in the meeting (**Substantive Secretariats**);
 - Ideally, precis-writers need to be seated in a place where they can see the speakers (**Substantive Secretariats and MMS**);

III. When are SRs processed?

List of bodies entitled to have Summary Records		
Body	Language entitlement	Remarks
Human Rights Council	A,C,E,F,R,S	As of 2008, SR were suspended further an internal agreement between OHCHR Secretariat and DCM. Entitlement remains still valid.
Human Rights Council Advisory Committee	E,F,S	SRs prepared only in 2008. As of 2009, no SRs were requested and prepared. This arrangement falls within the discussions held for the SRs of the HRC. Entitlement remains valid also for this body.
Human Rights Committee (CCPR)	One working language	
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)	One working language	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	One working language	
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	One working language	
Committee against Torture (CAT)	One working language	
The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT)	One working language	
Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	One working language	
Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)	One working language	
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	One working language	
Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)	One working language	
International Law Commission (ILC)	A,C,E,F,R,S	
Conference on Disarmament (CD) - PVs and not SRs	A,C,E,F,R,S	Transcription of PVs prepared by the Secretariat based on audio records
Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) - SRs provided on XB basis	One working language on a reimbursable basis	Other languages on case by case and on reimbursable basis
Convention on certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) - SRs provided on XB basis	One working language on a reimbursable basis	Other languages on case by case and on reimbursable basis
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - Executive Committee only	E,F,S	
United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) - SRs provided on XB basis	A,C,E,F,R,S	
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - Humanitarian Affairs Segment	E,F,S	

IV. Corrections to summary records

What is a correction?

A correction to a summary record concerns errors made in the record regarding, for example, the name of a speaker, an official title, a statistic or a statement made during a meeting. **A correction does not allow for the addition of material not presented during a meeting or for changes to be made**, for example, to the names used intentionally by speakers when referring to disputed territories or countries. The proposed correction will be checked against the sound recording of the meeting before any change can be made. Should a representative not be satisfied with the summary record, then the representative could informally circulate his/her speech or formally have the speech circulated under the appropriate agenda item.

Procedure

How should a correction be submitted?

Corrections should be **set forth in a memorandum (or note verbale)** and incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent **within one week of the date of the record** to the Documents Management Section (*DMS-DCM@un.org*).¹

How will the correction be made?

The Documents Management Section will forward the request to the relevant translation section. The correction will be checked against the sound recording of the meeting to determine whether the record can be changed. If the correction can be made, the proposed corrected text, which may contain edits, will be sent back to the requesting entity for verification. The Documents Management Section will initiate a request for **reissuance for technical reasons**. Thereafter, the corrected record will be uploaded onto ODS and paper copies will be distributed according to the applicable distribution pattern. Copies will be sent to permanent missions.

What if a correction cannot be made?

If for any reason the correction cannot be made, the Chief of the Translation Section handling the request will notify the requesting entity to explain the situation and why the correction cannot be made. The Documents Management Section will be copied on all the correspondence.

Archiving

The Documents Management Section will maintain a list of all requests for corrections to summary records and will follow up with the section concerned to ensure that all requests have been processed. It will also inform the translation sections if corrections to an original summary record require the reissuance and correction of a translation of the same record.

¹ A separate process is in place for records of the International Law Commission and the Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission.

Footnotes

The following footnotes will appear on the cover page of the summary records:

Public meetings

English

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@unog.ch).

*Any corrected records of the public **meetings** of the [Committee] at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.*

French

Le présent compte rendu est sujet à rectifications. Les rectifications doivent être présentées dans un mémorandum, portées sur un exemplaire du présent compte rendu et adressées, une semaine au plus tard à compter de la date du présent document, à la Section de la gestion des documents (DMS-DCM@unog.ch).

Les comptes rendus qui ont été rectifiés feront l'objet de nouveaux tirages pour raisons techniques à l'issue de la session.

Private/closed meetings

English

This record is subject to correction. Participants wishing to submit corrections during the session of the [Committee] are asked to provide them, in typewritten form, to the Secretary of the [Committee].

*Any corrected records of the closed **meetings** of the [Committee] at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.*

French

Le présent compte rendu est sujet à rectifications. Les participants qui souhaitent soumettre des rectifications pendant la session sont priés de les présenter sous forme dactylographiée au Secrétaire [du Comité].

Les comptes rendus qui ont été rectifiés feront l'objet de nouveaux tirages pour raisons techniques à l'issue de la session.

Disclaimer concerning simultaneous interpretation

The simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings, including Closed Captioning, is provided by the United Nations with the purpose of facilitating communication, in light of the fact that there are six official languages of the United Nations. Only the speech or intervention in the original language is authentic and constitutes an authentic record of the proceedings. In case of any inconsistency between the interpretation and the speech or intervention in the original language, the latter shall prevail.

Rule 53 of the GA rules of procedure

"Any representative may make a speech in a language other than the languages of the General Assembly. In this case, he shall himself provide for interpretation into one of the languages of the General Assembly or of the committee concerned. Interpretation into the other languages of the General Assembly or of the committee concerned by the interpreters of the Secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first such language."

Pursuant to this rule, it is the responsibility of the representative who is making a speech in a language other than the languages of the General Assembly to provide for interpretation into one of the official languages of the United Nations. Interpretation by the interpreters "may be based on the interpretation given in the first such language." It is thus the responsibility of the representative to provide for proper interpretation.