

THE UN'S OFFICIAL VERSIONS

As emphasized in the introductory material, this IOWatch archive seeks to present alternative views, information, critiques, and perspectives on the largest international organization, the UN, as a basis for better understanding it and also the UN system and other international organizations at large. Whereas the UN's official publications and media products focus on noble goals, good intentions, and the many, many activities underway, IOWatch's excerpted sources concentrate instead on implementation, performance, and results -- that is, on establishing accountability and transparency as a base for serious reform actions to move toward a much more effective UN.

For those who want to dip their toes in the flood of information which the UN publishes, much of which is now online, IOWatch offers the following search suggestions which might help you better find information on the enormous volume and complexities of the offerings of the UN, its programmes, and the UN system as a whole..

1. The **UN Web Site** is found at www.un.org . Among some of the main features are:
 - "About the UN" provides a basic overview.
 - "Secretary-General" contains much information about Mr. Annan's activities and speeches.
 - The five major themes of UN activity, as outlined by the Charter, are presented in the second text bar across the top of the page.
 - "Issues on the UN agenda" discusses how the UN system "works together" on over 40 global issues.
2. The **UN News Center** is found on the home page, and at www.un.org/News . It provides public statements, briefings, press releases, and meetings schedules, links to various media sources and fact sheets, and UN news magazines. It also provides extensive UN issuances and news stories on ten major areas, a search facility going back 45 days, and various presentations on major current topics.
3. UN documents, and especially session documents and resolutions of the General Assembly, are presented at the **UN Documentation Center**, on the home page and at www.un.org/documents .
4. The **UN System Web Site Locator** contains both an alphabetic and a thematic index to UN system organizations and their individual websites, as well as a UN System Chart. It is found at www.unsystem.org .

5. A detailed listing of **Departments of the UN Secretariat** (and other UN offices and programmes) is found at found at www.un.org/Depts .

6. A **Research Guide** to UN documentation provides a very useful overview of the various types of documents and publications of the UN, and how to work with them, which is valuable because UN document labeling is often arcane and difficult to understand. This guide is found at www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide .

7. Another news source is the **UN Wire**, which provides many articles concentrating "on timely and relevant news about the UN, international affairs, and the UN Foundation", including a free daily E-Mail news briefing. While it explains itself as "a unique daily news service providing concise, balanced, and free news", IO Watch would note that its sponsor, the UN Foundation, established by the \$1 billion gift made to the UN in 1997 by US philanthropist Ted Turner, "promotes a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world through the support of the United Nations," which involves grantmaking, "strengthening UN institutions and encouraging support for the UN and UN causes," "telling the story" and "educating the public about the UN's unique role," and raising funds to support UN programs and purposes.

This website provides some interesting articles, but not much critical analysis or assessment of UN performance, which is why IOWatch places it here rather than under the subsection on Top Related Sources and Websites at the end of this archive. Old *UN Wire* articles are found at www.unwire.org , while those since late August 2004 are found at www.smartbrief.com/un_wire . The UN Foundation is at www.unfoundation.org .

8. The UN provides and distributes a very large volume of educational materials on its activities. The most prominent and easily accessible is **UN Works**, "the stories of men, women, and children who have benefited from UN's work", and how the UN does what it does and brings people together. This material is at <http://www.un.org/works> .

9. Finally in this brief overview, the UN has many souvenir products for sale: emblems, watches, paperweights, pens, notepads, agendas, cufflinks, sacks, coffee cups, t-shirts with multiple logos and colours, miniature flags, flag kits, various special documents and wall charts, UN guides for all educational levels, and CD's about the UN.