New UNHCR Access Policy

SIO Meeting
New York, May 2018
Background

- **1996** Creation of UNHCR Records and Archives Section
- **2000** Archives open to external researchers
- **2017** UNHCR/HCP/2017/4 Records and Archives Policy
Rational for the new access policy

• Opportunity to have the High Commissioner’s endorsement
• New to align the archives policy with new policies on Classification and Data Protection
Access policy ecosystem

- Archives access policy
- UN Privileges and Immunities
- UNHCR Classification Policy
- Protection Data Persons of Concern Policy
Principles no changes

- Balance between right to know and need to protect
- Equal terms to all external researchers
- 20 years rule
- Exceptions
Changes

• Access police is part of overall UNHCR Records and Archives Policy
• Explicit RAS authority to declassify confidential and strictly confidential after 20 years
• 5 years rule to review classified records
• Removes especial access of former staff members
Authority to declassify

Creator unit

RAS

--- 20 Years ---
Exceptions

- Public records remain public
- Data of persons of concern classified during live span
- Records that maintain sensitivity after 20 years are not disclosed
Access in practice
Central point of access

• Online catalogue
  – Browse hierarchy
  – Free text search
  – Country
Access policy in practice: paper files

- Staff members access to all files except confidential files
- External researchers have access after 20 years and after revision of records by appointment
Access policy in practice: digital

- E-SAFE: based on permissions
- Web archives: online access through Catalogue
- Digital Archives: only through Catalogue
Challenges access to digital archives

- Repository protected
- Public content → online
- Genera files → ?
- Confidential → only by request
Access beyond the access policy
Records and Archives Policy
A central point of access

- Authentic
- Complete
- In context

Records

- Email
- Data
- Drives
- Web content
Access to do what?

• Evidence
• Reuse
• Knowledge
• Corporate identity