Notes for Consultants on

United Nations Style and Format

for the Submission of Chapter Drafts for the Poverty Statistics Handbook

———————————

The Secretariat frequently commissions writers to prepare technical reports and papers with a view to their eventual issuance as United Nations publications or documents. Consultants have been invited to prepare manuscripts for the draft chapters of the forthcoming poverty statistics handbook, a UN Statistics Division publication planned for 2005. The manuscripts will be reviewed widely in draft and may be substantially edited prior to reproduction to ensure their comprehensive and authoritative treatment of technical issues and conformity to United Nations guidelines for official documentation and publications. Inasmuch as the organization must process a huge volume of documentation, it is extremely important that a few common conventions to facilitate and standardize the process be followed to the extent possible, taking account of the fact that most writers now prepare their reports on PCs and submit them with a diskette.

These notes set out some rules of thumb, which writers can use with minimum effort to make the Secretariat's task much easier. As will be seen below, these can be summarized in one general rule of thumb – "when in doubt, don't" (capitalize, indent, punctuate, underline, etc.).

Basic format of manuscripts and diskettes

In order that review and editing can be carefully done, the manuscript should be prepared double-spaced.

Manuscripts should be prepared using the standard United Nations format, which is Times New Roman, typeface at 12 cpi. This includes all titles, headings, footnotes, etc. Any other font for any purpose will only require time-consuming "undoing" at some stage. Italics and bold should not be used. Underlining is used in text only for titles of books, journals and the like, and not for emphasis. Automatic justification should not be used.

The United Nations standard word processing programme is Microsoft Word. All submitted materials (text, tables, graphs and figures) must be compiled in one file. The paper size should be 8.5 " 11 inches (US letter size). Page setup: top margin 1", bottom margin 1", left and right margins 1".

Section headings and indentation

The most common basic format and hierarchy of titles and headings in United Nations documents is as follows:

INTRODUCTION

I.   CHAPTER TITLE, ALL CAPS, CENTERED (in the text)

A. Section title, underlined, centered

(capitalize only first letter of first word)

1.   Subsection title, underlined, flush left

(capitalize only first letter of first word)

Listing of points within paragraphs are given as follows

(a) … ;
(b) … ; etc.

The first letter of the first word following each item is capitalized; only the first line of each item is indented.

Sub-listings within (a), (b), etc. are given as (i), (ii), etc., again with capitalization of the first letter of each item but in this case with indentation of all lines.

Pages should be fully and consecutively numbered with Arabic numbers appearing centered on the bottom of the pages.

As a general rule of thumb, according to United Nations guidelines, it is safer to avoid any kind of capitalization. It is usual practice to spell out all acronyms the first time, showing their short forms in parentheses, including Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Labour Organisation (ILO). Periods are not used with acronyms.

Quotes and references

As a general rule, authors should use footnotes and references only to cite the exact source of material and ideas they are quoting or otherwise borrowing from.

Quotations should be thoroughly checked and as full and exact citations as possible given. United Nations editors are expected to check all quotations for accuracy and fairness.

Tables

All tables should be titled and organized so they can be understood without reference to the text and should include a precise and descriptive citation of source or sources.