



ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM No. 122

SUBJECT: TRAVEL POLICY

CONSIDERING,

That Administrative Memorandum No. 79 was issued on January 16, 1997 to provide instructions for Official Travel from Headquarters; and that some periodic revisions have been adopted to that memorandum to reflect flexibility in the rules governing travel and to expand the new automated Travel Expense Claim system on behalf of the General Secretariat to various types of official, group and statutory travel;

That the adoption of a consistent travel policy is necessary to ensure equitable and consistent standards for individuals traveling on behalf of the General Secretariat for Official Travel, and

That Administrative Memorandum No. 79 complements this Policy,

THE DECISION:

1. To adopt the Travel Policy as set forth in the document attached as Appendix A.
2. This Administrative Memorandum shall supersede any previous policies and practices of the General Secretariat.
3. This Administrative Memorandum shall take effect on the date of its signature.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald C. Anderson".

Gerald C. Anderson
Secretary for Administration and Finance

November 15, 2013
Original: English

Travel Policy
of the
General Secretariat of the Organization of American States

Introduction:

This Travel Policy (hereinafter, the “Policy”) has been created to ensure equitable and consistent standards for all individuals traveling on behalf of the GS/OAS for Official Travel. This policy is a formal reflection of the existing procedures governing the way in which GS/OAS conducts travel, and incorporates best industry practices and recommendations and standards followed by other international financial institutions. The goal of this document is to provide help and general guidance and to ease the travel experience and standardize the processes and procedures for all travelers on official mission.

As a general rule and under no circumstances this policy should create conditions to make official travel more difficult. When official travel is required to achieve program objectives, it is to be planned and carried out in the most efficient and cost effective manner, taking into account economy, travel and accommodation costs, travel time, and other related expenses. All standards, rules and regulations as explained throughout this document are to consider the use of caution to ensure that savings and conditions will not compromise the convenience, business purpose, or safety of our travelers.

In summary, this Policy formalizes the applicability of rules and procedures for work-related travel such as travel for missions, meetings, and work assignments. This Policy does not cover travel paid for by GS/OAS as a benefit of employment, which is known as Statutory Travel, and which includes among other things travel for home leave, repatriation, and other employment-benefit related travel.¹ This Policy is directed at setting the policies and procedures for the work-related travel, which shall hereinafter be known as Official Travel.

Complementing this Policy is Administrative Memorandum 79, and its subsequent revisions, which provides specific, detailed instructions for preparing and submitting Travel Expense Claims (TECs) through the automated TEC system.

All individuals travelling on behalf of GS/OAS are subject to this Policy and are expected to comply with its direction.

¹ Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules makes reference to “Official Travel of Staff Members” and discusses both work-related travel and employment-benefit related travel. Therefore, this Policy is meant to clarify and explain the rules pertaining to the work-related “Official Travel” administered by the Department of Procurement. The travel related to employment benefits is administered by the Department of Human Resources.

1. Travel Policy Summary

- 1.1. All requests for GS/OAS Official Travel must be authorized in advance and in writing by the corresponding area's highest authority (Director or Secretary, the Chief of Staff or the Secretary General) in keeping with the instructions detailed in Administrative Memorandum No. 79.
- 1.2. Travelers and travel arrangers are required to use the designated Travel Management Company (TMC) for all travel arrangements. The TMC is selected through Formal Competitive Bidding by the Department of Procurement.
- 1.3. Travelers are required to comply with the existing processes; this Policy and any other regulation that may affect travel related transactions, such as Administrative Memorandum No. 79, Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules, and Administrative Memorandum No. 65.
- 1.4. Travelers conducting official GS/OAS business may be entitled to receive fare accommodations, per diem, terminal expenses and other travel related expenses.
- 1.5. GS/OAS staff members are required to submit automated Travel Expense Claims and corresponding receipts within 30 days of completion of an official OAS trip. As detailed in Administrative Memorandum No. 79, prior to any official travel, the GS/OAS sponsoring department must notify: 1) the corresponding Office of the GS/OAS in the Member State to which they will travel if one exists, and shall also register with that GS/OAS Office upon arrival; 2) The highest ranking official of the Permanent Mission of the relevant Member State, per instructions at section A.13 of Administrative Memorandum No. 79.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Official Travel: any travel taken on behalf of the General Secretariat of the OAS for official meetings, missions, or work assignments. Official Travel is for official business of the OAS and is not to be confused with what is known as "Statutory Travel", see 1.2.
- 2.2 Statutory Travel: official travel for purposes of recruitment, repatriation, home leave and educational grants. Statutory travel is authorized and managed by the Department of Human Resources (DHR). Special Considerations apply for statutory travel in accordance to the General conditions in "Chapter VIII" of the GS/OAS Staff Rules.
- 2.3 OAS Traveler: includes Staff Members, Time Based Natural CPRs, SOCs, guests and every person (unless specifically written out) that travels on behalf of the GS/OAS or/and with GS/OAS funds.
- 2.4 OAS Travel Coordinator: includes GS/OAS Staff and Non-Staff Members responsible for the arrangements, reporting and reimbursement of travel related expenses incurred by other individuals on GS/OAS Official Travel.
- 2.5 Authorized Approver: under this travel policy, the corresponding area's highest authority (Director or Secretary, Chief of Staff or Secretary General) is only allowed to provide travel authorizations.
- 2.6 General Assembly and similar group travel: group travel such as the General Assembly is defined as council meetings, conferences or events that involve 10 or more individuals. Additionally, the Department of Procurement (DP) is responsible for negotiating transportation to the Member State hosting the General Assembly or Group Travel.

- 2.7 GS/OAS Staff Rules: Rules and regulations for the Staff Members of the GS/OAS. Staff Members travelling on behalf of the GS/OAS should consult the GS/OAS Staff Rules (Chapter VIII) for additional rules and regulations that may apply.
- 2.8 Pre-Trip Approval/Authority for Travel: all requests for GS/OAS Official Travel must be formally authorized in advance and in writing by the corresponding area's highest authority (Director or Secretary, the Chief of Staff or the Secretary General).
- 2.9 Quarterly Travel Plan: every quarter, all OAS Official Travel Plans must be approved by the traveler's supervisor who must be at or above the level of department/office director. This document should detail the official travel plans, purpose of trip, its justification, the approximate cost, the individuals involved, and the expected results. The form is available on the OAS Intranet, under Procurement Services.
- 2.10 Individual Travel Request/Authorization Form: similar to the Quarterly Travel Plan, each trip needs to be individually approved by the traveler's supervisor who must be at or above the level of department/office director. This form will also be used to process reservations and other travel arrangements. The form is available on the OAS Intranet, under Procurement Services.
- 2.11 Fare: price of conveyance for travel via air, ground or sea.
- 2.12 Per Diem: Per Diem or Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) is determined by destination by the United Nations International Civil Service Commission (UNICSC). This allowance determines the amount to be paid to individuals while on GS/OAS Official Travel. Unless otherwise provided by the GS/OAS or other institutions, this allowance should be considered total contribution to cover three elements: Lodging, Meals and Incidentals. GS/OAS is only required to pay per diem or its equivalent to GS/OAS Staff Members.
- 2.13 Terminal Expenses: rate to be paid to cover taxicabs or other means of public conveyance to and from the travel terminal or other place of departure or arrival. Terminal Expense rates are maintained by the Department of Human Resources.
- 2.14 Other Travel Related Expenses: these expenses should normally include: transfer of or excess baggage, additional airport fees, business related ancillary charges, etc. Necessary and additional expenses that are incurred on official business can be reimbursed provided that these expenses are explained and supported with proper receipts.
- 2.15 Reduced Subsistence Allowance: whenever the GS/OAS, another organization or any other institutions pays GS/OAS staff member's expenses or provides any staff member with lodging, meals or incidental expenses, the per diem allowance will be reduced accordingly and in accordance with the published UNICSC rates. If it is in the best interest of the Organization, the GS/OAS may also choose to provide a lower per diem to non-OAS Staff Members. To determine the applicable reduced per diem rates, areas should consult with DP.
- 2.16 Travel Advance: individuals with duly approved official business travel may request an advance before travel starts. The advance may include the estimated allowance for Per Diem and Terminal Expenses.
- 2.17 Non-Travel, Incidental and Unforeseen Expenses: expenses that cannot be directly attributed to travel but happen while the individual is travelling should be processed as an expense reimbursement and in accordance with the corresponding rules and regulations. The GS/OAS has alternative forms of payment to accommodate these types of business related expenses. Necessary and additional expenses that are incurred on official business can be reimbursed provided that these expenses are explained and supported with proper receipts.
- 2.18 Approved Travel Agency or Travel Management Company (TMC): officially travel agency selected in accordance to the procurement rules by DP. All OAS Travelers (i.e., employees, staff, delegates, etc.) are required to utilize the services of the GS/OAS designated travel agency (TMC) provider when booking travel.

- 2.19 Travel Profile - online form that records all the necessary traveler data, such as contact information, passport details, visas, frequent flier program, and any other relevant travel information. As part of the contract negotiations, the designated TMC shall maintain a secure Travel Profile for each GS/OAS Traveler. Travelers are encouraged to keep their records consistently updated.
- 2.20 Travel Class: With the exception of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the Chair of the Permanent Council, all GS/OAS Official Travel should be carried in Coach/Economy Class at the lowest logical fare. It should be reported to the Permanent Council on a quarterly basis any instance of noncompliance with this rule.
- 2.21 Premium Travel: travel completed by any means in a Travel Class other than Economy; this is considered an exception under this policy. To process a request for exception, a Premium Fare Authorization Form is available on the OAS Intranet, under Procurement Services.
- 2.22 Price Match Guarantee: the Department of Procurement will negotiate a price match guarantee clause whenever possible when selecting the designated TMC for the GS/OAS. Under this clause, the TMC is required to match any price for itinerary that a traveler may find elsewhere.
- 2.23 Airline Ancillary Service Fees: in addition and separate from airfare, some airlines may charge a fee for some of its services. While each carrier is different, these could include extra fees for checked baggage, ticket change fees, In-flight food/beverage/movies, on-board Internet connection, priority boarding, preferred seating and other services.
- 2.24 Lowest Logical Fare (LLF): lowest logical fares include any reasonable itineraries from the departure location to the desired destination. Some LLF may require at least one stop or layover. Lowest available fares must be used whenever possible. The Approved Travel Agency (TMC) will always search for lowest fare flight options.
- 2.25 Personal preference: within this policy, if LLF as presented by the designated TMC is not selected by the traveler in lieu of a different alternative, this change will be reported as for “personal preference”. Please note that the TMC should provide travelers with all comparable options.
- 2.26 Comparable Options: options will be comparable as long as the total cost for alternative fares are not higher than \$200² when compared to the LLF. Alternative options, routes, stops or connecting flights will be required if savings of \$200 or more can be achieved without extending the total one-way air travel time by more than four (4) hours. The GS/OAS and the designated TMC will always use caution to ensure that savings will not compromise convenience, business purpose, or safety. Travelers will be allowed to use their judgment and complete travel even when the alternative options exceed this allowance. Those cases will be reported and may require additional justification.
- 2.27 Rail/Train Travel: with the exception of the Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General and the Chair of the Permanent Council, “Coach Seat” accommodations are authorized for all rail travel for both domestic and international travel. Amtrak’s “Acela Express” is considered Business Class.
- 2.28 Mileage Allowance for use of Privately Owned Vehicle: individuals who are duly authorized to complete GS/OAS Official travel may request a mileage allowance when using a privately owned vehicle. This allowance will be provided in lieu of other fare expenses in accordance to the IRS published rates for such purpose. The allowance cannot exceed the amount to be paid if travel is completed using the lowest logical fare as defined by this policy.
- 2.29 OAS Official Travel Document: individuals on GS/OAS Official Travel may be entitled to use an OAS Official Travel Document. This document, also referred to as the OAS Passport, is a travel

² The amount of US\$200 is based on industry standards that would be revised and updated by the Department of Procurement on a periodic or as-needed basis.

document issued by the GS/OAS. These travel documents are managed by the Department of Human Resources and its use is governed by the GS/OAS Staff Rules.

- 2.30 Personal Passport: this is a document issued by your home country that proves your nationality. The name on airline tickets must match the name on your Personal Passport.
- 2.31 Official Visa: this is a document issued by the country you are visiting saying that you have their permission to enter, travel and work within that country.
- 2.32 Other Official Travel Documents and Requirements: travelers can contact the DP Travel Section and the GS/OAS Visa processing service to obtain additional information on Passport/Visa requirements and necessary forms for all travel documents.
- 2.33 Automated Travel Expense Claim (TEC): in accordance with Administrative Memorandum 79, travelers returning from travel are required to complete and process their travel expense claims in the automated TEC System within thirty (30) days of their estimated return travel date.
- 2.34 Unused Ticket: under the policy of "Lowest Logical Fare", most tickets that are not used as intended by the initial traveler, either partially or totally, may be lost. In some cases the same traveler can re-use the unused portion for the same segments during different dates, but only after paying a change fee plus any difference in price. The Department of Procurement has negotiated with some airlines special arrangements that allow the GS/OAS to reuse part of the value of these tickets. As defined by each carrier, unused tickets are only valid for a limited time.

3. Other Definitions and Relevant Travel Industry Abbreviations

- 3.1 ARC – Airlines Reporting Corporation
- 3.2 BSP – Billing and Statement Plan
- 3.3 CAAP – Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs
- 3.4 DFAMS – Department of Financial and Administrative Management Services
- 3.5 DSA – Daily Subsistence Allowance (Per Diem)
- 3.6 DHR – Department of Human Resources
- 3.7 ECA – Estimated Cost Avoidance
- 3.8 GDS – Global Distribution System (Travel Reservation System)
- 3.9 GS/OAS – General Secretariat of the Organization of American States
- 3.10 DCMM – Department of Conferences and Meetings
- 3.11 DP – Department of Procurement
- 3.12 OTA – Official Travel Agency (TMC)
- 3.13 SBT/OBT – Self Booking Tool/Online Booking Tool
- 3.14 TCM – Travel Contract Manager
- 3.15 TEC – Travel Expense Claim
- 3.16 TMC – Travel Management Company (Travel Agency)
- 3.17 TSA – Transportation Security Agency
- 3.18 UNICSC - United Nations International Civil Service Commission

4. Mandatory use of the designated Travel Management Company (TMC)

All GS/OAS Travelers are required to make use of the designated Travel Management Company (TMC) following the process determined by the Department of Procurement. This includes, but it is not limited to, making reservations for airfare, rail, hotels and any other available services.

Unless specified otherwise, the TMC should be accessible locally or internationally to all travelers during normal business hours or by contacting the 24-hour emergency travel service number. For specific details and special charges that may apply for calls made to the 24-hour emergency service, please

contact the Department of Procurement or consult the GS/OAS Intranet (Under Procurement Services). Please note that the 24-hour emergency travel service should be reserved primarily for emergency assistance while traveling or for unavoidable last minute requests.

- 4.1. PLEASE NOTE: Because all Official Travel must be completed through the TMC, fare reservations paid directly by the travelers or third parties, through alternative travel agencies, and other web sites (including the airline direct sites and any discount retail sites such as Travelocity, Expedia, Orbitz and the like) are strictly prohibited.

In coordination with the Department of Procurement, the designated TMC is responsible for applying this travel Policy. In addition, the TMC provides different reports that are crucial not only for the effective administration of the GS/OAS travel services, but also to ensure that the Organization receives institutional credits from airlines and other carriers for each travel dollar spent. Also, the use TMC is critical to keep records and detailed information of our travelers and their location. This information helps the GS/OAS to ensure our travelers safety and health, especially during emergencies and during natural disasters. In short, failure to use the TMC can result in administrative and financial damage to the GS/OAS, as well as impede the provision of travel assistance to employees in the event of emergencies.

- 4.2. Travel Profile: the designated TMC will keep a secure Travel Profile on each GS/OAS Traveler. The profile houses travelers contact information, travel preferences, frequent flier account numbers, passport/visa information, email addresses and any other relevant information. GS/OAS staff and travelers are responsible for keeping the Profile updated. Travelers are also encouraged to include their cellular phone numbers as the most reliable source to ensure that the GS/OAS or the TMC can contact travelers in the event of a crisis. To update their Travel Profile, travelers should go to the designated TMC Web site (also available on the GS/OAS Intranet – Under Procurement Services) and click on the Traveler Profiles link. Be aware that in order to comply with TSA regulations, the name on the Travel Profile must match the name on the driver's license and/or passport to be used while travelling. The information provided to the TMC will be kept strictly confidential.

5. Travel Arrangements

- 5.1. Advance Travel Planning: quarterly travel plans for GS/OAS Official Travel must be formally authorized in advance and in writing by the corresponding area's highest authority (Director or Secretary, the Chief of Staff or the Secretary General). Travel plans should be approved in accordance with Administrative Memorandum No. 79 and Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules. To estimate travel costs, including fares, travelers should consult with the designated TMC. Costs for per diem and travel expenses shall be estimated based on the rates posted by DHR. In addition, each travel must also include an "approved" Individual Travel Request/Authorization Form.
- 5.2. Advance Authorization - Timeliness: under normal circumstances and as required by other applicable regulations, Quarterly Travel Plans should be prepared and approved in advance every quarter. As a general rule and according to reasonable travel industry standards, travel plans should be approved no later than three (3) weeks prior to the travel date and all travel plans should be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the beginning of the following quarter. Fares purchased late are normally more expensive and would therefore require additional written approval from the duly authorized official in the requesting area.

- 5.3. Authorizing: all OAS Official Quarterly Travel Plans must be approved by the traveler's supervisor who must be at or above the level of department/office director. Directors, Secretaries and above, who are responsible for authorizing Individual Travel Requests/Authorization forms, are expected to assess the value of all proposed expenditures. Travel plans for executive and assistant secretaries, directors and advisors to the Secretary General must be approved by their immediate supervisors, the Chief of Staff or upon delegation of such authority from the Secretary General.
- 5.4. With the exception of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General and the Chair of the Permanent Council, an OAS traveler may not approve his/her own "Request for Travel" form or Official Travel Plan form.
- 5.5. Non-Emergency Required Un-planned Travel: from time to time, travelers may be required to complete travel that is not included in their Quarterly Travel Plans. Unless it is a last minute travel, processing will continue to require an approved Individual Travel Request/Authorization Form.
- 5.6. Emergency Required Un-planned Travel: in case of emergencies, and when approved by the Secretariat for Administration and Finance, the Individual Travel Request/Authorization Form may not be required. However, some document or pre-trip approval communication from the corresponding Director, Secretary or above must be provided as properly documented.
- 5.7. Travel Expenses: unless specified differently by the GS/OAS Staff Rules or any other applicable regulations, travel expenses paid or reimbursed by the General Secretariat shall include:
- 5.7.1. Transportation expenses, that is, the price of tickets;
 - 5.7.2. Terminal expenses;
 - 5.7.3. Travel subsistence allowance (per diem); and
 - 5.7.4. Necessary additional travel related expenses incurred during travel.
- 5.8. Travel Advances: When travel advances are provided for official travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from the airports, baggage fees, and departure taxes) should be paid to travelers by the DFAMS one week before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the staff member's account at a financial institution on record. A corresponding requisition must be created and approved by the appropriate authorizing official in the requesting Area. See specific procedure and instruction at Administrative Memorandum No. 79, at section B.2.c.

6. Transportation Accommodations (Air, Rail, Ground or Sea)

- 6.1. Class of Service: all travelers must comply with the requirement -- established by the OAS Permanent Council and ratified by the OAS General Assembly -- that requires that all tickets paid for with the funds of the Organization be purchased in Economy Class, except for tickets purchased for travel by the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the Chair of the Permanent Council.³ Any requests for advance purchase by GS/OAS of a different class of

³ With CP/RES. 219 (294/77) of June 7, 1977 the Permanent Council resolved: "To instruct the General Secretariat to see that all air travel paid for out of the funds of the Organization be by economy class, with the exception of air travel by the chairman of the Permanent Council...and by the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization." Since 1977,

service must be approved in advance and in writing by the Secretary General, and reported to the Permanent Council.⁴

- 6.1.1. Similarly and in accordance to this policy, the purchase of coach seat accommodations are authorized for all rail travel for both domestic and international train travel. With the exception of the Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General and the Chair of the Permanent Council, the purchase of Business Class and First Class rail travel are not permitted. Amtrak's Acela and similar premium service equivalents are considered Business Class and therefore not permitted unless authorized in advance and in writing by the Secretary General. Travelers are advised to contact the Department of Procurement if there is any doubt as to the service level of rail service.
- 6.2. Fares: all airfares for all approved GS/OAS must be purchased in accordance to this travel policy, following the specific instruction in Administrative Memorandum No. 79. Where available and as determined by the Department of Procurement, all travelers are required to purchase all airfares from the designated TMC.
- 6.3. Class of Service Exceptions: to process a request for exception, a filled Premium Fare Authorization Form must be approved by the Secretary General. The form is available on the OAS Intranet, under Procurement Services.
- 6.4. Price Match Guarantee: the Department of Procurement will negotiate a price match guarantee clause whenever possible when selecting the designated TMC for the GS/OAS. Under this clause, the TMC is required to match any price for itinerary that a traveler may find elsewhere. In order to do so, travelers are required to document the reservation and present it to DP for processing. For itineraries to be considered equal all travel segments and conditions have to be the same. However, the price match also applies when travelers may find alternative options at lower cost, as long as seats are still available.
- 6.5. Lowest Logical Fare (LLF): lowest logical fares include any reasonable itineraries that are available from the departure location to the desired destination.⁵ Some LLF may require at least one stop or layover. Lowest available fares must be used whenever possible. The approved travel agency (TMC) will always search for LLF and provide the traveler with options, if they are available. For this purpose, travelers are required to provide the TMC with the location and official travel dates only. No other information, accommodations or personal preferences should be requested.
- 6.6. Connections: for the purpose of finding the LLF, the TMC may add one or more stops where reasonable. For the effect of comparable fares to the LLF, any stops or connections added should not increase the travelling or layover time by more than 4-hours each way. The GS/OAS and the

this rule of Permanent Council has been reaffirmed by the General Assembly in many budget resolutions. For example, see the General Assembly Resolution of 2008, AG/RES. 2437 (XXXVIII-O/08): "To instruct the General Secretariat to reinforce the measures that **ensure compliance with the rule established by the Permanent Council** which requires that all tickets paid for by the Regular Fund, FEMCIDI, specific funds, and trust funds administered by the General Secretariat, be purchased in economy class, except for travel by the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the Chair of the Permanent Council, **and to report to the Permanent Council on a quarterly basis on any instances of noncompliance with that rule.**" See also Staff Rules 108.8(c) and 108.9. b.

⁴ AG/RES. 2157 (XXXV-O/05); AG/RES. 2353 (XXXVII-O/07); AG/RES. 2437 (XXXVIII-O/08)

⁵ See Staff Rule 108.8(c).

designated TMC will always use caution to ensure that savings will not compromise convenience, business purpose, or safety.

- 6.7. Personal preference: within this policy, if LLF as presented by the designated TMC is not selected by the traveler in lieu of a different alternative, this change will be reported as “personal preference”. Please note that the TMC should provide travelers with all available options. These options will be comparable as long as the total cost for alternative fares are not higher than \$200 when compared to the LLF. Alternative options, routes, stops or connecting flights will be required if savings of \$200 or more can be achieved without extending the total one-way air travel time by more than four (4) hours. Travelers will be allowed to use their judgment and complete travel even when the alternative options exceed this personal preference allowance. Those cases will continue to be reported to the Department of Procurement and may be subject to additional justification.
- 6.8. Selection of Carrier: the selection of the LLF should be independent of the carrier. Unless it is determined to be in the best interest of the GS/OAS and approved by the Department of Procurement, request for specific carriers would be subject to the “Personal Preference” criteria as described above.
- 6.9. Use of Alternate Airports or Departure Locations: the selection of the LLF should be independent of the selection of the departure location. Unless it is determined to be in the best interest of the GS/OAS and approved by the Department of Procurement, request for specific departure locations would be subject to the “Personal Preference” criteria as described above. In the case of airfare, the TMC would evaluate alternate comparable airports when building a travel itinerary. Considering that travelers are entitled to terminal expenses (intended to cover the transportation costs from and to the departure locations), alternative locations should be evaluated when the additional costs for terminal expenses are reasonably higher than the savings that could be achieved in airfare.
- 6.10. Airline Upgrades: upgrades to other than Economy Class using personal funds, points, miles and similar programs are allowed under this policy but they are not encouraged. In some instances, as in travel to the General Assembly, use of upgrades may in fact be prohibited. Note that the traveler upgrades at his/her own risk and expense and any costs associated with an upgrade may not be submitted for reimbursement. Travelers may not request full coach fares for upgrade purposes when reasonable non-penalty lower fares are available. Without exceptions, the use of upgrades cannot increase the ticket cost for the GS/OAS, especially if the extra cost results from trying to get upgradable ticket in coach. Please note that after booking, if travelers make changes to their original reservations, those reservations may become unusable by the designated TMC. Official changes to reservations will become the responsibility of the traveler unless approved by the Secretary for Administration and Finance.
- 6.11. Airline Ancillary Services Fees: although ancillary fees are a fairly new component, most major airlines have introduced them over the last few years. Some of these fees may have the potential to increase the cost of air travel. For the purpose of determining the LLF, airline ancillary service fees (including baggage) should not be included. Ancillary service fees for a first and/or second baggage should be considered reimbursable travel expenses and should be processed separately, when possible.

- 6.12. Non-emergency unplanned ticket purchases: duly authorized requests outside from normal business hours, should continue to be processed through the designated TMC or by calling the After Hours Emergency Service. These situations may incur additional costs and should be documented. Care should be exercised when making reservations involving fares that carry heavy restrictions or cancellation penalties. Although a trip may have not been included in the original Quarterly Travel Plan, an approved Individual Travel Request/Authorization Form is required. This form is available on the OAS Intranet, under Procurement Services.
- 6.13. Last minute emergency ticket purchases: when duly authorized, processing of emergency travel outside of business hours should continue to be processed through the designated TMC by calling the After Hours Emergency Service. These situations may incur additional costs and should be documented by the traveler or travel arranger. Care should be exercised when making reservations involving fares that carry heavy restrictions or cancellation penalties. As explained before, in case of emergencies and when approved by the Secretariat for Administration and Finance the Individual Travel Request/Authorization Form may not be required. However, some document or pre-trip approval communication from the corresponding Director, Secretary or above must be provided.
- 6.14. Car Rentals: the use of car rentals requires signing of contractual agreements and includes insurance considerations. In order to complete car rental reservations and to inquire about the existing procedures, travelers are required to contact the designated TMC and the Department of Procurement.
- 6.15. Taxi Policy: from time to time, travelers will be required to use taxis as a mean for transportation. Travelers seeking reimbursement for valid business related taxicab transportation should take the following into consideration:
1. Terminal Expenses are usually provided for GS/OAS Official Travel. If the cost of the taxi exceeds the allowance provided under that category, travelers can claim the difference in the TEC.
 2. Unforeseen taxi transportation should be authorized by the requesting area and should be processed as part of the TEC.
 3. In all cases travelers are required to present a receipt showing information of the transportation services and must separate the fare from gratuity if paid. Gratuities should not exceed 15-20% of the total fare. Excessive gratuities will not be reimbursed.
- 6.16. Mileage Allowance for use of Privately Owned Vehicle: individuals who are duly authorized by the requesting area to complete GS/OAS Official travel may request a mileage allowance when using a privately owned vehicle. This allowance will be provided in lieu of other transportation expenses in accordance to the IRS published rates by distance for such purpose. The allowance cannot exceed the amount to be paid if travel is completed using the lowest logical fare as defined by this policy.

7. Additional Considerations

- 7.1. Frequent Flier Miles: GS/OAS permits travelers to retain their frequent flyer mileage points earned when flying on official GS/OAS official travel. However, GS/OAS travelers must follow the

company's LLF policy stated above. GS/OAS travelers are responsible for managing their own frequent flyer membership.

- 7.2. Passports and Consular Visas: travelers are encouraged to contact the travel desk in the Department of Procurement to determine whether consular visas or other travel requirements are necessary for any travel on behalf of the GS/OAS. Although the TMC is expected to notify travelers when consular visas are required, the traveler is ultimately responsible for ascertaining whether visas will be needed in light of each traveler's nationality and the Member State visited.

The following considerations shall be taken:

1. **Personal Passports**: this is a document issued by your home country that proves your nationality. A passport should ALWAYS be carried when crossing country borders. Passports must be valid six (6) months AFTER the expected international travel return date. Most passports are good for ten (10) years. Due to security reasons, the GS/OAS will not be responsible for requests or information regarding international travel related to the use of personal passports.
2. **Consular Visa**: depending on the destination and the travel document being used, travelers may be required to get consular visas. These documents are issued by country and grant travelers permission to enter their territory. There are different web sites that provide information about Consular Visa (i.e.: <http://www.visahq.com/>), although it is recommended to verify the information with the consulate of the country to be visited and the DP Travel Desk.
3. **OAS Official Travel Document**: this is a document issued by the GS/OAS. The OAS Official Travel Document is the property of GS/OAS and is not the property of the individual traveler to whom it is assigned. It is important to make use of the Travel Document when entering a Member State on Official Travel because doing so facilitates the assertion of privileges and immunities of GS/OAS personnel if they are needed. The Travel Document should never be used for personal travel or for any personal benefit of the traveler. The Travel Document must be returned to the DHR within 15 days of return from official travel. The regulations, the benefits and privileges and the use of this document are governed by the GS/OAS Staff Rules and the GS/OAS Code of Ethics. When flying internationally with a GS/OAS Official Travel Document, travelers should contact DP to obtain additional information on Passport/Visa requirements, processing times and necessary forms. This information is also available on the GS/OAS Intranet – under Procurement Services.

Always make a photocopy or scan of your official travel documents and consular visas to leave with your assistant, spouse or friend. This copy can be faxed to a local consulate should your documentation be lost or confiscated. You may also consider making a scan of the document and keeping it as an electronic copy that may be emailed or printed if necessary.

- 7.3. Comparison of Itinerary and Per Diem: as needed, the DP will verify that itinerary travel dates and days of per diem are in correspondence. A written justification will be required if itinerary travel dates do not coincide with per diem allowance. Along these same lines, per diem by location must coincide with the travel itinerary. Differences (additional legs, stop overs, etc.) will require a written explanation to DP. See Administrative Memorandum No. 79 at section B.2.

- 7.4. Itinerary Changes & Associated Costs: changes to planned itineraries are often unavoidable. Every effort should be made to manage plans and schedules to reduce additional costs such as fare change fees and fare differentials for re-issuance of ticket. LLF can become a very expensive fare when multiple changes are made. All changes should be approved by the duly authorized person in the requesting area, should be documented and should be processed through the designated TMC. See Administrative Memorandum No. 79 at sections A.8 and A.10.
- 7.5. En-Route Changes: travelers are required to contact the TMC and DP when unexpected changes or cancellations happen. Even in cases where changes or cancellations happen while standing at the airport ticket counter, travelers are reminded to contact the TMC (regular or the 24-Hour Emergency Line) instead of letting the airline make changes to their itineraries. Once a third party or once an airline modifies a reservation, that itinerary drops out of the TMC system. In those cases, the TMC can no longer support travelers for the remainder of their trips. Any differences arising from reservations outside the TMC will require proper documentation and approval from the duly authorized approver in the requesting area.
- 7.6. Reservations modified by outside Agents: as stated before, once a third party, agent or airline modifies a reservation, that itinerary drops out of the TMC system. These changes can include upgrades using personal miles, changes in the original itineraries, etc. When records are modified outside from the TMC, the TMC can no longer regain control of the initial reservation. Travelers should keep this in mind, as further changes may be required during the remainder of the trip. Unless properly documented through the designated TMC, any additional costs resulting from further changes to that record may become the traveler responsibility.
- 7.7. Completion of Travel: in accordance Administrative Memorandum 79, travelers returning from travel are required to complete and process their travel expense claims in the automated TEC System within thirty (30) days of their estimated return travel date. An official travel report may also be required. The travel report shall detail the official travel plan, purpose of the trip, its justification, the cost, the individuals involved, and the results.
- 7.8. Unused Tickets: when cancellations occur, travelers are required to report any unused portions of fares to the designated TMC and their travel coordinators no later than 15 days from the originally estimated return date. DP has negotiated special agreements with major airline carriers to be able to reuse tickets that satisfy certain conditions. These reusable ticket values are stored by the designated TMC and should be reissued as soon as possible. Most unused tickets expire after 3 or 12 months. For more details, please contact the Department of Procurement. In addition, travelers may need to return money paid to them as advance per diem for trips that were not taken. See Administrative Memorandum 79 at section B. 11.
- 7.9. Lost/stolen Paper Airline Tickets: Although rarely used in light of e-tickets, there may be some instances where paper tickets are issued. Be aware that paper tickets may have a monetary value. If lost, travelers are required to report the case immediately to the designated TMC and to the Department of Procurement.

8. Special Circumstances and Other Considerations

- 8.1. Official Travel Combined with Personal Trip: at times a traveler/passenger may wish to combine personal activity in connection with a business trip. Business and personal travel may be

combined if prior authorization is obtained from either the Director or the Secretary of the requesting area. The GS/OAS will accommodate these requests provided that the personal related time and expenses are clearly documented, separated and paid for by the individual, and the business objective for the travel remains unaffected. It is the traveler's responsibility to document any differences (cost, time, etc.) and the GS/OAS will not be responsible for undocumented cases. Travelers need to justify in writing even if there are no additional travel costs related to personal changes or if those changes make the official travel less expensive. See Administrative Memorandum 79 at section A. 10.

- 8.1.1. Permissible changes: personal changes will only be allowed if the official itinerary remains unchanged. For the purpose of this policy, the use of different hubs and date changes to arrive to same destination(s) will be allowed, provided that these changes do not increase the fare cost beyond the comparable options. For any other changes (i.e.: a different destination, add legs, etc.) the traveler will have to wait until the ticket is issued and make changes to the confirmed reservation. Changes at this point should also be made through the designated TMC. Please note that the clause of "Reservations modified by outside Agents" in this policy will apply.
- 8.1.2. Per diem will not be paid if the traveler is not on official duty the day or applicable night after the business travel ends. The GS/OAS will not provide additional insurance for personal travel. Any excess baggage and other fees for personal travel shall be paid by the traveler. All expenses or differences in payment arising from personal changes shall also be paid by the traveler.
- 8.1.3. When combining personal and official travel, the passenger understands that official travel may be cancelled due to any circumstances and the GS/OAS will not be responsible for personal reimbursements of any kind.
- 8.2. Deviations from Travel Plans paid by Third Parties: if passenger is travelling or has already scheduled travel plans for non-GS/OAS official travel, payment for the portion related to GS/OAS Official travel should only cover any additional expenses paid to deviate from the original travel plans. In no case, the GS/OAS portion should exceed the cost(s) of what the GS/OAS would pay if the initial travel plans did not exist.
- 8.3. Privileges and Immunities: headquarters agreement between the OAS and the Government of the United States of America, under Article XIII, Section 2 (b), stipulate that GS/OAS Officials traveling on the Organization's Official Travel Document and on the Organization's business are accorded the same facilities, privileges and immunities granted to diplomatic agents. Nevertheless, when entering the USA, travelers are advised to comply with the directions of the host country's customs and immigration authorities.
- 8.4. Insurance & Coverage: All GS/OAS official travelers are covered by Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance while travelling. While all GS/OAS Staff Members (excluding the types listed here) are covered by their statutory benefits, a special AD&D Insurance Policy may cover non-GS/OAS Staff and certain categories of GS/OAS Staff. If in doubt, contact the Department of Procurement. Coverage begins when the individual leaves its home or normal place of business and ends upon the individual's return.

It is important to note that the GS/OAS uses records of per diem to request, report and pay for this coverage. If no per diem is recorded, these individual are exposed unless they are reported

separately to DP. Areas are required to procure special coverage for these individuals. This includes: when the GS/OAS signs a contract with hotels to provide participants with all meals and incidentals, when per diem is being paid by a third party (but the travel is on behalf of the GS/OAS), and special cases such as Electoral Observation Missions, etc.

- 8.5. Employees Flying Together: there are specific restrictions related to insurance and risk regarding the maximum number of GS/OAS Staff/Employees who can travel together on a single aircraft (for more information, please contact DP). These tolerances are set to protect GS/OAS in the case of crisis. Group travelers may need to exercise flexibility when booking air reservations to accommodate these tolerances. The TMC will monitor the GS/OAS travelers travelling together and will notify the GS/OAS when changes are required to accommodate these requirements. All exceptions must be brought to the attention of the DP Travel Section or the TMC.
- 8.6. Human Rights Commissioners: According to request GS/CIDH/10/09 and until further notice, the SG authorized an exception to allow the elected IACHR Commissioner to purchase full economy fares. However, all other rules herein continue to apply, including the need to process all available travel arguments through the designated travel agency (TMC) following the process determined by DP.
- 8.7. Staff of Institutions unable to receive payments in their name: from time to time, the GS/OAS may invite experts or individuals from Organizations or Institutions (such as U.S. Government Officials) that are not allowed to receive payments issued in their own name. In those cases, the Department of Procurement has established the following procedure:
 - 8.7.1. Fare accommodations will be purchased through the GS/OAS or the institution designated TMC
 - 8.7.2. Lodging will be paid directly by the GS/OAS. Any possible meals should be added to the lodging accommodations and included in the bill.
 - 8.7.3. A requisition shall be entered for the remainder portion of per diem and terminal expenses that could not be paid directly. This requisition will be entered as a "General" Category in the name of the Organization or Institution. Payment should be paid against presentation of supporting invoices.

9. Lodging, Meals & Incidentals

Unless covered by this policy, the GS/OAS will only process requests for lodging, meals and incidentals in the name of the traveler.

- 9.1. Travel Subsistence Allowance ("Per-Diem") and Terminal Expenses: within this policy, travelers are entitled to receive a daily allowance while on GS/OAS Official Travel. Unless otherwise provided by the GS/OAS or other institutions, this allowance should be considered total contribution to cover three elements: Lodging, Meals and Incidentals. GS/OAS is only required to pay per diem or its equivalent to GS/OAS Staff Members. .
- 9.2. The per diem rates for the various OAS Member States are posted on the OAS Intranet. Travelers are advised to check the per diem rate and days traveled against the amount they are paid in advance per diem. If a traveler is paid more per diem than is warranted by days of travel, the

traveler will be obligated to return this money or it will be taken out of his/her next paycheck. See Administrative Memorandum 79 at section B. 10.

- 9.3. Reduced per diem: Whenever another organization or any other institution pays GS/OAS staff member's expenses or provides any staff member with lodging, meals and/or incidental expenses, the per diem allowance will be reduced accordingly. For purpose of these calculations, travelers should consult with DP the applicable rates published by the UNISC. Reduced per diem should always be used when the GS/OAS is organizing events. In the interest of savings and to the extent possible, travel coordinators shall work in conjunction with DP to negotiate special individual and group rates for lodging and pay reduced allowances.
- 9.4. Requests for Per Diem Adjustment: according to circular SAF/051-13, prevailing rates must be followed. Exceptions to increase these rates are not permitted. The Secretary for Administration and Finance will review any cases requiring adjustments due to exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. However, travelers are encouraged to plan and to identify the most competitive accommodation costs in order to comply with the established rates. Areas should contact DP for assistance to find an option that fits the GS/OAS needs.
- 9.5. Other Travel Related Expenses: while traveling, individuals may incur unexpected but authorized travel related expenses. These expenses, that are not considered part of the incidentals portion of per diem include: transfer of or excess baggage, additional airport fees, business related ancillary charges, etc. These and other necessary additional expenses that are incurred on official business can be reimbursed provided that these expenses are explained and supported with proper receipts. For non-travel related transactions, the applicable expense reimbursement policy shall apply. See Administrative Memorandum 79 at sections B.2. and B. 12.

10. Automated Travel Expense Claims (TEC)

According to this policy and all applicable regulations, all travel expenditures should be budgeted and planned for in advance. However, a traveler may incur unanticipated expenses while on a planned official trip. Such additional expenses may be claimed in the automated TEC filed for the trip. The automated expense claim process is governed by Administrative Memorandum 79 at sections B.2. and B.12.

11. General Assembly, Groups and Meetings

Groups are defined as council meetings, conferences or events that involve 10 or more individuals. When selecting cities or sites for meetings, GS/OAS meeting planners should keep in mind that, whenever possible, hotel vendors and airlines with which GS/OAS has "preferred" relationships MUST be considered first before looking elsewhere. On-site and off-site business meetings are both included under this Policy. See Administrative Memorandum 79 at section B.2.a.

Airline Contract Signing: the DP Travel Section will negotiate and sign all airline, group air and transient hotel agreements as representatives of all GS/OAS sections. The DP Travel Section in cooperation with the section meeting planners (or the TMC) must manage all group airline negotiations at least 60 days prior to the meeting date.

12. Personal/Vacation Travel

Personal travel not associated with GS/OAS official travel trip can be made through the leisure section of the designated TMC. If available, the TMC may be able to extend as a personal benefit, any corporate discounts negotiated by the GS/OAS or the Department of Procurement. However, the TMC corporate travel agents should not be used to book leisure trips. All costs associated with these personal arrangements will be at the traveler's expense and considered non-reimbursable. This includes any TMC service and/or transaction fees. Personal airfares and service fees will be charged to the traveler's personal credit card.

13. Personal Accountability

All travelers shall be responsible for the representations made with regard to travel, including the representations made on the TEC. By submitting the TEC or participating in Official Travel, each traveler warrants that all statements he or she makes with regard to travel are true to the best of his/her knowledge. All travelers should be aware that false statements could subject the traveler to summary dismissal proceedings or other discipline.

Staff Members who separate from service and who cannot substantiate their travel expenses as required through the TEC process shall reimburse the General Secretariat for the travel expenses. Said reimbursement shall take place through deductions from any remuneration that may be owed to the Staff Member upon separation from service. Similarly, reimbursement from independent contractors shall be deducted from any compensation owed to the contractor.