ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM No. 79 REV. 3

SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRAVEL IN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

CONSIDERING,

That Administrative Memorandum No. 79 was issued on January 16, 1997 to provide Instructions for Official Travel from Headquarters; and,

That Administrative Memorandum No. 79 has been revised on two occasions, and it is necessary to revise it again to introduce more flexibility in the rules governing travel on behalf of the General Secretariat,

THE DECISION:

1. To issue “Instructions for Travel in the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States,” attached hereto as Annex A, which would enter into effect on the date of this Administrative Memorandum; and

2. To revoke as of the date of this Administrative Memorandum any and all provisions contained in prior administrative issuances of the General Secretariat that are inconsistent with the Policies and Procedures attached hereto.

Frank Almaguer  
Assistant Secretary  
Secretariat for Administration and Finance

Original: English  
March 3, 2006

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM No. 79 REV. 3

ANNEX A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TRAVEL IN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

A. Travel Authority

1. Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules governs official and statutory travel by staff and their dependents.

2. Official travel is travel taken on behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States ("GS/OAS"), and is managed by the corresponding GS/OAS dependency ("Requesting Area").

3. Statutory travel is official travel for purposes of recruitment, repatriation, home leave, and education grants, and is managed by the Department of Human Resources ("DHR").

4. Executive and Assistant Secretaries, Department and Office Directors, and Section Chiefs ("supervisors") must ensure that adequate budget authorization is available to finance any and all types of travel requests.

5. Supervisors shall produce quarterly Official Travel Plan reports. Each report should spell out the official travel planned, its justification in terms of the aims of the Organization, the approximate cost, the individuals involved, and the expected results. It shall be presented to the Office of the Secretary General for consideration and approval at least one month before the quarter in question begins.

6. All travel must be authorized in advance and in writing. In order for a staff member to travel on official business or a staff member and his/her dependents to travel for statutory purposes, a requisition must be created and must be approved by the appropriate authorizing official in the Requesting Area. The purchase order encumbers the funds authorized for the travel.

7. Unplanned travel due to unforeseen circumstances requires prior approval by the Chief of Staff of the Secretary General.

8. Only the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General may approve their own Official Travel Plans. All other Official Travel Plans must be approved by the staff member’s supervisor who must be at or above the level of department/office director. Travel plans for executive and assistant secretaries, directors, and advisors to the Secretary General, shall be approved by their immediate supervisors, the Chief of Staff or upon delegation of such authority from the Secretary General.
9. During the official travel period, travelers must obtain prior approval by their supervisors to use annual leave for: (a) personal travel to be taken immediately before or after the official travel; and (b) planned home leave travel. Any itinerary changes that depart from the planned official travel must also have the supervisor's prior approval, in writing.

10. OAS official travel financed by outside organizations and at no cost to the GS/OAS should also be included in the Official Travel Plan or authorized by the Office of the Secretary General. A copy of the travel authorization should be sent to the Office of Procurement Services (“OPS”) prior to the travel taking place so that the traveler will be covered by the GS/OAS’s group travel insurance policy.

11. A staff member traveling on official business is entitled to GS/OAS standard per-diem and terminal expense rates in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Staff Rules, including the provision for reduced travel subsistence allowance. If the rate for GS/OAS official travel financed by an outside organization is below the GS/OAS standard per-diem rate, the staff member is entitled to receive the difference between GS/OAS travel rate and the rate offered by the outside organization. The amount that GS/OAS and the outside organization will pay for an official travel should be the result of an agreement with the outside organization.

12. All travelers on official travel from Headquarters shall, prior to beginning the official travel, inform the corresponding Office of the GS/OAS in the Member State (the “GS/OAS Office”) to which they will travel, and shall register with that GS/OAS Office upon arrival in the country. If the GS/OAS Office is not on the traveler's itinerary, a telephone registration will suffice unless the Member State does not have a GS/OAS office, in which case a registration is not required.

13. All travelers shall fill out an OAS Form 343 (registry of staff member on official mission), signed by the Director of the GS/OAS Office, for each Member State visited during the official travel.

B. Administrative and Financial Procedures

1. Air Fares and Travel Reservations

   a. For all official travel (except the OAS General Assembly and other group travel), the Requesting Area will be responsible for making the travel reservations through the OPS Travel Section, or with the appropriate travel supplier authorized by GS/OAS. Once the fare cost is determined, the Requesting Area is required to prepare the requisition and purchase order in the name of the approved authorized travel supplier for the air fare and fees associated with the fare purchase. Except in unusual circumstances justified in writing, the purchase order must be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the travel date. Tickets will not be issued without the required approved purchase order reference number.
b. For the OAS General Assembly and other group travel, the OPS is responsible for negotiating round air fare costs to the Member State where the event will take place. The reservations are made by the travel supplier, the details of which are provided to the traveler by the OPS Travel Section through the Office of Conferences and Meetings (“OCM”). Any changes to the negotiated travel fare reservations must be made with the travel supplier with authorization from the OPS and the Requesting Area. The OPS Travel Section will provide the travel fare ticket costs for the creation of a requisition and a purchase order to the travel supplier to be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the travel date. Tickets will not be issued without the required approved purchase order reference number. Payment for airline tickets will be made upon receipt of the invoice from the travel supplier.

c. The DHR is responsible for authorizing all statutory travel and for preparing the requisitions authorizing the statutory travel to be taken. The OPS Travel Section will provide the DHR with the actual ticket cost for the creation of a requisition and a purchase order to the travel supplier to be approved no later than fifteen (15) days before the travel date. The traveler is responsible for making his/her travel reservations through the OPS Travel Section or with the appropriate travel supplier authorized by GS/OAS. Tickets will not be issued without the required approved purchase order reference number. Payment for airline tickets will be made upon receipt of the invoice from the travel supplier.

2. Travel Advances For Per diem and Terminal Expenses

In order to receive a travel advance, a requisition and purchase order must be approved in the OASES Purchasing module. The requisition lines for per diem and terminal expenses must be prepared at the same time that the requisition line for the air fare is prepared, and must contain the following travel expense information: (i) The entire itinerary for the travel including dates and destinations; and (ii) The applicable per-diem rates, terminal expenses, and any foreseen miscellaneous travel expenses and statutory travel expenses.

a. Official Travel

i. In the case of official travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from the airports, baggage fees, and departure taxes) shall be paid to travelers by the Department of Budgetary and Financial Affairs (“DBFS”) fifteen (15) days before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the staff member's account at a financial institution on record.

ii. The Requesting Area must create and approve a requisition to pay the traveler for all applicable travel expenses, including estimated fees associated with the ticket purchase and for any penalty charges for subsequent changes to the confirmed ticketed fare.
b. General Assembly and Group Travel

i. In the case of the OAS General Assembly and other group travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from the airports, baggage fees, and departure taxes) shall be paid to travelers by the DBFS fifteen (15) days before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the staff member's account at a financial institution on record.

ii. The OCM will create a requisition to pay the travel supplier issuing the tickets, and separate requisition lines to pay the travelers for the per-diem, terminal expenses and any other applicable travel expenses, including estimated fees associated with the ticket purchase and for any penalty charges for subsequent changes to the confirmed ticketed fare.

c. Statutory Travel

i. In the case of statutory travel, per-diem and terminal expenses (which include transportation to and from the airports) shall be paid to travelers by the DBFS fifteen (15) days before the travel date. This will be accomplished by depositing the payment in the staff member's account at a financial institution on record.

ii. The DHR will create a requisition to pay the travel agency issuing the tickets and to pay the travelers for per-diem, terminal expenses and any applicable statutory expenses. The requisition lines for per diem and terminal expenses must be prepared at the same time that the requisition line for the air fare is prepared, and must contain the following travel expense information: (i) The entire itinerary for the travel including dates and destinations; and (ii) The applicable per-diem rates, terminal expenses, and any applicable miscellaneous travel expenses and statutory travel expenses.

3. From approved travel requisitions, the OPS will create and approve purchase orders and provide hardcopies to DBFS for use as invoices for payment to the travelers. Travelers are encouraged to print and use the purchase order as supporting documentation for the subsequent filling out of Travel Expense Claims forms (“TECs”).

4. For a purchase order made out for a traveler, the DBFS will create an invoice and generate a payment to be deposited in the traveler's account in a financial institution on record. For all travel, the DBFS will pay for the airline tickets upon receipt of the invoice from the travel supplier.

5. After the OPS Travel Section or travel supplier has completed the travel arrangements, the traveler will be issued e-tickets.

6. The traveler must pick-up and sign for the OAS Official Travel Document (Passport) at the OPS Travel Section.
7. Within fifteen (15) days of return from an official travel, the traveler shall return the OAS Official Travel Document to the DHR. The DHR then will issue a receipt for the OAS Official Travel Document.

8. Travelers returning from official travel are also required to submit to their supervisor a TEC to be approved and submitted to the DBFS within fifteen (15) days of their return from official travel. The TEC should contain the following:

   a. Receipts for all expenses related to travel for which additional reimbursement is required;
   b. Copy of travel purchase orders;
   c. Airline ticket stubs and boarding passes;
   d. OAS Form 343 (registry of staff member on official mission) http://oasintrananet/Forms/FORM%20343.doc;
   e. Receipt of the OAS Official Travel Document from the DHR; and
   f. Any other supporting documents.

9. In the case of statutory travel, OAS General Assembly, and other group travel, staff members are not required to submit a TEC. However, they will be required to keep on file all travel information for auditing purposes.

10. Every month the DBFS will review paid purchase orders for official travel that have not been closed and will contact the originating area to request submission of TECs. Instructions on how to complete a TEC are attached to this Administrative Memorandum. Failure to submit a TEC to the DBFS within the required time period may result in a deduction of the travel advance amount from the salary of the staff member.

11. Should the TEC amount equal the amount of the purchase order, the supervisor will submit the TEC to the DBFS with a request to close the purchase order.

12. Should the TEC amount be less than the approved purchase order, the traveler shall reimburse the GS/OAS when submitting the TEC, using a check for the difference. In the event that the difference in the amount is not sent at the time that the TEC is submitted, the DBFS will deduct the corresponding amount from the traveler’s payroll check.

13. Should the TEC amount be greater than the approved purchase order, the originating area must create and approve another requisition to reimburse the traveler for the difference. Once the OPS has approved the new purchase order, the originating area should submit the TEC to the DBFS containing both purchase order numbers. The DBFS will create an invoice for the second purchase order, issue a payment, and do a final match to close both purchase orders. The payment will be deposited in the staff member’s account in a financial institution.

14. Penalty charges caused by changes in travel plans made for personal reasons must be paid to the travel supplier directly by the traveler and will not be reimbursed by GS/OAS.
15. All TECs will be retained in the DBFS for auditing purposes.

C. Reporting

1. Every staff member, except the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General and the Executive and Assistant Secretaries, who travel on official business (except in the case of statutory travel, OAS General Assembly, and other group travel) shall submit a mission report to the supervisor who authorized the travel no later than fifteen (15) days after returning. The report should specify the purpose of the official travel, contacts made, progress achieved, problems encountered, and commitments undertaken on the official travel.

2. Supervisors who authorize travel should submit to the Office of the Secretary General, a quarterly Report on Official Travel that summarizes all travel carried out during the three months prior to the report. The report should be submitted by the 15th day of the following month. This document should specify the reason and cost for each travel, the staff members involved, and the accomplishments achieved on the official travel. This document should also report on the class of official travel carried out during the quarter, i.e. first, business, and economy class for tickets purchased by GS/OAS.

3. Unplanned travel shall be identified separately in the Report on Official Travel and will be justified in terms of its contribution to fulfilling the goals of the Organization.

4. Both the Official Travel Plan and the Report on Official Travel should cover only travel related to the official activities of the area in question. Statutory travel, OAS General Assembly, and other group travel should not be included in these documents.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING OAS FORM 7
TRAVEL EXPENSE CLAIM, "TEC"

All travelers who travel on behalf of the GS/OAS (except statutory travel, OAS General Assembly, and other group travel) must complete a Travel Expense Claim, or "TEC", upon returning from their official travel. Staff members on statutory travel are not required to fill-out a TEC, but are required to keep in file all documentation related to that travel in case of an audit.

The completed TEC form should have the following documentation attached:

- Receipts for all expenses related to travel for which additional reimbursement is required;
- Copy of travel purchase orders;
- Airline ticket stubs and boarding passes;
- OAS Form 343 (registry of staff member on official mission) http://oasintranet/Forms/FORM%20343.doc;
- Receipt of the OAS Official Travel Document from the DHR; and
- Any other supporting documents.

The completed TEC, along with all supporting documentation must be submitted to the Department of Budgetary and Financial Services not later then fifteen (15) days after the completion of the travel. Failure to submit a TEC within the required time period will result in a deduction of the travel advance amount from the salary of the staff member.

How to complete a TEC form:

Attached to this Administrative Memorandum is a reduced copy of TEC form to serve as a guide. It has explanations with arrows pointing to parts of the TEC form indicating where information should to be entered.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING OAS FORM 7
TRAVEL EXPENSE CLAIM, "TEC"

1) The TEC form must contain the corresponding Purchase Order number in the upper right-hand corner of the form under item 1 of the form.

2) If the traveler needs to be reimbursed, a second Purchase Order should be approved for the amount of the reimbursement. The number of the reimbursement Purchase Order should be entered under item 2 of the form.

3) Travelers must enter their name, grade, employee numbers, telephone extension number, their office number, and building code.

4) The traveler must enter the account information: fund, source of finance, budget period, organization, project, sub-project, and project task.

5) Travel itinerary information is entered here.

6) Entitlements are as follows:
   a) Per Diem: Full per diem rate for staff member for each full day of travel.
   b) Terminal Expenses: Departure taxes are included in the terminal expenses and should not be included separately.

7) All receipts for taxi fares must accompany the form. Any expense which is not supported by a receipt will be at the traveler's own expense.

8) Miscellaneous expense is limited to excess baggage fees and expenses related to passport renewal.

9) The total for all supported expenses is entered in the box on the right-hand side of the form under this item.

10) Travelers must indicate the amount of their travel advance and the duty station at which the advance was received.
11) The traveler must calculate the settlement. This item is the difference between the amount entered in the box at item 9.

- If a positive balance results from this subtraction, then the traveler should check the small box "Traveler - Payment will be issued to you." The number of the reimbursement purchase order should be entered in item number 2.
- If a negative balance results from this subtraction, then the traveler should check the box "OAS - Check is attached, and attach a check payable to the GS/OAS for the corresponding amount.

12) This item is for certification of both the traveler and the traveler's supervisor that the information being submitted is accurate and correct. Information submitted which was deliberately false or misleading will lead to disciplinary measures taken against both signatories of this form.