

Series - Reports to Headquarters from Special Representatives to U.N. Organizations in Geneva

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Identity area	
Reference code	WB IBRD/IDA DEC-03-18
Title	Reports to Headquarters from Special Representatives to U.N. Organizations in Geneva
Dates	10 September 1985, 31 January 1986 - 12 October 1989 (Creation)
Level of description	Series

Extent and medium 0.42 linear feet of textual records

Context area

Name of creator [Office of the Chief Economist -- Office of the Vice President, Development Economics and Chief Economist and later Senior Vice President, Development Economics and Chief Economist](#)

Repository [World Bank Group Archives](#)

Content and structure area

Scope and content

The series consists of three black binders containing reports sent from Geneva to Headquarters by Representatives Mahmud Burney, L. Peter Chatenay, and Wolfgang Siebeck. The Bank first opened an office in Geneva in 1978 staffed by a resident representative and one support staff. Its responsibilities included representing the Bank in meetings of international organizations held in Geneva, principally the GATT, UNCTAD, ILO, and WHO. The Bank staff at Geneva kept Bank Headquarters informed through periodic reports and facilitated informal contacts with staffs of Geneva organizations. Reports to Headquarters prior to 1987 were addressed to the Director of the Bank's International Relations Department (IRD). When the Strategic Planning and Review Department (SPR) was established under the Senior Vice President, Policy, Planning and Research (SVPPR) in May 1987, the Geneva Office reported to the International Relations Division (SPRIE), which included the U.N. Offices in New York and Geneva (SPRGE).

The first black binder contains numbered Geneva bi-monthly letters (also referred to as newsletters) sent by Mahmud, the first Representative, from September 21, 1979 to October 29, 1982. A register showing letter number, date, and subject is located at the beginning of the binder. At the back of the binder are 15 unnumbered Washington letters and one unnumbered memorandum (10 September 1979 - 31 August 1982), most of which were sent to Burney by Shirley Boskey, Director, International Relations Department (IRD), in response to issues raised in Burney's numbered reports.

All of the numbered Burney Geneva letters except the first and last were addressed to Boskey. In almost all of the letters, Burney provides full descriptions of discussions and outcomes of meetings and conferences of UNCTAD [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development], particularly the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD, and GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade]. In the 17 December 1979 letter, Burney offers his views on the impact of the crisis in Iran on Geneva negotiations and possibly the Bank. Burney's letters describe his involvement with work of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and various preparatory meetings for the G-77 ministers meeting (1980), the U.N. Conference on the Least Developed Countries (1981), the GATT Ministerial Meeting (1982), and UNCTAD VI (1982). Burney also reported on the reactions from the U.N. and other organizations at Geneva to world events such as the Iran crisis (1979), President McNamara's announcement of his retirement (1980), the Gulf War (1980), Ronald Reagan's assumption of the U.S. Presidency (1981), and President Clausen's early pronouncements as Bank President (1981). Burney included in his letters information gained in informal and formal discussions with country representatives at Geneva concerning the impact of high oil prices and inflation on economies, balance-of-payments problems of developing countries; the absence of developing countries' at management and senior management levels of the Bank; and the withholding of observer status for the PLO at Bank annual meetings. Burney also reported on other formal and informal contacts with representatives of international organizations in Geneva, arrivals and departures of ambassadors, changes in U.N. and GATT officials, and visits with Bank staff attending meetings in Geneva.

Reports from Geneva of the other two Representatives were similar in the kinds of information covered but differed in frequency and format. The Geneva Letters binder of L. Peter Chatenay is divided into three parts: Geneva Office Activity Reports (in the form of memoranda) sent monthly to the Director, IRD, Shahid Javed Burki, 15 August 1983 - 3 July 1985; reports of UNCTAD, GATT, and other meetings Chatenay attended, 12 September 1983 - 30 July 1985 addressed primarily to Burki; and a small number of Washington letters and messages, some undated, received by Chatenay from Burney and others at the Bank, 10 August 1983 - 16 September 1985. The monthly activity reports focused more on general trends, upcoming events, contacts with and observations about the diplomatic community at Geneva, and contacts with Bank visitors to Geneva. The reports of meetings attended describe comments made by Chatenay and other representatives at these meetings, outcomes, and Chatenay's observations and/or recommendations for Bank response.

Wolfgang Siebeck's first report of 21 January 1986 to Burki was in the form of a letter. The next report, simply captioned Geneva Report for April 1986, covered meetings and other developments related to GATT, UNCTAD, the International Trade Center, the International Labor Organization, and a World Bank briefing given by Burki on April 20, 1986 at Geneva for a group of 88 representatives of Permanent Missions and U.N. Organizations. The reports which followed were submitted on a monthly basis, followed the same format, and focused primarily on GATT and UNCTAD. In these reports, Siebeck covered meetings attended, positions taken, outcomes, and his observations.

In his cover memo of 14 November 1986, Siebeck announced a change in the format of the Geneva Report. Attached to the memo were the October/November and November/December reports, both of which focused on preparations for and negotiations at the Uruguay Round. Succeeding reports beginning with January/February 1987 were numbered and covered Uruguay Round meetings/negotiations, UNCTAD VII and other activities. After September 1987, Siebeck's reports from Geneva fluctuated between one month and two months coverage but continued to address the Uruguay Round and UNCTAD VII developments. In his last report (October/November 1989) from Geneva, Siebeck focused entirely on the status of negotiations in individual Uruguay Round groups.

System of arrangement Records are arranged by Representative.

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Allied materials area

Related units of description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Records of the Office of the Chief Economist -- Records of the Office of the Vice President, Development Economics and Chief Economist and Later Senior Vice President, Development Economics and Chief Economist (DECVP) -- Correspondence and Reports of the Office of the Special Representative to the U.N. Organizations in Geneva Concerning Negotiation of General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) for the Uruguay Round (WB IBRD/IDA DEC-03-20) for other correspondence relating to the Uruguay Round (see Archives folder # 1572655). • See oral history of Shirley E. Boskey.
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Description control area

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Dates of creation revision deletion 28 September 2011