

Establishing New Organizational Units, Status Adjustments, and Naming Conventions

by
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(Presented to 2016 Secretariat Advisory – but of value to those updating the Yearbook)

I was asked to talk today about Establishing New Organizational Units, Status Adjustments, and Naming Conventions. Hopefully the presentation today will provide some insights into the importance of working with the Yearbook Office on all these matters.

Background:

Before I start discussing the topics assigned, I need to go over some important information first that will help the topics I am covering to make more sense. When the Yearbook and Adventist Directory databases were developed in the late 1990s, the Yearbook database was created solely for the purpose of printing an annual book - while it was tied into the Adventist Directory database which provided an online website for all Adventist entities, even those not included in the Yearbook. But over time, some features of the Yearbook database, especially the AdmFieldID and OrgMastID, began to be used by GC Treasury, Risk Management, and SunPlus. Last quinquennium it was agreed that the General Conference would begin moving towards a more centralized manner of managing databases worldwide. Now, under the direction of the Chief Information Officer, Nancy Lamoreaux, the General Conference is focusing on the development of new systems that will link into some of the identifiers used in the Yearbook database.

MyReport, the web-based system for reporting quarterly and annual statistics, has already been developed, and is being used by all of you. Because MyReport uses the AdmFieldID *and* names of organizational units, **if** you have created new fields, or restructured or renamed current fields, and haven't notified the Yearbook Office so I can implement those changes in the database, you won't see them reflected in MyReport.

Besides MyReport, reporting programs for Education, Exchange Rates, Global Mission, Literature Evangelists, Membership, and Tithes and Offerings have also been created. Work will continue over this quinquennium to link together the many reporting systems of the world Church so we can avoid duplication of work, and share information more easily.

I have mentioned that two identifiers of the Yearbook database, used now by many other entities, are the AdmFieldID and OrgMastID. I want to give an explanation of these because most of you will either work with them or at least notice them in various reporting systems.

AdmFieldID

This is a *unique*, usually four-letter code that the Yearbook Editor is responsible for creating or making up when a new organizational unit is first created.

The AdmFieldID was designed to be an abbreviation or acronym-like identifier. Initially it looked like that. But over time as the world Church grew, it wasn't always possible to use an exact abbreviation/acronym for the org unit as there would have been duplicates. (You will notice that I am using the term, organizational or org units throughout this presentation – instead of administrative field – as we are trying to use the terminology found in the *General Conference Working Policy*). The AdmFieldID, remember, is a *unique* identifying code. **The AdmFieldID assigned at the time an organizational unit is first created will never change – regardless of the change of status (i.e., from mission to conference), the change of name, or the change of organizational parent.**

Here are a few examples of active organizational units and their AdmFieldIDs:

Central Nyanza Conference	CNYF
German Swiss Conference	GSWC
Greek Mission	GRKM
South Bolivar Venezuela Mission	SOBO
Southeast Sao Paulo Conference	SESP
Southwest India Union Section	KRLA

You will notice that some AdmFieldIDs above look almost like acronyms, and others do not.

The AdmFieldID is used by the Adventist Church Management System, Education, MyReport, and the various reporting systems Italo Osorio has or is developing here at the General Conference.

OrgMastID

The OrgMastID is a six-digit alphanumeric ID *automatically calculated* by the Yearbook/Adventist Directory database when a new organizational unit is created, or when its organizational parent changes. It provides a hierarchical structure or identifier for each organizational unit and institution that is created in the database.

Here is an example of the Inter-American Division, the Cuban Union, and two of its local fields:

Administrative Field Name	OrgMastID
Inter-American Division	AG1111
Cuban Union Conference	AGD111
Central Conference	AGD611
Del Amancer Conference	AGD911

In the OrgMastID, the **A** stands for Adventist, the **G** identifies the Inter-American Division, the third digit, in this case, the **D**, stands for the Cuban Union, and the fourth digit, **6**, and **9** above, stands for the local fields. For all organizational units, the last two digits are always 11. The OrgMastID of institutions utilizes those last two digits.

If at some point the Cuban Union was to split into North and South Cuban Unions, we would ask the division if they wanted the original Cuban Union to be *retired*, or renamed and reused. If it was retired (and became inactive), two new unions would be created with new AdmFieldIDs and OrgMastIDs. If the original Cuban Union was *reused*, it would be *renamed* either the North or South Cuban Union, but keep the original AdmFieldID and OrgMastID, and only *one* new union would be created. Normally, when a union or conference is *reused*, the new field to get that OrgMastID would be the one that keeps the old headquarters office. To recap, some divisions/unions prefer to keep the original OrgMastID (for financial or record-keeping reasons); while others want a clean start, and will request that two new unions (and OrgMastIDs) be created.

Unlike the AdmFieldID, OrgMastIDs change *whenever* the organizational parent changes, because it represents the hierarchical order or placement of the field. If the former Cuban Union is renamed, it keeps its OrgMastID, and *so do the local fields that stay under it!* The local fields moving to the new union will have *new OrgMastIDs* because they have a new organizational parent.

The OrgMastID is used by Adventist Church Management System, ARM, GC Treasury, and SunPlus.

With this background, let me focus now on the three areas I was asked to cover.

New Organizational Units

I explained previously that your new and reorganized fields will not be able to send their information into MyReport or the other databases here at the General Conference that use the AdmFieldID or OrgMastID *until* the Yearbook database has been updated *first*.

So it is vital that you notify the Yearbook Office of new and reorganized organizational units as soon as possible. If you want those fields to report their statistics in MyReport for the quarter in which they *begin functioning*, you should send the Yearbook Office your division actions, and the information below, **no later than the same quarter the changes become effective.** **IF** the changes come too late, and MyReport has been closed for that quarter, the new or reorganized org unit may not be able to report their statistics until the following quarter.

What does the Yearbook Office need in order to **create** new organizational units?

- A copy of the division action, and the date the action was voted.

- The names of the new organizational units as you want them to appear in the Yearbook. (Please consider looking carefully at the names of new and reorganized org units *before* voting them. I will mention that there have been times where unions voted the name one way, but when the division voted – it changed the name. And I have been sent both names! That causes confusion for me! There have also been cases where I have created the new org units according to the division action, and then the union or division changes the names of the fields shortly after. This creates extra work for me, and for those entities that I have already advised of the new names.)

- The actual date the new or reorganized fields will begin operating – such as February 1, 2016 or December 31, 2016.

If you have taken these actions at your Year-end meetings, and the new org units are going **to begin functioning** immediately, or *before* February 1, **and** you want them that year's new Yearbook, it can be done, **but** only if you send me the information above immediately, **and also provide:**

- A *specific* Territory description of the new or reorganized field
- Contact information (Phone, Fax, E-mail, Website, Address)
- Administration – at least the officers
- Departments and Directors if you have them; otherwise they can be added the following year

After I create or reorganize the fields, I send a notice out, including the AdmFieldID and OrgMastID of the new and reorganized units, to:

The division's officers

Italo Osorio

Kathleen Jones, Editor of the Annual Statistical Report

The GC associate secretary working with that division

Adventist Church Management System

SunPlus

Name Adjustments or Status Changes

The name change of an established field (for example, Cabo Mission becomes Greater Cabo Mission); or a status change of an org unit – a region becomes a mission; a union mission becomes a union conference – must again be sent to the Yearbook Office as soon as possible after the division votes the change. Again, we will need the following information:

- A copy of the division action, and the date the action was voted.
- The *effective* date of the name change – in some cases it may be effective as soon as the division votes it; in other cases it may have a different effective date. I would encourage you to *always* include an effective date in any actions dealing with new, renamed, and reorganized org units.

Until the change has been made in the Yearbook database, that name change or status change *will not be reflected* in any of the systems using the AdmFieldID or OrgMastID, including Adventist Church Management System, MyReport, and SunPlus!

After I rename or revise the status of the org unit, I send a notice out, including the AdmFieldID and OrgMastID, to the same individuals/offices mentioned previously.

Naming Conventions

Although you are dealing only with the org units in your division, the Yearbook Office works with all 13 divisions (and approximately 760 other organizational units worldwide). As the Church continues to grow, it is perhaps understandable that more and more org unit names are quite similar, and in some cases, duplicates of names in other divisions. Some examples:

a. There are currently two Central Conferences, and a Central Mission. If the mission becomes a conference at some point, we will have three Central Conferences. We also have two West Conferences. These are generic, non-specific names that tell us nothing about the org units or the part of the world they are in.

b. It seems that directional names are the most popular as part of org unit names. But those names can become challenging for a couple of reasons. Whether they are two words (North East), a hyphenated word (North-East), or a combined name (Northeast) can sometimes change the alphabetical placement of that unit within its division or union.

c. In one country that has been split into two unions, the org units are named:

Central East ____

Central ____

East ____

North Central ____

Northwestern ____

South Central ____

Southeast ____

West Central ____

West ____

Can you see the possibility of confusion when you consider we have nearly 800 organizational units around the world, and the Church continues to grow?!

Right now we have 68 org units that begin with the word Central, and 48 that begin with the word, West.

d. The second problem the directional names create for us is that in the employee credentials section of the database, we use dropdown windows to select the correct organizational unit; it is very easy to accidentally select the wrong entity out of a long list of names beginning with Central, East, North, or South.

e. We also have at least two places where there is a union and conference with the same name, except for the word, Union, and this can be confusing at times. (Using a made-up name, here is an example of one of these situations):

Central Rainbow Union Conference

Central Rainbow Conference (the conference is not in the union with the same name)

Again, there is the possibility of confusion.

Some Suggestions

1. First of all, from the union to the division, please be very intentional in determining the names of new org units. Try to be sure that what you vote is what the name should actually be so that the information sent to the Yearbook Office is correct, and won't have to be changed one or two times because someone thought of a better name.

2. If you are thinking of naming a new org unit, or renaming a current org unit - and you wonder if the name already exists, or if it might be lost in a long list of similarly named fields, you can check the General Index in the back of the printed *Yearbook* before you actually vote a name.

(There are two other ways you can check if you don't have an actual book. 1) You can open up your Yearbook on Disk that you installed after purchasing the 2015 Yearbook, and do a search selecting all Administrative Regions, and, all Administrative types. Then start typing in the proposed name of your org unit to see what other fields may start with the same word or words. OR, 2) you can go to the Yearbook website, www.adventistyearbook.org, and select Advanced Search. Below the Search box on that page, select the *Name Only* radio button. Then in the Search box, type the beginning word or words of the proposed name, and see if any duplicate or similar names appears.)

3. Please send us copies of your division actions renaming, reorganizing, or creating org units *as soon as possible after the vote*. Even if the effective date is several months ahead, this will alert us to the future change.

4. Please encourage your unions to consider non-generic and non-directional names for their new or renamed org units. A unique name for a new unit is always preferred, using factors such as:

a. the name of the province, state or country (if the entire territory of the state/country is in the field) – Armenian Mission, Baja California Conference, Edo Conference, French Polynesia Mission, Reunion Conference, Romblom Adventist Mission, etc.

b. a name tied to a geographical area, language, or place in the field – Chesapeake Conference, French-Italian Swiss Conference, Greater Rift Valley Conference, Tiza Conference.

And on a final note, please review GC *Working Policy* B 10, Outline and Definitions of Denominational Organization, which was revised last quinquennium. Notice the two new organizational units now included in policy, Field Station, and Region, and their criteria. Please make sure that any new organizational units your division is creating or reorganizing meet the requirements of GC policy.

Conclusion

I know that sometimes when you see my e-mails, you may shake your heads. But from my office I can see the overall picture, and I am really trying to help you. I need your information so I can do the best job possible in not only putting out an annual *Yearbook*; but so the divisions and other entities using or tied into the *Yearbook* database can function to the best of their ability.

Thank you for your time today. I look forward to getting better acquainted with some of you either thru future e-mails or during the ASTR Advisory.