

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I adopt Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations (AKN4UN)?

Akoma Ntoso is an official standard for parliamentary and legal documents. It has been adopted by the HLCM as standard for the UN System, in its localized version Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations (AKN4UN). Adopting AKN4UN in your organizations means entering a network of UN Organizations and international institutions that collaborate to create a shared ecosystem for knowledge.

Who is leading this process?

UNSIF is a project co-led by the [Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the United Nations Secretariat](#), the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) and the [High Level Committee on Management of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination](#).

Is converting our documents in Akoma Ntoso compulsory?

Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations was adopted by the HLCM as common document standard for the UN System: this means that, although its adoption is not compulsory, it will greatly enhance interoperability and provide the opportunity for collaboration and shared efforts.

What are Uniform Resource Identifiers? What is Linked Open Data?

Having machine-readable documents in a common standard means entering an harmonized “information space” where information in documents is tagged with common identifiers (Uniform Resource Identifiers) so that every data can be easily looked up and linked to other documents. It is open in the sense that information is freely available to everyone to use and republish as they wish, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control.

This is quite complex; can you give me an example?

Let’s say you have a document:

1. The first step is identifying all relevant concept in that document: this can be anything, from countries, to persons, to specific words (e.g. “family”, “building”).
2. The next step is tagging these documents using URIs: these can be found in repositories on the web, which take the form of ontologies, thesauri, vocabularies, etc. URIs usually are in the form of URLs (e.g. <https://w3id.org/un/ontology/undo/Amendment>).
3. Tagging is done in XML format, which should follow Akoma Ntoso guidelines. Once a document is fully tagged, it can be “added” to the ecosystem and become part of an inter-linked, machine-readable information space. This allows for countless applications: for example, to create a portals where keywords can be used to retrieve relevant documents.

How do AKN4UN and UNDO fit this picture?

Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations is the *standard for XML mark-up*; while the United Nations Document Ontology is the UN-specific repository of URIs.

What is a XML editor?

Manual mark-up can be extremely time-consuming. XML editors are used to support manual the mark-up of documents, greatly speeding-up the process.

This sounds great. Can I have this tomorrow?

The process of creating machine-readable document required resources and time: it is not possible to do this overnight. The process usually involves starting a pilot project that involving a selection of documents and a limited scope. The pilot helps showcasing to management the concept and benefits.

I would like to start an Akoma Ntoso pilot: what should I do?

Many organizations have or are conducting pilot projects on Akoma Ntoso. All of them are keen to share their knowledge and provide guidance. Get in touch with the HLCM Secretariat to receive guidance.

What do I need to start a pilot?

To start a pilot, we need a complete use case of your needs: this should include details on which documents you would like to start with and their format, including samples; the resources you would be able to put in place; the expected outcome. Any additional details to help framing your needs are warmly welcomed.

Can the High Level Committee on Management provide technical support and resource to set up a pilot in my Organizations?

The HLCM Secretariat is an inter-agency coordination body: it does not have dedicated staff and resources for pilots, but it can provide strategic guidance and connect you with other Organizations that can help.