



Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

**General Assembly
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Note

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Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit was created on an experimental basis under General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) of 4 November 1966 and extended thereafter under Assembly resolutions 2735 A (XXV) of 17 December 1970 and 2924 B (XXVII) of 24 November 1972. By its resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, the Assembly decided to establish the Joint Inspection Unit as a standing subsidiary organ and approved the statute of the Unit, with effect from 1 January 1978. Under article 1, paragraph 2, of its statute, the Unit is responsible to the General Assembly and similarly, to the competent legislative organs of those specialized agencies and other international organizations within the United Nations system which accept the statute.
2. The Unit is composed of 11 Inspectors appointed by the General Assembly on the basis of their special experience in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions, and with due regard to the principles of equitable geographical distribution and reasonable rotation. Inspectors serve in their personal capacity and are appointed for a five-year term, which is renewable for one term.
3. The Inspectors have the broadest powers of investigation in all matters having a bearing on the efficiency of the services and the proper use of funds and, to those ends, make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations. They are mandated to provide an independent view through inspection and evaluation aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination between organizations. In pursuance of its objectives of enhancing the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system, the Unit is required to satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that optimum use is made of the resources available for carrying out those activities. The Unit may issue reports, notes and confidential letters. Reports are addressed to one or more organizations, or to all the organizations when the subject is of interest to the system as a whole, for consideration by the competent legislative organs of the organizations concerned. Notes and confidential letters are submitted to executive heads for their use, as they may decide. The Unit submits annual reports to the General Assembly and to the competent organs of the participating organizations.
4. The Unit is assisted by an Executive Secretary and by such staff as may be authorized in the budget of the Unit. The budget is included in the regular budget of the United Nations and its expenditures are shared by the participating organizations.
5. The present report is the thirty-first of its kind prepared by the Unit since its establishment.

Chapter II

Participating organizations

6. The following organizations have accepted the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit:

United Nations, including its programmes, funds and offices*

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

* United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)
World Food Programme (WFP) which is also a subsidiary body of FAO
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Chapter III

Composition

7. The composition of the Unit as at 31 December 1999 was as follows:

Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso),* Chairman

Sumihiro Kuyama (Japan),**** Vice-Chairman

Andrzej Abraszewski (Poland)*

Fatih Bouayad-Agha (Algeria)**

Armando Duque González (Colombia)***

John D. Fox (United States of America)*

Homero L. Hernández-Sánchez (Dominican Republic)**

Eduard Kudryavtsev (Russian Federation)**

Francesco Mezzalama (Italy)**

Wolfgang Münch (Germany)*

Khalil I. Othman (Jordan)**

* Term expires on 31 December 2000.

** Term expires on 31 December 2002.

*** Term expires on 31 December 2003.

**** Term expires on 31 December 2004.

8. In accordance with article 18 of its statute, which provides that “the Unit shall elect each year from among the Inspectors a Chairman and Vice-Chairman”, and following the Unit’s decision, announced in its 1997 annual report, not to follow, as of 1999, the previous practice of regional rotation for a one-year term in filling those two posts, the Unit re-elected Mr. Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo as Chairman and Mr. Sumihiro Kuyama as Vice-Chairman for the calendar year 2000.

Chapter IV

Human and financial resources

9. For the biennium 1998-1999, the programme budget for the Joint Inspection Unit, as approved by the General Assembly, amounted to \$8,174,000.

10. All 11 Inspectors of the Joint Inspection Unit were on board in 1999. The Unit is assisted by a secretariat of 19 staff members, consisting of an Executive Secretary (D-2), eight research officers (two P-5, two P-4, two P-3 and two P-2), one information technology officer (P-3), three research assistants (one G-7 and two G-6), and six other General Service staff, including only four secretarial posts to serve the Inspectors, the Executive Secretary and nine Professional staff. The proportion of General Service staff to Inspectors and Professional staff in the Unit is only 42.8 per cent, while in the United Nations Secretariat, for example, the rate is 58.1 per cent.

11. In 1999, the staff of the Unit registered a high turnover. By year end, out of a total of 10 posts at the Professional level (of which 2 were vacant at the beginning of the year), three staff members left the secretariat and five new staff members joined it.

12. The Inspectors consider that an indispensable aspect of a revitalized and better performing Joint Inspection Unit is the mix of expertise, professionalism and efficiency of the staff provided to assist them under the responsibility of the Executive Secretary. Efforts will continue to equip the Unit with an optimal mix of skilled and well-qualified staff.

Chapter V

Programme of work and related performance

13. The Unit is called upon to prepare its annual programme of work, which is transmitted by the Secretary-General to the executive heads of other participating organizations and to bodies of the United Nations system concerned with budgetary control, investigation coordination and evaluation. The 1999 programme of work (A/53/841) contained 11 topics.

14. The results of the work of the Unit are either reports, which are submitted to legislative organs, or notes and confidential letters, which are addressed to executive heads for use by them as they may decide. Improving the productivity of the Unit is among the main preoccupations and endeavours of the Inspectors. The total outputs for 1999 showed an improvement over the preceding years: the Unit actually issued and sent for action 7 reports, 10 notes and 1 confidential letter.

Chapter VI

Measures to further enhance the functioning and impact of the Joint Inspection Unit

A. Relevance and impact

15. On 29 October 1999, the General Assembly, having considered, inter alia, the annual reports of the Joint Inspection Unit for 1995-1996¹ and 1996-1997,² its programmes of work for 1996-1997 (A/51/559 and Corr.1) and 1997-1998 (A/52/267), as well as the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit (A/52/206), approved resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999, which provides the Unit with new tools to further enhance its functioning and impact.

16. In the above-mentioned resolution, the General Assembly recognized the improvements made in the functioning of the Unit, encouraged the Unit to continue its efforts in that respect and endorsed the system of follow-up to the reports of the Unit, as contained in annex I to the annual report of the Unit for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997. While it draws some satisfaction from the recognition by the General Assembly of its efforts to make the Joint Inspection Unit more relevant, the Unit is conscious of the need to have that recognition shared by its other participating organizations. Reaching such a goal should be among the Unit's challenges and priorities for 2000 and beyond.

17. In resolution 54/16, the General Assembly also invited the Joint Inspection Unit, when preparing its annual programme of work, to give priority to the reports requested by the participating organizations. In that respect, the Unit would like to recall that article 9 of the statute provides that the annual programme of work shall take into account, besides its own observations and assessments of priorities, (a) requests made by legislative organs and (b) suggestions made by the executive heads. The relevance and timeliness of the work programme therefore depends not only on the knowledge gathered by the Inspectors themselves about ongoing concerns of participating organizations, but also very much on inputs from such requests and suggestions.

18. The impact of the Joint Inspection Unit can only come from the implementation of approved recommendations. This presupposes that, on the one hand, legislative organs take action on recommendations submitted to them and, on the other hand, the executive heads clearly indicate which of the recommendations falling within their mandate are accepted and undertake to implement them expeditiously. Within the context of enhancing the functioning and impact of the Unit, improvement in the handling of its reports by the participating organizations is important. Accordingly, and as a supplement to the follow-up system referred to in chapter VIII of the present report, 10 notes on the subject have been issued, as reflected in annex I.

B. Resource requirements

19. While Inspectors are ultimately accountable for the performance of the Unit, such performance cannot be isolated from the level and quality of the assistance they receive from the Unit's secretariat in discharging their duties, as outlined in

articles 19 and 20 of the statute. In particular, as indicated in the annual report for 1999, a case can be made for the need to increase the staffing resources of the Unit. However, conscious of the financial constraints faced by all its participating organizations, the Unit has refrained from reiterating requests to strengthen its staffing capacities. Nonetheless, the Unit considers that serious consideration should be given in the future to providing it with more adequate resources, so as to allow it better to discharge its mandate.

C. Administrative and budgetary operational independence

20. In paragraphs 19 and 20 of its annual report for 1998,³ the Unit once again raised the issue of its administrative and budgetary operational independence. Since the interpretation by the United Nations Secretariat of the pertinent provisions of article 20 of the statute could compromise the Unit's operational independence, the Unit suggested that the General Assembly might wish to clarify the intent behind the provision of article 20.1 of the statute. In paragraph 182 of its resolution 54/249 of 23 December 1999, the General Assembly stressed the need to ensure that the independence of the Joint Inspection Unit, as the only system-wide external oversight body, is not compromised through the budgetary process.

Chapter VII

Relations and cooperation with participating organizations and other oversight bodies

21. Interaction between the Unit and all its participating organizations, including with their governing organs and secretariats, as well as improved relations and cooperation with other oversight bodies, have received special attention in the activities of the Unit.

A. Participating organizations

22. In order to remain relevant to all its participating organizations, the Joint Inspection Unit recognizes the need for keeping abreast of developments in their governing bodies, while gaining a better knowledge of the functioning of their secretariats. The Unit seeks to ensure that it is not perceived by organizations other than the United Nations itself as a “foreign” mechanism to which contributions are made, nolens volens, as offerings to the common system. Rather, its statutory role, which makes it responsible to the competent legislative organs of each participating organization, will need to be stressed more forcefully. In that connection, the Unit has embarked on a series of meetings with the secretariats of its participating organizations. Meetings have been held so far with WHO and ILO, and have proved useful in showing the commitment of the Unit to entertaining a mutually fruitful dialogue and to ensuring that the relevance of the Joint Inspection Unit is better understood and appreciated.

23. Meetings were also held by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Inspectors and the Executive Secretary with a number of executive heads of participating organizations and other high-level officials of the United Nations system to exchange views on issues of common interest and in connection with the preparation of Unit reports.

24. During the reporting period, a number of Joint Inspection Unit reports were taken up by the legislative organs of the participating organizations and the Inspectors concerned introduced or otherwise discussed the reports and/or followed up on their deliberations. In addition, the Unit participated in forums, as follows:

(a) The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, some Inspectors and the Executive Secretary attended the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly and participated in meetings of the Fifth Committee and informal consultations on agenda items concerning the Joint Inspection Unit;

(b) The Chairman represented the Unit at the eighty-first session of the Programme Committee of FAO (3-7 May 1999). That was the first time that the Unit was represented officially at a meeting of FAO;

(c) The Vice-Chairman and a number of Inspectors represented the Unit at the 276th meeting of the ILO Governing Body, on 9 November 1999. While five reports, as well as the 1997-1998 annual report were taken up, the need to improve the current practice of handling Joint Inspection Unit reports was advocated by a number of delegations;

(d) The Vice-Chairman represented the Unit at the Special Committee of the 156th session of the UNESCO Executive Board (17-19 May 1999), where three Unit reports were considered and specific decisions taken on each of them.

B. Other oversight bodies

25. In its interaction with other oversight bodies, traditional relations with the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations Secretariat have been pursued. However, such efforts have yet to be developed with internal and external oversight bodies of other participating organizations. The Inspectors have also met informally with the external and the internal auditors of a number of specialized agencies.

26. Following the practice of annual rotating chairmanship, the Unit organized and chaired the Third Tripartite Oversight Coordination meeting between the Board of Auditors, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, held at United Nations Headquarters in October 1999.

27. Taking advantage of the completion of service of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, the 1999 Tripartite Oversight Coordination meeting made an assessment of the impact of oversight services in the United Nations during the past five years. It also exchanged views on issues related to internal oversight of jointly financed administrative activities, information technology as an oversight tool and its related security requirements, oversight in the United Nations system by non-United Nations oversight bodies, as well as the implementation of recommendations of internal and external oversight bodies. The Secretary-General addressed the meeting.

28. During the reporting period, the Unit was represented at: the thirtieth meeting of the representatives of internal audit services of the United Nations organizations and multilateral financial institutions, held in Paris in May 1999; the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation, held in Geneva from 7 to 9 December 1999; and at the Evaluation Seminar organized by the Government of Norway in New York from 14 to 16 June 1999.

Chapter VIII

Follow-up on reports and recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

29. In view of the importance of follow-up to Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations, the Unit, in annex I of its annual report for 1996-1997,² submitted an official proposal entitled "Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit" for consideration and action by the legislative organs of its participating organizations.

30. By resolution 54/16, the General Assembly endorsed the system of follow-up as set out in the above-mentioned proposal, and some of the other participating organizations have been taking steps in a similar way. In its resolution, the General Assembly invited the Unit, among other things, to include in its annual reports approved recommendations that had not been implemented. The Assembly also requested the Unit to report to it at its fifty-sixth session on experience with the system, including action taken and comments made by participating organizations.

31. As indicated in paragraph 14 of the proposed follow-up system, the Unit is committed to establishing a systematic process for tracking each step taken towards consideration of a report by the appropriate legislative organs, including measures taken by secretariat officials, in accordance with article 11, paragraph 4, of the Joint Inspection Unit statute.

32. The Unit intends to have the tracking system referred to in paragraph 14 of the follow-up system in place as soon as possible and to include in its annual reports, on a system-wide basis, the status of approved recommendations which have not been implemented.

33. As a first step in this direction, the Unit has compiled information on the timing of the submission by its participating organizations to their legislative organs of the Joint Inspection Unit reports produced during 1994-1999 (see annex I).

34. Information contained in annex I indicates that, during the period from 1994 to 1999, 47 reports were issued, of which 26 (55 per cent) considered system-wide issues, whereas the other 21 reports (45 per cent) related to either a single organization or a few organizations within the United Nations system.

35. As shown in annex I, the majority of the participating organizations submit Joint Inspection Unit reports regularly or reasonably frequently to their legislative organs for consideration. Nine participating organizations regularly presented Joint Inspection Unit reports to their legislative organs during the period from 1994 to 1999. Two organizations took up several Unit reports during that period. It may be worth noting that two organizations began formally presenting reports to their legislative organs in 1998. One organization considered some reports during 1997 and 1998 and another considered Joint Inspection Unit reports only in 1994. Few organizations did not take up Joint Inspection Unit reports.

36. It is observed, in this context, that even when participating organizations submit Joint Inspection Unit reports to their legislative organs, the reports are often taken up one to three years after they are published, although the time lag varies from organization to organization. Furthermore and more importantly, there have not been many instances where legislative organs of participating organizations have

actually made specific decisions on the recommendations contained in the reports. As the basis for the follow-up of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations, it is vital for the legislative organs of the participating organizations to take specific action (i.e., endorse, modify or reject) on each of the relevant recommendations.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/51/34).*

² *Ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/52/34).*

³ *Ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/54/34).*

Annex II

Joint Inspection Unit reports and notes issued during the reporting period

Reports

A/55/288	Review of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its Machinery (JIU/REP/99/1).
A/54/156-E/1999/102	An evaluation of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (JIU/REP/99/2)
A/54/287	Results-based Budgeting: the experience of United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/99/3)
A/54/635	Review of management and administration in the International Labour Office (JIU/REP/99/4) Use of contractual services to support established staff resources in the International Civil Aviation Organization (JIU/REP/99/5)
A/54/700	Private sector involvement and cooperation with the United Nations system (JIU/REP/99/6)
A/54/702	Policies and practices in the use of the services of private management consulting firms in the organizations of the United Nations (JIU/REP/99/7)

Notes

1. JIU/NOTE/99/1	Handling of JIU reports by WHO.
2. JIU/NOTE/99/2	Handling of JIU reports by FAO.
3. JIU/NOTE/99/3	Handling of JIU reports by ILO.
4. JIU/NOTE/99/4	Handling of JIU reports by WMO.
5. JIU/NOTE/99/5	Handling of JIU reports by WIPO.
6. JIU/NOTE/99/6	Handling of JIU reports by ITU.
7. JIU/NOTE/99/7	Handling of JIU reports by UPU.
8. JIU/NOTE/99/8	Handling of JIU reports by UNDP.
9. JIU/NOTE/99/9	Handling of JIU reports by UNICEF.
10. JIU/NOTE/99/10	Handling of JIU reports by ICAO.