
Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report by the Secretariat

1. In 2010, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued 10 reports, one of which was not of direct relevance to WHO¹ or did not call for any specific action from WHO at this stage. Detailed comments by the Secretariat on the remaining nine reports from 2010 have been transmitted to JIU and the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

2. These comments, together with JIU's main findings and recommendations, are summarized in a tracking sheet, which is available upon request. Specifically, the comments concern the following reports: Environmental profile of the United Nations system organizations: review of their in-house environmental management policies and practices (JIU/REP/2010/1); Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/2); Ethics in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/3); Review of enterprise risk management in the United Nations system: benchmarking framework (JIU/REP/2010/4); The audit function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/5); Preparedness of United Nations system organizations for the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) (JIU/REP/2010/6); Policies and procedures for the administration of trust funds in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2010/7); Inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/8); and United Nations corporate partnerships: the role and functioning of the Global Compact (JIU/REP/2010/9).

3. By October 2011, JIU had issued three more reports, one of which was not of direct relevance to WHO² or did not call for any specific action from WHO at this stage. The two others are: Review of the medical service in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/1) and South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3).

4. WHO's comments on these reports, together with those on the subsequent reports to be issued by JIU during 2011, will be submitted to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee at its seventeenth meeting in January 2013.

¹ Document JIU/REP/2010/10, Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

² Document JIU/REP/2011/2, Transparency in the selection and appointment of senior managers in the United Nations Secretariat.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN PREVIOUS REPORTS

5. Regarding progress made in implementing the recommendations of previous JIU reports considered by this Committee at its thirteenth meeting in January 2011 and with respect to the report on Selection and conditions of service of executive heads in the United Nations organizations (JIU/REP/2009/8), there are 13 recommendations, directed variously at the Secretary-General, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, or the legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations. The JIU's recommendations for the last named are summarized as follows.

6. The legislative bodies that have not yet done so should conduct hearings/meetings with candidates running for the post of executive head, in order to enhance the transparency and credibility of the selection process. They should establish timelines for the selection process ending at least three months before the expiring date of the mandate of the incumbent, in order to ensure a smooth transition.

7. They should furthermore request all candidates to submit, together with their curriculum vitae, a certificate of good health signed by a recognized medical facility; limit the terms of their executive heads to a maximum of two successive terms not exceeding five years each; condemn and prohibit unethical practices such as promises, favours, invitations and gifts provided by candidates or their supporting governments during the election campaign; and ensure that provisions comprehensively addressing conflicts of interest pertaining to, and/or wrongdoing or misconduct by, the executive head are in place.

8. They should direct the internal oversight or ethics office/function, as appropriate, or JIU to conduct investigations into alleged cases of wrongdoing or other misconduct by the executive heads, including retaliation and irregularities relating to the financial disclosure statements, with the outcome of the investigation reported directly to the legislative body of the respective organization.

9. Those legislative bodies that have not done so already (including WHO) should establish a financial disclosure statement policy applicable to their executive heads; and all the legislative bodies should establish rigorous policies for the acceptance of gifts, honours, decorations etc. by their executive heads.

10. Finally, the legislative bodies should include in the terms of appointment of their executive heads a provision related to the possible termination allowance on the basis of the standards of the International Civil Service Commission.

11. WHO, together with a few of its sister agencies, has been singled out in the report (see paragraphs 33, 51 and 52) as representing best-practice examples in the important areas of interviewing the candidates and having detailed selection criteria in place (as done by the Executive Board in resolution EB97.R10).

12. WHO has also been singled out as the best-practice example regarding the mandatory medical examination of all candidates (which is performed by its medical service, but, according to JIU, could be replaced with a certificate of good health signed by a recognized medical facility in the absence of an internal service).

13. The JIU recommendation regarding the limitation of the term of the executive heads to a maximum of five years, once renewable, also mirrors long-standing WHO practice, as reflected in the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly. The recommendation concerning the investigation of unethical practices on the part of staff members likewise reflects WHO's current Staff Rules and the authority of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

14. With regard to the issues of conflict of interest and financial disclosure, the executive head annually submits a Declaration of Interest form (which includes disclosure of conflicts of interest). Finally, as to including a termination allowance in the terms of appointment of an executive head on the basis of the International Civil Service Commission's standards, the Secretariat considers that in the present climate of financial rigour and the need for the utmost care in introducing additional staff benefits, at whatever level, this recommendation is premature.

15. Copies of the JIU report (JIU/REP/2009/8) and the detailed comments of WHO thereon, which are contained in the recommendations tracking sheet that accompanied the Secretariat's last report to the Committee on JIU reports,¹ are available upon request.

ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

16. The Committee is invited to take note of this report.

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¹ Document EBPBAC13/6.