



## **Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations**

### **Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit**

#### **Report by the Director-General**

In accordance with agreed procedures, six formal reports of the Joint Inspection Unit are submitted, with the Director-General's comments thereon, for the Board's consideration.

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Director-General is transmitting to the Board, together with his comments, the following six reports formally addressed to him by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) The advancement of women through and in the programmes of the United Nations system: what happens after the Fourth World Conference on Women? (document JIU/REP/95/5);
- (2) The involvement of the United Nations system in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance (document JIU/REP/95/9);
- (3) Strengthening of the United Nations system capacity for conflict prevention (document JIU/REP/95/13);
- (4) Coordination of policy and programming frameworks for more effective development (document JIU/REP/96/3);
- (5) Review of financial resources allocated by the United Nations system to activities by non-governmental organizations (document JIU/REP/96/4);
- (6) Comparison of methods of calculating equitable geographical distribution within the United Nations common system (document JIU/REP/96/7).

<sup>1</sup> The reports are attached only to the copies of the document distributed to members of the Executive Board.

2. The annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit, describing activities during the period 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997 (Official Record of the United Nations General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 34 - document A/52/34) has been transmitted to the Director-General. Copies are available to members of the Board upon request. The Board may wish to note Annex I, Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit. The Director-General is studying these proposals and will convey his comments to the Board at a future session.

## REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

### (1) **The advancement of women through and in the programmes of the United Nations system: what happens after the Fourth World Conference on Women? (document JIU/REP/95/5)**

3. This study outlines progress in the area of the advancement of women and emphasizes the need for a stronger managerial focus on the substantive programmes for women's advancement and on the improvement of women's status within the United Nations system. The report acknowledges the slow and complex process of transforming organizational cultures in order to incorporate gender perspectives, issues and activities in all policies and programmes of the United Nations system.

4. The report highlights the need to ensure a more strategic, responsive and well-managed set of organizational programmes within the United Nations system on women and gender, with an overriding emphasis on pragmatic actions and results in three interrelated areas: (i) substantive programmes that attempt to incorporate gender perspectives and issues into the mainstream of activities; (ii) improvement of the status of women in the system through innovative approaches to human resources management that move beyond the focus on percentages of women professional staff; and (iii) the critical role of the United Nations as a focal point in both substantive and human resources programmes for women.

5. The study includes, for each of the three areas, a set of concrete recommendations on which to base strategies for action. It calls for stronger awareness and support from governing bodies and executive heads throughout the system; increased training in techniques of gender analysis and in improvement of women's recruitment and advancement; greater substantive and cooperative interagency processes; and well-established mechanisms for accountability and monitoring. The report argues convincingly that these strategies, *inter alia*, would encourage and facilitate more effective programmes on women and gender.

6. ACC welcomed the positive tone of the report and considered the assessment made of the current initiative a good starting point for future action. It emphasized the importance of one key point noted in the study: "... **substantive women's programmes and women's status issues are intertwined** ... substantive gender programmes will be stronger, better applied and better understood if they are led and implemented by both men and women, especially at top management and programme management levels. Conversely women's status and career advancement in an organization should be facilitated if that organization is already gender-aware and gender-oriented in its substantive programmes".<sup>1</sup>

7. ACC also welcomed the recognition given in the study to the responsibilities of governing bodies and Member States and considered that if Member States were to place gender balance on an equal footing with geographical distribution, this would also be a "propelling force".

8. The Director-General subscribes to the substance and recommendations of the report. In fact, a number of "actions needed" outlined in the report both in the areas of substantive programmes for women's advancement

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<sup>1</sup> Document JIU/REP/95/5, paragraph 15.

and improving the status of women in the organizations have been addressed in WHO. For example, one of the priority functions of the Women's Health and Development programme (WHD) in WHO is to integrate gender into policies, programmes and research in WHO and in countries. WHD focal points and programmes exist in all regional offices. Furthermore, in order to devise a more strategic approach to the incorporation of gender issues into mainstream activities, an interdivisional gender working group is framing a WHO policy on gender and health and a long-term strategy for capacity-building in gender and health. Additionally, the Director-General created in 1996 the post of Coordinator, Employment and Participation of Women in the Work of WHO in an effort to promote the advancement of women in the Organization. Action identified in the report has also been taken in a number of areas to improve the status of women in WHO, including combating of sexual harassment; work and family issues; and governing body support, in particular the participation of Executive Board members in the Steering Committee on the Employment and Participation of Women in the Work of WHO.

## **(2) The involvement of the United Nations system in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance (document JIU/REP/95/9)**

9. This report reviews the ability of the United Nations to provide humanitarian assistance, with a number of recommendations for improvement.

10. ACC welcomed the report. It noted that many of the issues raised had already been addressed on an ongoing basis at interagency level as part of a systematic effort to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian response to emergencies.

11. The Director-General would note that there have been two important developments, since the report was prepared.

(a) Subsequent to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, with its working groups and sub-working groups, has studied the entire system of humanitarian assistance and provided a report with recommendations to the Economic and Social Council meeting in July 1997.

(b) The Secretary-General has initiated a reform process within the United Nations system, which will have an important impact on agencies, their roles, and their capacity to react to emergencies. WHO, as a full member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, is fully committed to the process of enhanced coordination.

## **(3) Strengthening of the United Nations system capacity for conflict prevention (document JIU/REP/95/13)**

12. This report calls for a proactive and comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention. Key concepts are preventive diplomacy and pre-conflict peace-building. It describes the capacity of United Nations agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations in this field. A plea is made to move conflict prevention high on the agenda for United Nations reform.

13. ACC considered the report in the context of peace-building, and considered ways of reinforcing the United Nations system's overall capacity for early warning, and pooling all the system's substantive capacities for analysing trends and factors that can lead to crises. It also pointed out restrictions on conflict prevention which relate to either respect of sovereignty or financial considerations.

14. The Director-General recognizes that the root causes of today's internal and cross-border conflicts are closely related to the failure of global development. As a direct contribution to preventive diplomacy, WHO, in cooperation with donors, academia and other agencies, recently launched a modest initiative - "Health as a bridge

for peace” - to explore ways in which health can help to even out socioeconomic disparities, facilitate dialogue, or even initiate peace negotiations.

#### **(4) Coordination of policy and programming frameworks for more effective development (document JIU/REP/96/3)**

15. The main purpose of this report is to contribute to the efforts of Member States to rationalize the operations of the complex network of institutions for multilateral development cooperation, in order to ensure optimum efficiency, integrated approaches and lower overhead costs in their support for developing countries. One way of achieving these objectives is to integrate or harmonize, to the extent possible, the numerous institutional policy and programming formats, mechanisms or frames of references, defined in the study as “frameworks”, that are used by organizations and donors to formulate, implement and evaluate their development cooperation policies, strategies, programmes and projects.

16. The report focuses on policy and programming frameworks. It deals particularly with the funds and programmes of the United Nations development system, namely, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP.

17. ACC agreed that in a context of scarce financial resources, when no one can afford to duplicate activities undertaken by different parts of the system, the issue of better coordination is of great importance. It also agrees with the emphasis on the lead role of governments, which have the main responsibility for coordination of all external inputs in support of national development. Most of the issues covered by the report have already received considerable attention within the United Nations system and continue to be addressed at interagency level, more particularly in ACC, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and the Joint Consultation Group on Policy (JCGP). ACC therefore noted that a number of proposals contained in the report and in its recommendations have been overtaken by events and did not need further comment.

18. Although the report and its recommendations have a direct impact on the work of the JCGP group of United Nations development bodies, the Director-General shares the common concern to enhance coordination of international development cooperation at national, regional and global levels. He recognizes the need to collaborate with all organizations of the United Nations system in order to ensure that policy and programming frameworks promote and strengthen development cooperation.

#### **(5) Review of financial resources allocated by the United Nations system to activities by non-governmental organizations (document JIU/REP/96/4)**

19. One of the most profound changes in the international scene in recent years is the increased involvement of nongovernmental organizations in the activities of the United Nations system. An earlier report of the Joint Inspection Unit dealt with operational aspects of this phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> WHO suggested that it would be useful to supplement the information in the earlier report with information on the allocation of financial resources devoted by the United Nations system to activities of the nongovernmental organizations. The report is thus welcomed by the Director-General as a first step towards understanding the economic aspects of this change.

20. The introduction reviews the various rules and procedures within the United Nations system for the allocation of funds from both regular and extrabudgetary sources for activities carried out by nongovernmental organizations as implementing partners. It notes that there is no analysis of the United Nations itself, which does not directly finance activities of these organizations. Sections II and III of the report look in detail at the financial rules, regulations and procedures used by the United Nations system for allocating resources to nongovernmental and other voluntary organizations, and the various criteria and approaches used to identify and select the

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<sup>1</sup> Working with NGOs: operational activities for development of the United Nations system with non-governmental organizations and governments at the grassroots and national levels. Document JIU/REP/93/1.

organizations as partners. Sections IV and V deal respectively with matters relating to accountability for funds provided by the United Nations system, and capacity-building through financial and management support for national nongovernmental organizations. Of particular interest is a conclusion that “the weakness of the system resides in the fact that on the one hand the accountability for funds going to NGO activities is insufficient and on the other that there is a need for a better reporting on the resources allocated to NGOs”.<sup>1</sup>

21. The report makes seven recommendations to the United Nations system. The Director-General agrees with the general thrust of the recommendations, and several of those relevant to the situation of WHO are already in place, for example, Recommendation 2, which refers to the appointment of “NGO liaison officers”. WHO is also participating in discussions in CCPOQ on an interagency mechanism for the exchange of information on issues related to operational collaboration with nongovernmental organizations. However, some of the recommendations would require funding for their implementation, for example, Recommendation 4, which refers to the creation of budget lines to fund *inter alia* the participation of nongovernmental organizations from developing countries in headquarters meetings. This important recommendation will help further to integrate the views of national organizations in work and policy framing in the United Nations system. It has been the practice of WHO to encourage its international nongovernmental partners to facilitate, wherever possible, the participation of their national members in its activities. In the light of current financial constraints however, it would appear that, for the moment, implementation of such a recommendation would be difficult for WHO. Recommendation 7 concerns working with nongovernmental organizations at national level as a means of contributing more effectively to a country’s economic and social development. It contains a number of specific recommendations relating to strengthening of government capacity to maintain effective records of national organizations, compile databases, etc. WHO regional offices have already been making considerable efforts along these lines.

#### **(6) Comparison of methods of calculating equitable geographical distribution within the United Nations common system (document JIU/REP/96/7)**

22. This study was undertaken in response to a request from UNESCO for a comparison of the methods used to calculate equitable geographical distribution within the organizations of the United Nations common system. Its main objective was to identify those principles that allow the maximum number of elements to be included in any methodology used for calculating the post quota for each Member State. It intends to stimulate a general reflection on the subject, on the basis of which a further study is envisaged to set out various methodologies for calculating the ranges of geographical distribution. Thus, each organization would ultimately have a choice of methodologies, from which it could select according to its own “development” level in the matter of managing geocultural representation.

23. Although ACC has not commented separately on the matter, the United Nations Secretary-General provided extensive general and detailed comments on the report, and shared the conclusion of the Inspectors that “audacious ideas”, as expressed in the report, should be the subject of general reflection. He stressed that any new system of desirable ranges should *inter alia* produce predictable and verifiable results, be easy to administer, and be transparent.

24. The report points out that the WHO system of “desirable ranges” is in large part modelled on that of the United Nations and already takes account of more elements than that of a number of other agencies. Unlike the United Nations (and most other agencies), WHO applies the geographical distribution system also to extrabudgetary posts. The Director-General recognizes the complexity of the question of geographical distribution of posts and of its application in the United Nations system. He will bring to the attention of the Executive Board the outcome of any further reflection on this subject which may result from a follow-up study of the Joint Inspection Unit.

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<sup>1</sup> Document JIU/REP/96/4, page vi.

**ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

25. The Board may wish to thank the Joint Inspection Unit, express its agreement or otherwise with the comments of the Director-General, and request him to transmit this document to the United Nations Secretary-General, the participating organizations of the Unit, the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, and the External Auditor of WHO, for their information and perusal.

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