
Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report by the Director-General

1. This report presents those reports and notes of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system issued since the Secretariat's last report to the Committee.¹ This annual review cycle covers the period October 2022 to December 2023. In late 2022, the JIU issued one note, and in 2023 five reports,² two of which were not relevant to WHO.³ Moreover, the JIU has issued three new reports in 2024 (although they are numbered in the 2023 series), of which one is not relevant to WHO. The two considered relevant to WHO will be presented in the Secretariat's report to the forty-second meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee in May 2025.

2. The Secretariat notes that during 2022, the JIU experienced delays in completing reviews, because the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic meant that work slowed down or was suspended, as a result of which several reviews were completed in 2023.

3. The 2022 note and 2023 reports that are of relevance to WHO, have been published since the 2023 report by the Secretariat and are included in this report are the following: Review of measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations: managing for achieving organizational effectiveness (document JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1); Review of the internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms available to staff of the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/2); Review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/3); and Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/4).

4. The Secretariat also provides its initial comments on recently published JIU reports to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which in turn includes them as part of consolidated United Nations agency comments in a document subsequently issued by the CEB, available on the JIU website's reports page under "Comments".⁴

¹ Document EBPBAC38/6.

² All JIU reports and notes are available at <https://www.unjiu.org/content/reports-and-notes> (accessed 26 March 2024).

³ Documents JIU/REP/2023/1 (Review of management and administration in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) and JIU/REP/2023/5 (Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

⁴ See "CEB Comments" for individual JIU reports, available at <https://www.unjiu.org/content/reports-and-notes> (accessed 26 March 2024).

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS DIRECTED TO THE SECRETARIAT

5. Paragraphs 6–27 below summarize the Secretariat’s consideration of, and, where relevant, progress made in implementing, recommendations directed to executive heads of United Nations system organizations made in JIU reports issued during the period October 2022 to December 2023 that are of direct relevance to the Organization.

Review of measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations: managing for achieving organizational effectiveness (document JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1)

6. *JIU recommendation 1: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations should collaborate, in the framework of the CEB, to establish a common set of categories for voluntary self-identification by personnel by June 2024, for the purposes of monitoring, analysing, evaluating and reporting on progress and success in achieving the goals of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in addressing racism and racial discrimination.* The Secretariat notes that this recommendation does not fall within the sole remit of WHO. The establishment of a common set of categories for voluntary self-identification in the United Nations system is welcomed and will contribute to any inter-agency initiative resulting from this recommendation. The Secretariat will await further guidance from the CEB and notes that further inter-agency discussions may subsequently be required.

7. *JIU recommendation 2: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations should direct their respective training and learning units to develop and implement a high-impact and integrated curriculum to improve awareness, learning and performance that responds to the needs of personnel of various functions, categories and levels in order to address all forms and configurations of racism and racial discrimination in the workplace.* The Secretariat, in partnership with other United Nations organizations, will put in place a mandatory training course on cultural competency and anti-racism in order to improve knowledge and performance, and to address all forms and manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in the workplace. Since 2018 members of recruitment selection panels have been sensitized for unconscious bias. Online courses on anti-racism for self-education are also available on WHO’s eLearning platform. WHO also plans to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) principles, priorities and targets into other applicable training courses and to provide additional capacity-building opportunities for staff, such as workshops on racial equity and non-discrimination.

8. *JIU recommendation 3: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not done so should provide sufficient resources to support the achievement of defined results for the implementation of action plans for addressing racism and racial discrimination.* The Secretariat established its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Unit as part of the Gender, Rights and Equity Department in early 2023 to develop a DEI strategy, support its implementation, monitor, track, evaluate and report on progress, and adapt the strategy for the WHO workforce to take account of evolving needs and challenges. The soon-to-be launched strategy, which is based on the United Nations Strategic Action Plan on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations Secretariat, will guide ongoing efforts to ensure that resources are adequately distributed to where they are needed. The Secretariat has also developed an anti-racism policy for consultation among key stakeholders. Within the Secretariat, a global DEI network, the stakeholders responsible for implementation, including staff-led DEI catalyst groups, and an affinity group, United Against Racism, help to amplify and support the implementation of the strategy for staff within the Organization. The affinity group was created in an effort to reduce the prevalence and impact of racism and ethnicity-based discrimination, thereby fostering diversity, equity and inclusion. The Secretariat has also established a Respectful, Safe and Healthy Work Environment Programme and Platform to facilitate efficient, cohesive efforts to promote

a positive workplace culture that champions trust, professionalism, integrity, collaboration and caring as fundamental values.

9. *JIU recommendation 4: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations, as members of the CEB, should jointly develop and provide resources to a high-level, inter-agency standing mechanism intended to unite organizations, leverage their existing capacities and comparative added value to collaborate and work together to respond to both immediate and longer-term needs for addressing racism and racial discrimination across the United Nations system, and address the transformative changes needed to enhance the continued relevance and value of the various efforts at both the organizational and the system-wide levels.* In early 2023, WHO contributed in-kind technical support to the timebound, multidisciplinary Working Group of Focal Points on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of the CEB's High-Level Committee on Management to deliver a glossary, principles and best practices. The Secretariat notes that it has reservations in this regard and that there are limitations on cost-sharing for the mechanisms envisioned by this recommendation. In October 2023, WHO signed a joint declaration of the Geneva Alliance against Racism,¹ reaffirming its commitment to fighting racism and racial discrimination. The objective of the Alliance is to share good practices across organizations in order to address racism and racial discrimination in the workplace and to coordinate ongoing activities or planned initiatives to maximize their desirable impact. In March 2024, WHO committed to 16 agreed pledges to address racism through the Alliance.

10. *JIU recommendation 5: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations should establish, by 2024, an accountability framework that sets out the expected results, outcomes and key performance indicators for addressing racism and racial discrimination, and report periodically to their legislative organs and/or governing bodies on progress made in achieving the predefined results.* The Secretariat notes that its DEI strategy and proposed anti-racism policy and action plan form the normative framework for: advancing the Organization's ongoing anti-racism activities; facilitating Organization-wide collaborative efforts; and serving as the basis for monitoring and accountability. As part of this effort, the Secretariat is developing defined improvement areas, activities, and performance indicators with targets to measure progress. The Secretariat will report annually to the United Nations Office at Geneva's Office of Anti-racism on the pledges of the Geneva Alliance against Racism, noting the target of fully accomplishing these pledges within three years.

11. *JIU recommendation 6: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations should strengthen the equal distribution of opportunities in human resources management for all personnel.* The Secretariat notes that a more geographically balanced workforce composition remains on its human resources agenda. Achieving diversity will be supported by hiring talent from un- and underrepresented countries, and from low- and middle-income countries, to achieve equitable geographical representation. Further improvements will be made through outreach and by reviewing human resources policies and recruitment, mobility, onboarding, career support and performance management processes to ensure there are no provisions that may have a disparate impact on employees depending on their region of origin.

Review of the internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms available to staff of the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/2)

12. *JIU recommendation 1: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should, by the end of 2025, harmonize the time limits for their administrations' response to*

¹ The Secretariat for the Alliance is managed by the Office of Anti-racism of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), see <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/engage/campaigns/united-against-racism> (accessed 10 April 2024)

requests for management evaluation or administrative review to a minimum of 45 calendar days and a maximum of 60 calendar days, irrespective of whether the request originates from a staff member at headquarters or in a field location; or propose this harmonization for decision by their legislative organs or governing bodies. The Secretariat has implemented this recommendation. The Secretariat responds to requests for administrative review within the recommended 60 calendar days, irrespective of whether the request originates from a staff member at headquarters or in a regional or country office (Staff Rules 1225.3 to 1225.5). In 2023, the average response time was 55.5 calendar days. However, the Secretariat would prefer to maintain the existing allowance for an extension period on reasonable grounds at a maximum of 90 calendar days. This takes into account situations where the parties do not object to an extension, for example to allow for informal resolution of the matter. A maximum extension period addresses the requirement for expeditious disposal of cases while allowing for a comprehensive resolution.

13. *JIU recommendation 2: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should, by the end of 2025, introduce into their regulatory frameworks a provision for suspension of action of contested decisions at the pre-tribunal stage, ex officio or upon the appellant's request, in cases of prima facie unlawfulness of the decision, error of fact, particular urgency or when implementation of the decision could cause irreparable damage; or propose the introduction of this provision for decision to their legislative organs or governing bodies.* The Secretariat has implemented the key aspects of this recommendation, as the matters included are already addressed as part of the administrative review process. In principle, a suspension of a decision could be applied at any time, when appropriate.

14. *JIU recommendation 3: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations should, where applicable and by the end of 2025, establish terms of reference or similar instruments for the Chairs and secretaries of their peer review bodies that set out the required qualifications, including legal expertise, their functions and reporting lines, in order to provide the safeguards necessary for their structural independence and impartiality.* The Secretariat has implemented this recommendation. In its report, the JIU cites WHO as one of only two organizations that have “professionalized their peer review mechanisms by employing external Chairs with a legal background, who are also supported by full-time, legally trained secretaries or secretariat personnel”.¹

15. *JIU recommendation 6: the executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should, by the end of 2025, review the procedural rules governing formal internal appeal mechanisms regarding the time limits applicable to the administrations' responses at different stages of the internal appeal processes, and specify the conditions for extending the time limits, with a view to reducing associated delays and fostering legal certainty and accountability.* The Secretariat has implemented this recommendation. Time limits applicable to the WHO Administration's responses at different stages of the internal appeal process are stipulated in the WHO Staff Rules and WHO eManual. In 2022, WHO conducted an independent review of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and independence of its internal justice system, which found that the “average duration of proceedings is in accordance with the procedural deadlines and timelines for decision are respected”. WHO considers it necessary to have room to extend those time limits on exceptional grounds with valid reasons, as sometimes an extension is required (or even requested by a staff member) to resolve matters informally.

¹ Document JIU/REP/2023/2, paragraph 195(a).

16. *JIU recommendation 7: the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should, by the end of 2025, adjust the regulatory frameworks of their organizations and remove all restrictions regarding legal representation of their staff in internal justice processes, with the aim of allowing staff to choose their legal counsel freely and without restriction.* The Secretariat has implemented this recommendation. WHO's regulatory framework has no "restrictions regarding legal representation" of staff in the internal appeal process.

Review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/3)

17. *JIU recommendation 3: the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, starting from 2025, present to their legislative organs and/or governing bodies a regular report on the implementation of the accountability framework and on the costs of its key components.* The Secretariat notes that it already reports to its legislative bodies, with periodic updates as relevant, on progress in its accountability and oversight functions and work, reporting on accountability overall, individual accountability and oversight offices. The Secretariat is now considering the new JIU reference accountability framework with a view to updating the Organization's global accountability framework, including clear guidance on reporting.

18. *JIU recommendation 4: the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should prepare, by the end of 2024, through consultations held in the appropriate inter-agency mechanisms, a common United Nations system reference accountability framework maturity model, taking into consideration the updated JIU reference accountability framework.* The Secretariat welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with other United Nations agencies towards a "common United Nations system reference accountability framework maturity model", but notes that this recommendation comes under the managerial control of the appropriate United Nations system body (whether the CEB, its High-Level Committee on Management or other body).

19. *JIU recommendation 5: the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should prepare, by the end of 2025, an assessment of the maturity of their own accountability frameworks against the common United Nations system reference accountability framework maturity model and share the results with their respective legislative organs and/or governing bodies for information.* As mentioned in paragraph 18 above, the Secretariat welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with other United Nations agencies towards a "common United Nations system reference accountability framework maturity model". Implementation of this recommendation will be fully dependent on the outcome of work on recommendation 4 regarding an agreed model. In the meantime, the Organization will be reviewing its current global accountability framework against the new JIU reference accountability framework.

Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/4)

20. *JIU recommendation 1: the executive heads of those United Nations system organizations that do not already participate on the Implementation Board of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy should nominate a representative to serve on the Board by its first meeting in 2024.* The Secretariat notes that it has implemented this recommendation. WHO has been a member of various United Nations system-wide mental health task forces, including the United Nations Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Implementation Board, where it has been the primary contributor of technical support, given its mandate. This support includes the WHO Workplace Mental Health and Well-being

Policy Brief and Guidelines, which served as the basis for the United Nations Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. WHO already has a representative on the Implementation Board.

21. *JIU recommendation 2: executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not already done so, should define an evidence-based and data-driven organizational approach to the mental health and well-being of their personnel and design, by the end of 2025, a workplace action plan and reflect its principles in their enterprise risk management process, their occupational health and safety framework and their human resources strategies.* The Secretariat has developed an implementation plan for its Workforce Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. Full implementation will be dependent on securing the necessary internal resources, including for the development of a component global psychosocial risk assessment and mitigation plan.

22. *JIU recommendation 4: by the end of 2024, executive heads of United Nations system organizations should review the rules governing the return to work of personnel, including provisions for granting accommodations to facilitate the return process, in order to ensure the inclusiveness of mental health-related considerations, and develop standard operating procedures that clearly identify roles and responsibilities, including decision-making.* The Secretariat has implemented this recommendation and has standard operating procedures in place which it continuously updates and revises accordingly, to ensure accommodations are made.

23. *JIU recommendation 5: by the end of 2024, executive heads of United Nations system organizations should assess and identify any gaps or areas to improve their counselling function in their organizational context, using the guidance on professional standards for counsellors prepared by the United Nations Staff/Stress Counsellors Group and endorsed by the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as key elements highlighted by the Joint Inspection Unit in the present report.* The Secretariat has implemented this recommendation. WHO has been and is an active participant in both networks and provides key technical support, given its expertise and mandate.

24. *JIU recommendation 8: executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure that their organizations collaborate on the mapping of psychosocial support capacity available in all locations and consider the system-wide capacity when designing their workplace action plans, capitalizing on shared services, cost-sharing and other models for cost-effective and efficient delivery.* The Secretariat is currently considering this recommendation. WHO notes that this is an important, evolving field, where collaboration among United Nations system organizations is helpful to share lessons learned in ensuring the provision of staff counselling and work-planning. However, there appears to be an assumption in the text of the recommendation that shared services and cost-sharing are already in place at country level. While this is important for future planning, neither the JIU report nor the recommendation specify how entities would operationalize shared services or cost-sharing. A number of unresolved issues and some questions remain regarding shared services and cost-sharing, particularly with regard to identifying differences in operational modalities between United Nations funds and programmes, and specialized agencies at country level. WHO has concerns regarding system-wide cost-sharing for this area of work, given the significant in-kind technical support already provided to United Nations agencies by WHO and broader issues regarding the budget development process for these shared costs.

25. *JIU recommendation 9: executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure that their workplace action plans on the mental health and well-being of their personnel, to be designed by the end of 2025, identify barriers to accessing psychosocial support services, including prioritizing stigma reduction through mental health literacy initiatives, outreach and health-promotion measures.*

The Secretariat notes that implementation of this recommendation is in progress. It has held webinars on mental health literacy for staff as part of its Mental Health and Well-being Strategy workplan.

26. *JIU recommendation 10: to maximize return on investment, executive heads of United Nations system organizations should, by 2026, ensure that well-being programmes and activities are embedded in and complement the evidence-based and data-driven approach of the organization to mental health and well-being and are routinely monitored and assessed.* The Secretariat has included the elements of this recommendation in its Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, with full implementation dependent on available human resources.

27. *JIU recommendation 11: executive heads of United Nations system organizations should explore integrating, by the end of 2024, mental health and well-being considerations into training programmes, in particular for managers, as a means to provide opportunities for facilitated discussions and enhanced learning and to support employees with mental health conditions.* The Secretariat is currently considering this recommendation and notes that it has included the elements of this recommendation in its Mental Health and Well-being Strategy implementation workplan. Implementation is not planned for 2024, given the availability of resources.

ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION RATES OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS

28. JIU reports provide valuable syntheses of good practices and benchmarking across the United Nations system on topics covered by JIU reviews. At its previous meetings, the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee requested the Secretariat to add further detail on progress made in implementing recommendations made in previous JIU reports and to continue to pay close attention to the implementation of recommendations contained in JIU reports.¹ The Secretariat continues to ensure that it follows up on all relevant JIU recommendations.

29. The Secretariat records its status updates for each individual JIU recommendation on the electronic platform for the JIU's web-based tracking system and on the WHO internal consolidated platform for tracking and managing recommendations and related dashboard. A full list of JIU recommendations relevant to WHO, together with the Secretariat's implementation status and actions taken, is available through the consolidated recommendations dashboard on the Member States Portal of the WHO website.²

30. In the past year, WHO has continued to make good progress in implementing recommendations made in JIU reports issued between 2017 and 2023 (see graphics in the Annex to this report showing rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations).

31. As of 5 March 2024, WHO had implemented 90% of accepted recommendations made by the JIU during the period 2017–2023,³ which exceeds the overall implementation rate of 76% by all United

¹ See documents EB147/2, paragraph 24; EB151/2, paragraph 29; and EB153/2, paragraph 24.

² <https://www.who.int/about/governance/member-states-portal> (accessed on 25 March 2024).

³ The percentage of recommendations fully implemented by WHO stands at 100% for the 2017 and 2019 JIU reports; 97% for the 2018 reports; 90% for the 2020 reports; 88% for the 2021 reports; and 60% for the 2023 reports. No reports relevant to WHO were issued in 2022, except for the JIU note on racism and racial discrimination (document JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1, released in 2023); work to implement the various recommendations contained in this note is either in progress or has not yet started.

Nations system organizations.¹ During the same period, WHO's acceptance of JIU recommendations remained high, at 86%, compared to the United Nations agency average of 70%. In addition, in the past year, WHO has fully implemented and closed six JIU reports issued between 2016 and 2021.² As of the time of writing, WHO has fully closed all outstanding recommendations from JIU reports issued up to the end of 2017 and in 2019. Table 1 presents a list of reports issued more than two years ago containing open recommendations relevant to WHO for which implementation is under way.

Table 1: List of open recommendations, JIU reports 2018–2021

Year	Report	Number of open recommendations (of total number of recommendations relevant to WHO)
2018	JIU/REP/2018/6 – Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system	1 (of 10)
2020	JIU/REP/2020/8 – Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system	4 (of 10)
2021	JIU/REP/2021/4 – Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations	1 (of 9)
2021	JIU/REP/2021/5 – Review of the ethics function in the United Nations System	1 (of 4)
2021	JIU/REP/2021/6 – Business continuity management in United Nations system organizations	1 (of 6)

32. Given the broad nature of JIU recommendations addressing all United Nations system organizations, the Secretariat interprets the meaning and relevance of individual recommendations in the context of WHO and in the implementation of recommendations. Implementation rates are always lower for recently issued reports. The Secretariat also notes that several JIU recommendations go beyond WHO's remit/managerial control (with action often under the managerial control of the High-Level Committee on Management of the CEB); in these cases, the Secretariat may consider the recommendations not to be relevant to WHO. The Secretariat also assigns implementation target dates to JIU recommendations, which is in line with the process followed for oversight recommendations issued by other offices. This ensures effective monitoring and reporting on JIU recommendations and facilitates the assessment of those that are effectively overdue.

33. Regarding Table 1, the open recommendation on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings is being addressed through the finalization of a new meetings and events module within the Business Management System, which will include standardized accessibility requirements. As regards the need to mainstream environmental sustainability through the

¹ The current reported implementation rate of 90% compares favourably with WHO's reported implementation rate of 82% for JIU report recommendations issued between 2017 and 2022, as documented in EBPBAC38/6.

² Documents JIU/REP/2016/10 (Knowledge management in the United Nations system), JIU/REP/2019/8 (Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations), JIU/REP/2019/9 (Review of contemporary practices in the external outsourcing of services to commercial service providers by United Nations system organizations), JIU/REP/2020/3 (Common premises in the United Nations system: current practices and future prospects), JIU/REP/2020/6 (Multilingualism in the United Nations system) and JIU/REP/2020/7 (Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness).

formulation of a blueprint to make WHO carbon neutral by 2030, the Secretariat and governing bodies have progressed in this area, with consideration by the 154th session of the Executive Board and an anticipated resolution of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.¹ Regarding the one remaining open recommendation on the review of the management of implementing partners, in 2024 the Secretariat is continuing to review aspects of its policies on managing implementing partners and to revise them as needed, and it has joined the United Nations Partner Portal. In addressing the JIU report on the ethics function and its recommendation to conduct a “value for money” study of declaration of interest and financial disclosure programmes, the Secretariat has made significant progress towards conducting analyses and enhancing its in-house declaration of interest programme to ensure it is state of the art and in keeping with WHO’s mandate. To close the one remaining recommendation from the JIU report on business continuity management – to implement the organizational resilience management system and its revised performance indicators – the Secretariat is further developing this system in line with its approved business continuity management framework, with completion expected by the end of 2024.

34. Following on from Member States’ requests and comments made respectively at the thirty-fourth and thirty-sixth meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee,² and recognizing the revised mandate of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee approved by the Executive Board at its 150th session, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee submitted its final draft process for managing potential allegations against the Director-General to the thirty-eighth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.³ The Executive Board, at its 153rd session, decided to request the former co-facilitators of the Agile Member States Task Group on Strengthening WHO’s Budgetary, Programmatic and Financing Governance to take forward Member State consultations to finalize the process.⁴ The former co-facilitators submitted a progress report to the 154th session of the Executive Board.⁵

35. At the thirty-sixth and thirty-eighth meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, the Committee requested the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee to consider a process for managing potential allegations against the Director of the Office of Internal Oversight Services,⁶ following on from recommendation 8 in the 2020 JIU report on the investigation function in United Nations system organizations.⁷ The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee concluded its work, as reflected in its report to the thirty-ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, which was acknowledged by the Executive Board at its 154th session;⁸ the Director-General approved the amended Charter of the Office of Independent Oversight Services in December 2023.⁹

¹ See documents EB154/25 and EB154/CONF./12.

² See documents EB149/2, paragraph 25(c), and EB151/2, paragraph 26.

³ See document EBPBAC38/2, paragraphs 49–54 and Annex A.

⁴ Decision EB153(1).

⁵ See document EB154/35.

⁶ See documents EB152/4, paragraph 11, and EB153/2, paragraph 7.

⁷ See document JIU/REP/2020/1 (Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function).

⁸ See documents EBPBAC39/2 and EB154/4, paragraph 8.

⁹ Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/ios-charter> (accessed 25 March 2024).

ACTION BY LEGISLATIVE/GOVERNING BODIES

36. The following recommendations made in JIU reports issued during the period October 2022–December 2023 are directed at the legislative/governing bodies of United Nations system organizations.

Review of the internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms available to staff of the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/2)

37. JIU recommendation 4: the legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request their respective executive heads who have not yet done so to undertake a thorough review of their regulatory frameworks and practices concerning internal specialized recourse mechanisms, with a view to assessing their continued utility and adequate functioning within the broader framework of internal appeal mechanisms, including eliminating duplicative or ambiguous process paths in the interest of procedural efficiency, and to report to them thereon, no later than 2025. The Secretariat notes that WHO has already fulfilled the requirement of the recommendation. In 2022, WHO commissioned an independent review of its internal justice system, which determined that the 2016 reform of the system was “a successful one” and that “WHO/UNAIDS have put in place the essential internal justice mechanisms to deal with work-related disputes both at a formal and an informal level”.¹ The report provides a list of recommendations to improve the system in the areas of informal resolution, investigation and disciplinary processes, access to justice, legal assistance and whistle-blower protection. WHO is currently implementing these proposals.

38. *JIU recommendation 5: the legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request their respective executive heads who have not yet done so to report to them annually, starting in 2025, on the functioning of their formal internal appeal mechanisms, including the specialized recourse mechanisms. The reports should include details on the number, subject matter and outcome of appeals, including cases deemed irreceivable, information on the demographics of applicants and information on whether the appealed decisions were upheld or revised, disaggregated by type of procedure, as applicable.* The Secretariat reports to its governing bodies annually on the functioning of the internal justice system. The JIU cites the “type of information collected by the peer review bodies” of four Organizations, including WHO, as “useful examples that other organizations could follow”.² Beginning in 2024, WHO will also issue a compendium on a yearly basis, outlining general trends arising from administrative review decisions and summarizing, in an anonymized fashion, the recommendations of its Global Board of Appeal.

Review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/3)

39. *JIU recommendation 1: the legislative organs and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request their executive heads to assess their organization’s accountability framework against the updated JIU reference accountability framework and adjust it as necessary, by the end of 2024.* The Secretariat is considering the new JIU reference accountability framework, together with other recent accountability and oversight function benchmarking studies, and will further revise the Organization’s 2015 accountability framework.

¹ Document EB152/47, paragraph 52.

² Document JIU/REP/2023/2, paragraph 319.

40. *JIU recommendation 2: beginning in 2025, the legislative organs and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the oversight plans of internal oversight offices cover all elements of their respective accountability framework within a reasonable time frame and that, if coverage is incomplete, a rationale is provided.* The Secretariat is considering the new JIU reference accountability framework, together with other recent accountability and oversight function benchmarking studies, and will further revise the Organization's 2015 accountability framework.

Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2023/4)

41. *JIU recommendation 3: legislative and/or governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request that executive heads provide, by the end of 2026, an update on the development and implementation of the mental health and well-being workplace action plan developed according to their evidence-based and data-driven organizational approach on the matter.* The Secretariat notes that it will report on its Mental Health and Well-being Action Plan to its governing bodies and to staff. In addition, the implementation plan for the WHO Workforce Mental Health and Well-being Strategy is cross-linked with the United Nations Mental Health and Well-being Implementation Board's reporting requirements and scorecards for each activity.

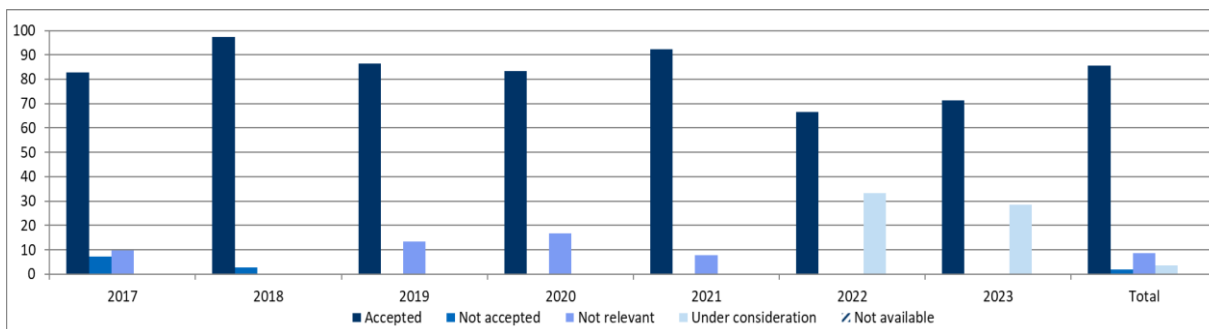
ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

42. The Committee is invited to note the report; it is further invited to consider and provide guidance on the recommendations contained in the JIU reports requiring action by WHO's legislative/governing bodies.

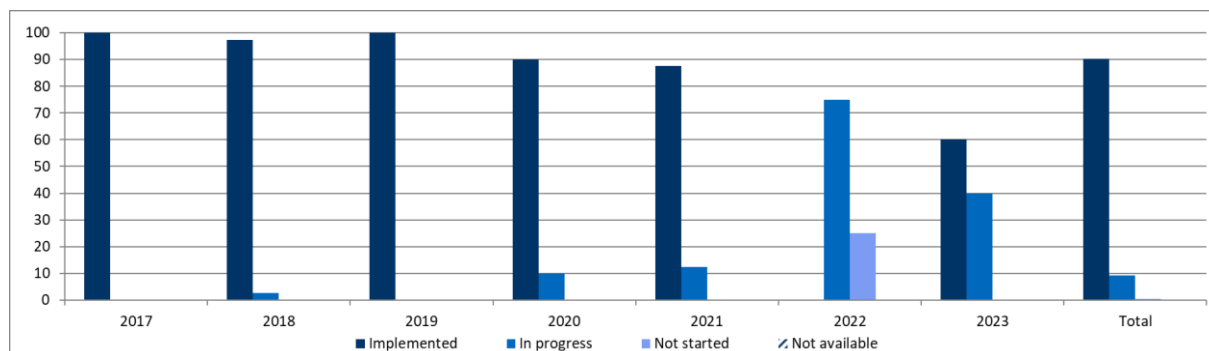
ANNEX

RATES OF ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY PERIOD (PERCENTAGE)¹

Acceptance



Implementation



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¹ Information extracted from the closed, password-protected JIU web-based tracking system (<https://www.unjiu.org>, accessed 15 April 2024).