



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD
105th Session
Provisional agenda item 7.4

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Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report by the Secretariat

1. Five reports formally addressed to the Director-General by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) are submitted for the Board's consideration. A summary of the findings with comments of WHO and ACC on the reports are provided in Annex 1. Copies of the full reports are available, should a Board member wish to review the findings and recommendations in more detail. In addition, members of JIU will attend the Administration, Budget and Finance Committee and Executive Board debates on the reports.
2. Apart from formal reports, WHO has also received a JIU Note entitled "Handling of JIU reports by WHO", available to members of the Board on request,¹ subsequent to a review by JIU of the way in which its participating organizations handle its reports. The Note provides WHO with five sets of recommendations on ways to improve its current practices for handling JIU reports related to: distribution, criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative bodies, appropriate agenda item, WHO documents on JIU reports, and follow-up.
3. Although the information in the JIU Note on WHO's current practices is correct, the recommendations have yet to be subject to the usual consultation process. The Note is, however, based on a previous JIU proposal for follow-up, recently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly through resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999, and attached as Annex 2.
4. WHO agrees with some of the recommendations made by JIU in this regard, but has reservations about others, which would appear to subject the Organization and the Executive Board to systematic monitoring of all JIU recommendations. The financial and other resource implications of such detailed monitoring of recommendations which are often of only marginal, if any, relevance to WHO, require further investigation and discussion with JIU.
5. As the General Assembly resolution was adopted very recently, it is proposed to postpone consideration of the implications of the new JIU follow-up system until the 107th session of the Executive Board in January 2001, when all the elements of importance for a decision on this matter will be available. Any views of the Board on this matter would, however, be welcome, as input to the ongoing consultation process.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

6. The Board is invited to take note of the reports and WHO's comments thereon.

¹ The Note was provided by JIU in English only.

ANNEX 1

REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Title	Purpose	Findings	WHO's comments
<p>JIU/REP/98/1</p> <p>Fellowships in the United Nations system</p>	<p>To identify major management and coordination issues concerning implementation of the United Nations system fellowship programmes and their contribution to capacity-building.</p>	<p>Six recommendations on (1) adoption of a common definition of fellowship, a uniform reporting format on fellowships, common standards of excellence for training institutions, data banks for local/regional expertise; (2) need for an evaluation report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the different training and fellowship programmes; (3) establishment of data banks of training institutions to support national execution, collective insurance contracts, harmonization of allowances paid; (4) exploration of ways and means for more cost-effective placements; (5) internal evaluations of fellowships programmes by organizations of the United Nations system, sharing of experiences and best practices, (6) an interagency coordination mechanism with focal points, establishment of lead agencies, harmonization of training programmes.</p>	<p>Report of limited relevance to WHO. Recommendations advocate “good house-keeping” which will be studied as changes to implement efficiencies are introduced.</p> <p>ACC accepted most recommendations, but objected to some as too narrow in scope or not realistic.</p> <p>No costing or suggested source of funds to implement JIU recommendations.</p>
<p>JIU/REP/98/2</p> <p>More coherence for enhanced oversight in the United Nations system</p>	<p>To increase the effectiveness of oversight in the United Nations system, for both individual organizations and system-wide.</p>	<p>Six recommendations on (1) agreed plans for conducting internal oversight for approval by legislative organs; (2) a common, system-wide format for reporting to those organs; (3) highlighting of good practices; (4) periodic JIU analyses of consolidated annual summary reports on internal oversight practices; (5) a stronger grouping of oversight professionals; (6) more dialogue among oversight partners.</p>	<p>Doubts about perceived shortcomings of internal oversight functions can be remedied by another system-wide arrangement without significant additional costs.</p> <p>ACC underlined organization-specific nature of internal oversight, with responsibility mainly vested in the executive heads of organizations. Although full transparency is supported, concern was expressed about excessive micromanagement by Member States. The proposed JIU analyses of summary reports would involve an additional layer of reporting and is not seen as the most cost-effective way of enhancing efficiency. It might also pose a confidentiality problem.</p>

Title	Purpose	Findings	WHO's comments
<p>JIU/REP/98/3</p> <p>The United Nations University – enhancing its relevance and effectiveness</p>	<p>To assess whether this institution, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1973, has performed its basic mandates satisfactorily; to evaluate its major programmes; and to suggest ways and means of how to invigorate it and enhance its overall performance capabilities and credibility.</p>	<p>It appears that the university has not fulfilled the high expectations attached to its creation. It has not yet succeeded in asserting its distinctive academic image and visibility; not made the best use of its “think tank” potential in support of United Nations policies and processes; not established itself as a valued intellectual bridge between multilateral cooperation and academia; and has lacked strategic direction, programme focus and tangible intergovernmental impact. Eleven recommendations are proposed for improvements in the areas of governance, institutional development, research and training centres and programmes, programme planning and implementation, and financing and management.</p>	<p>Of marginal value to WHO. WHO was not involved in preparation of, nor asked to comment on, the report.</p> <p>No costing or source of funds attached to the recommendations.</p>
<p>JIU/REP/98/4</p> <p>United Nations System Common Services at Geneva: overview of administrative cooperation and coordination</p>	<p>To examine the present state of interagency cooperation by exploring the status quo and potential for common services of the Geneva-based members of the United Nations system.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding their close physical proximity in this largest duty station, the Geneva-based secretariats today operate very few services in common. This leads to fragmentation and duplication, further aggravated by the absence of an intergovernmental consultative or review body and the lack of effective and cohesive leadership of common services.</p> <p>Three recommendations on (1) adoption of a new framework for common services of the United Nations system at Geneva; (2) establishment of a common services committee and possible appointment of a high-level official to foster broad common services objectives and arrangements in Geneva; (3) strengthened intergovernmental oversight of common services at Geneva by way of a more active role of the Geneva Diplomatic Committee.</p>	<p>Report could have potential for realizing managerial and administrative efficiencies, but WHO finds the result disappointing.</p> <p>The conclusions may be of value to the United Nations at Geneva, but are only partially feasible for the specialized agencies. If implemented, they are likely to lead to more inefficiency, not less.</p> <p>No costing or source of funds attached to the recommendations.</p> <p>JIU made extensive changes to its draft report as a result of criticism from the agencies concerned. Specifically, it dropped several poorly supported claims regarding achievable annual savings through the adoption of the JIU-proposed plan of action, and a recommendation calling for the appointment of an Assistant Secretary-General for common services.</p>

Title	Purpose	Findings	WHO's comments
<p>JIU/REP/98/5</p> <p>United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS): broader engagement with United Nations system organizations</p>	<p>To enhance effective cooperation between the new UNOPS and organizations of the United Nations system by taking advantage of division of labour and complementarities between them.</p> <p>(UNOPS, having evolved from an operational division of UNDP to its current status as a separate entity since 1995, provides project services such as management expertise, procurement of equipment, and identification of consulting firms or individual consultants for projects carried out under the umbrella of the organizations of the United Nations system.)</p>	<p>The report advocates a sharper and more distinctive division of labour between UNOPS and other organizations of the United Nations system based on their respective competitive advantages.</p>	<p>The report was well received by the interested parties, notably UNDP, but is of only limited relevance to WHO.</p> <p>ACC welcomed its thrust and considers it to be a useful contribution towards efforts to reform the United Nations system.</p>