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Joint Inspection Unit

Review of consideration of and action taken on the reports and recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit by United Nations system organizations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled “Review of consideration of and action taken on the reports and recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit by United Nations system organizations” ([JIU/REP/2024/2](#)).



I. Introduction

1. The main objective of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled “Review of consideration of and action taken on the reports and recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit by United Nations system organizations” (JIU/REP/2024/2)¹ is to determine the current situation regarding the consideration of JIU reports and the effectiveness of the decision-making process relating to the acceptance and implementation of its recommendations by the participating organizations and their legislative organs and governing bodies, and to assess the progress made since the previous JIU review on the matter (JIU/REP/2017/5).²

II. General comments

2. Organizations welcome the report, noting that it provides an informative summary of how participating organizations handle JIU reports and recommendations and that it presents useful good practices. Depending on the governance structure of each entity, there are a variety of practices regarding the interactions between JIU and governing bodies, the acceptance and implementation of recommendations and the tracking and reporting mechanisms.

3. Organizations that adopt a whole-of-system approach to oversight, with JIU as an important and distinct contributor within this broader context, observe that a greater acknowledgement of the wider oversight context would have enhanced the report. In addition, a greater focus on steps that the Unit could take to enhance the acceptance and implementation of its recommendations to strengthen the outcome and impact of its products would have also added value to the review.

4. Organizations underscore the distinction between the process managed by secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the mechanism maintained by JIU. United Nations system-wide management responses, such as those contained in the present note and in similar notes by which the Secretary-General transmits the comments of CEB to the General Assembly, provide initial reactions and comments on the findings of a recently issued JIU review and its specific recommendations. The JIU mechanism, on the other hand, is focused on updates by individual organizations, including the status of implementation of each recommendation.

5. Organizations agree with the terminology utilized in the notes by the Secretary-General on JIU reports and underscore that, in implementing article 11, paragraph 4 (e), of the JIU statute, the CEB secretariat, a neutral facilitator, collects and synthesizes comments from member organizations through a questionnaire implemented by the participating entities, a process in place since late 2017.

6. At the most recent biennial meeting of JIU focal points, convened by the Unit in Geneva on 19 and 20 September 2023, the content and structure of the questionnaire were part of a broader discussion on the initial findings of the current JIU review. A subsequent consultation among JIU focal points, with the participation of the CEB secretariat, confirmed the appropriateness of the questionnaire in meeting organizations’ needs in fulfilling the mandate set out in article 11, paragraph 4 (e), of the statute, in an efficient and timely manner.

¹ Circulated to the General Assembly under the symbol [A/79/717](#).

² For the related comments of the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, see [A/72/704/Add.1](#).

7. Organizations note that indications of full or partial support for a proposed recommendation in the present note and in all other similar notes by the Secretary-General should not be interpreted as acceptance of the recommendations. Formal acceptance can only be communicated directly by each organization to JIU through its web-based tracking system. Suggesting comparability between the CEB secretariat process and the JIU mechanisms may be challenging due to various factors, including the distinct timeframes governing those separate processes, as noted in the comments on recommendation 3.

8. Several organizations note that the findings of the current review could have benefited from a deeper analysis of the data generated through the JIU web-based system for tracking recommendations, which reflects the level of acceptance and the status of implementation. They further note that the lack of detail in support of those status updates, such as the reflection of comments in support of a particular level of acceptance and/or status of implementation, frames the analysis on a purely numerical level without consideration of related factors, such as the resource and/or time factors required to accept and thus implement a recommendation during a given period or any system-wide infrastructure (e.g. a task force or working group) to be established to jointly agree, work and take action on a recommendation. Regarding the latter, the follow-up on recommendations that require action or involvement at the system-wide level shows that such recommendations remain either “under consideration” or “accepted” and “in progress” for an extended period of time.

9. The comments provided for such recommendations over the course of the reporting period would provide insight as to why recommendations remain “under consideration” or “in progress” over extended periods and would reflect aspects relating to the resources (whether human or financial or both) that need to be considered by an organization for the implementation of JIU recommendations.

10. The Inspector’s proposal to include, under a future new and improved tracking system, a new category, labelled “Closed – Management accepts the risk”, to allow for the closing of long-outstanding recommendations, is seen in a positive light by many participating organizations.

11. Organizations, while understanding the criticality of the JIU oversight platform, note that the request contained in recommendation 4 should have been routed through the appropriate established mechanisms, in accordance with the provisions of article 20 of the JIU statute, and not through a recommendation, as further highlighted in paragraphs 25 to 28 below.

12. Organizations are partially supportive of the proposed recommendations, while drawing attention to annex XVI of the JIU review, which provides an overview of actions to be taken by participating organizations on the proposed recommendations and listing those exempt.

III. Comments on specific recommendations

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should present to their legislative organs and governing bodies a proposal for a follow-up system for JIU reports and recommendations based on the 1997 JIU model framework and the good practices of other United Nations system organizations and seek the approval of their legislative organs and governing bodies thereon not later than by the end of 2025.

13. Organizations to which this recommendation is addressed as set out in annex XVI partially support it, noting that the existing follow-up mechanisms in place already incorporate elements of the 1997 framework.

Recommendation 2

The legislative organs and governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2025, re-examine their processes for the consideration of JIU reports and recommendations, including their decision-making thereon and the monitoring of the implementation of JIU recommendations from previous years, by taking into account the good practice examples identified in the report, as appropriate.

14. Organizations note that the recommendation is addressed to their legislative organs and governing bodies.

15. Several organizations stand ready to respond to requests by their respective legislative organs and governing bodies for any change to the existing reporting on JIU reports and recommendations. Other organizations consider the processes and systems in place to be adequate and to not require further action.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should take individual or collective action, in consultation with the executive heads of other CEB member organizations, preferably within the framework of the CEB inter-agency coordination mechanisms, to revise the current CEB terminology relating to JIU recommendations by the end of 2025, with the aim of making it compatible with the criteria used by JIU, so that factually correct information on the acceptance of JIU recommendations, based on the comments of CEB entities, is provided in the notes by the Secretary-General on JIU reports.

16. Organizations partially support this recommendation.

17. Organizations appreciate the ability to express “partial support” of recommendations through the use of such classification for the purposes of the note by the Secretary-General. The comments shared with the CEB secretariat are preliminary collective views and reactions of the management of member organizations to a system-wide report.

18. While a few favour the prospect of establishing comparable standards that would guide both processes, most support the co-existence of the CEB secretariat and JIU web-based tracking system processes, without the need to use the very same terminology, as the two processes differ in scope, timing and purpose.

19. Organizations support the use of the categorization “partially support” and note that such an option remains relevant and, at times, the most factual, as there are often instances where the underlying observation may be correct, but some elements of the recommendation are not fully agreeable for various reasons. For example, some aspects of the recommendation may not be feasible to implement due to a lack of capacity and/or resources; some aspects may not apply to the context of the organization or may be outside its remit; the timeline proposed by JIU may be unachievable; or the recommendation may have resource implications that would first require approval by the governing body.

20. As noted in paragraph 6 above, organizations recall that the categorization of “partial support” was discussed among the JIU focal points and with the CEB secretariat, prior and in follow-up to the meeting of JIU focal points convened by the Unit in September 2023, and confirm that they agreed to maintain the current

classification, noting that not all recommendations have straight-forward responses and that the terminology utilized in the questionnaire circulated by the CEB secretariat is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the realities of individual entities.

21. In October 2023, JIU focal points and the CEB secretariat developed a guidance note for internal use aimed at clarifying the purpose and associated process of gathering CEB comments. Within each entity, the guidance note is distributed together with the questionnaire, in order to promote clarity on the role of the CEB secretariat-managed process vis-à-vis the JIU-led process. Organizations do not see the need to reopen the discussion at the present juncture, nor to revise the guidance note, which was developed in a consultative and collaborative manner.

22. Entities reiterate that the CEB secretariat-managed process to consolidate system-wide comments is clearly distinct from the formal response by individual entities to indicate acceptance and, if applicable, implementation of recommendations managed through the JIU web-based tracking system.

23. Organizations review and agree to the notes by the Secretary-General containing their consolidated comments that are submitted to the General Assembly. They emphasize the fact that the questionnaire utilized by the CEB secretariat to collect their input reflects initial reactions and comments from the organizations' perspectives. Moreover, while the CEB secretariat consolidates all responses without attribution, each organization officially enters its data into the JIU web-tracking system.

24. Some observe that, in its report, the Unit does not elaborate on the different timing underpinning the release of a JIU report and its subsequent uploading to the web-based tracking system, which is when each participating organization enters its "official" acceptance and implementation status (which can be a few months after release), and the issuance of the note by the Secretary-General based on the CEB questionnaire for the purpose of deliberations by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 4

The General Assembly should support the request for the additional financial resources required to replace the current JIU web-based tracking system, which will be funded through the contributions of the participating organizations as part of the existing cost-sharing arrangements for the 2025 JIU budget.

25. Organizations note that this recommendation is addressed to the General Assembly.

26. Organizations recall article 20 of the JIU statute and the related established mechanism in place for the General Assembly to review and approve the proposed budgets of jointly financed activities, including JIU, and consider that issues like the one presented in recommendation 4 should rather be addressed through the established budget review process.

27. It is noted that the formulation, review and submission of the Unit's budget proposals are governed by article 20 of the statute and that, in the absence of an amendment to the statute, the procedures for consultation with the participating organizations will remain as currently established. It is further noted that the specialized agencies and related organizations are established by separate constitutive instruments and have separate governing bodies with their own membership. The specialized agencies and related organizations are thus subject to the decisions of their respective governing bodies and not to the decisions or resolutions of the General Assembly.

28. The United Nations Secretariat considers this recommendation to be implemented, as the General Assembly approved the proposed gross budget for JIU for 2025,³ which included an amount of \$140,400 for development costs to replace the web-based tracking system used by the Unit and its participating organizations to monitor the implementation of its recommendations.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should, with immediate effect and on a continuing basis, provide detailed comments and appropriate information, as well as supporting evidence on the implementation of accepted recommendations in the JIU web-based tracking system, so as to allow the monitoring of their full implementation.

29. Most organizations support this recommendation. A few organizations note that they will be providing comments and information as needed, taking into account data confidentiality and protection in sharing supporting evidence, given the openness of the web-based tracking system.

Recommendation 6

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should, with immediate effect and on a continuing basis, ensure that detailed information and justification are provided in the JIU web-based tracking system for all JIU recommendations that are marked as “not accepted” or “not relevant” and include this information in their periodic reporting to their legislative organs and governing bodies.

30. Most organizations support this recommendation.

31. The United Nations Secretariat does not support the second part of the recommendation, as it is not applicable to the Secretariat since the General Assembly, in its resolution [59/267](#) of 23 December 2004, decided to discontinue the requirement for the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the JIU.

³ [A/79/6 \(Sect. 31\)](#), sect. II, part B.