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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2018 and programme of work for 2019

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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2018 and programme of work for 2019



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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Abbreviations

CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme

WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

Mission statement*

The Joint Inspection Unit aims to:

(a) Assist the legislative organs of the participating organizations in meeting their governance responsibilities in respect of their oversight function concerning management by the secretariats of human, financial and other resources;

(b) Help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the respective secretariats in achieving the legislative mandates and the mission objectives established for the organizations;

(c) Promote greater coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) Identify best practices, propose benchmarks and facilitate information-sharing throughout the system.

Message by the Chair

In accordance with article 10, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system, I have the honour to present the annual report of the Unit. The report contains an account of the Unit's activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018 and an outline of its programme of work for 2019.

As an independent external oversight body mandated to apply a system-wide perspective, the Joint Inspection Unit's work over the past years has responded to the current needs of legislative bodies, to bring fresh contributions within the mandate of the Unit to the support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to maintain the Unit's long-standing commitment for strengthening accountability, learning and improvement in the United Nations system.

For example, by adjusting the phasing of the previously planned programme of work, the Unit was pleased to be able to respond in a timely way to the request by the General Assembly to review progress in the implementation of recommendations on South-South cooperation. A review of the uptake by United Nations system organizations of policy research as well as a review of cloud computing reflect an ongoing effort in support of the 2030 Agenda. Likewise, a review of organizational change management approaches seeks to support efforts that would enhance success and sustainability in ongoing reforms across the United Nations system.

The review of opportunities for efficiency gains in administrative support services through inter-agency cooperation contributes to the ongoing repositioning of the United Nations development system, while the review of internship programmes across the United Nations system offers insights for improvements to those programmes. These, together with single organization reviews, such as the ones on UNOPS and ICAO, reflect a focus on efficiency and sound management and administration. Furthermore, two reviews – on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and on accessibility of United Nations conferences and meetings for persons with disabilities – support the goals of enhancing inclusion and equality. Subsequent to dialogue with organizations on an appropriate timing, the Unit initiated in 2018 its review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system. Completion of a system-wide review of whistle-blower policies and practices, the initiation in 2018 of a review of the investigation function in the United Nations system and the ongoing review of oversight committees reinforce the deep engagement of the Unit with accountability and integrity.

The relevance and value of the Unit's programme of work benefit from continued inputs from organizations and coordination with other oversight bodies. In support of strengthening the dialogue with organizations, several meetings have been held with heads of organizations and departments, and many more are planned for 2019, including continued engagement with professional networks.

To further enhance relevance in current times, the Unit will prepare its strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029 and a medium-term plan for the period from 2020 to 2024. This will represent significant activity for the Unit in 2019. The Unit will take this opportunity to increase its strategic alignment with priorities that address the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the ongoing reforms across the United Nations system.

The value of the investment made and the impact of the work of the Joint Inspection Unit depends primarily on the effective use of its products, mainly through the implementation of the recommendations made. The attainment of that objective continues to require improvements among all stakeholders that have a shared

responsibility for oversight of organizational effectiveness – the executive heads and the Secretary-General, legislative organs of organizations, the General Assembly and the Joint Inspection Unit. The Assembly has in several of its resolutions emphasized the need for legislative organs and governing bodies to give full consideration to the reports and recommendations of the Unit.

The Unit has noticed that, as a consequence of this, the effective consideration and use of its reports and recommendations has improved in some organizations. The following is illustrative of an emerging good practice. In some organizations, the reports of the executive head are submitted accompanied by a list of the Unit's reports and notes produced during the preceding year. A summary and a list of all the recommendations addressed to the legislative bodies and executive heads are produced with the corresponding CEB comments and/or management responses. In some cases, the submission contains a document listing the status of the organization's acceptance and implementation of previous recommendations of the Unit.

This practice facilitates informed decision-making and the identification of concrete courses of action in line with the shared oversight responsibility of the Unit, Member States and the secretariats of its participating organizations. However, the practice is currently not performed by the majority of organizations. The Unit will monitor and report on it more systematically in 2019. The General Assembly may wish to reiterate its request to all executive heads and invite the legislative bodies of organizations that have not yet adopted this practice to do so, in order to increase the value of system-wide recommendations.

The consideration of the Unit's reports by the General Assembly under the agenda item on the Joint Inspection Unit has increased substantive exchange to further enhance informed decision-making. This is less so the case when the Unit's reports are included for consideration with other substantive reports addressing the same subject or theme. To enhance effective dialogue and use, the Unit will take a proactive role in sharing information about its reports prior to their consideration by the Assembly. This will include making informal presentations of its reports to stakeholder groups in New York and Geneva to encourage in-depth discussions on the findings and recommendations. Other internal measures under development include making reports shorter, providing brief synopses and report highlights and, where possible, producing complementary technical papers that are relevant for implementation.

In accordance with article 5 (4) of its Statute, the Joint Inspection Unit endeavours to support the evaluation function of United Nations system organizations and to engage in the dialogue on the independent, system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development. In 2019, the Unit, drawing on its previous experience, will seek to engage more fully in that dialogue on measures to strengthen such evaluation, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/279](#).

The work of the Unit requires the dedicated and concerted effort of the inspectors and the secretariat staff and the full cooperation of the Unit's participating organizations. I acknowledge the work done and look forward to coordinating the delivery of the workplan for 2019.

(Signed) Sukai Elie **Prom-Jackson**
Chair
Geneva, 18 January 2019

Chapter I

Major areas of activities in 2018

1. In 2018, the Joint Inspection Unit worked on 15 projects. That included four projects that had been carried over from 2017, namely: opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation; review of management and administration in UNOPS; review of whistle-blower policies and practices in the United Nations system; and review of internship programmes in the United Nations system.
2. The following projects were initiated by the Unit in 2018: progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3); enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system; strengthening the policy research uptake in service of the 2030 Agenda; managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system; organizational change management in the United Nations system: lessons learned and strategies for the future; review of oversight committees in the United Nations system; review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system entities; review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; review of management and administration of UNAIDS; and review of management and administration in ICAO. The Unit subsequently decided to suspend its review of UNAIDS in view of other reviews that had been initiated by other bodies. The Unit has since resumed its work on the project for completion in 2019.
3. In the course of 2018, the Unit decided to add to the 2018 programme of work the review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function.
4. The status of implementation of the workplan for 2018 as at 31 December 2018 is presented in annex I to the present report; the summaries of the completed reviews are included in section B of the present chapter.
5. In terms of non-project activities, the Unit continued to enhance its working procedures and processes and strived to further improve the quality of the outputs by revising some of its working tools and approaches to the preparation and execution of the programme of work. It also made further efforts aimed at better coordination and strengthened interaction with the secretariats of the relevant General Assembly committees as well as with other oversight and coordinating bodies of the United Nations system, as described in section A of the present chapter.
6. The reports of the Joint Inspection Unit increasingly draw attention within and beyond the United Nations system. This is evidenced by the increasing invitations for the Unit to submit papers and for its participation in conferences and workshops with development partners, expert groups and thematic working groups on a vast range of topics associated with the work of the Unit.
7. The composition of the Unit in 2018 remained unchanged, with 11 inspectors (at the D-2 level) who are assisted in their work by an Executive Secretary (D-2), nine evaluation and inspection officers (2 P-5, 3 P-4, 3 P-3 and 1 P-2), one investigator (P-3) and five research assistants (at the G-7 and G-6 levels). Four General Service staff continued to provide administrative, information technology, documentation management, editorial and other support to the Unit.

8. The fact that all authorized posts in the Unit's secretariat are filled, combined with the contribution made by Junior Professional Officers and interns and the provision of extrabudgetary support, has made a positive impact on the capacity and quality of the Unit's reviews. As in previous years, interns have made a valuable contribution to the project teams' work and, in turn, have received a positive experience from their internship in the Unit.

9. One Junior Professional Officer was provided by the United States in 2018, and one will be provided by Germany early in 2019. Having Junior Professional Officers from countries of the South will be important in enhancing the diversity and exchange of knowledge in the Unit. Member States supporting Junior Professional Officer programmes and interns from the South are encouraged to support that objective of the Unit.

10. Extrabudgetary funds received in 2017 from the Government of Switzerland (\$75,000) and from UNICEF (\$50,000) were instrumental in supporting the conduct of complex reviews in the 2018 programme of work, which required country visits and the use of external experts.

11. In 2018, the services for hosting and maintaining the web-based tracking system and the Unit's website were migrated to the United Nations Secretariat. The support that the Unit has received from the Office of Information and Communications Technology is much appreciated. Plans are in place to make improvements and enhancements to the functionality of the tracking system in 2019. Those upgrades will provide a mechanism to give assistance in validating self-reported implementation and to provide functionality to facilitate the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of the Unit's recommendations. Enhancements and changes will also be made to the Unit's website to improve the utility and presentation of information.

A. Interaction with other oversight and coordinating bodies

12. The 21st annual tripartite meeting of the Board of Auditors, OIOS and the Joint Inspection Unit was held on 10 December 2018. In preparation for the meeting, the three entities shared their workplans for the forthcoming year. Each entity briefed the meeting in turn on their draft programmes of work and areas of focus for 2019. They also reflected on their experiences in 2018 and acknowledged the collaboration and interaction at the working level during that year.

13. As usual, a significant part of the meeting was dedicated to the main objective, which was to promote collaboration, avoid overlap and duplication and maximize synergy in the conduct of oversight work. In the discussion on the opportunities for collaboration and sharing among the entities, three areas emerged as being of common interest for the tripartite members: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; United Nations reform; and delegation of authority.

14. Based on the workplans, cooperation could be deepened with interaction on specific topics that were identified as common. It was agreed at the meeting that the interaction and collaboration should continue at the working level between the respective teams undertaking the reviews as this was most effective.

15. The secretariat of CEB continues to be a valuable partner in facilitating the timely processing of the Unit's system-wide reports and consolidation of comments from participating organizations and in providing relevant United Nations system data for the Unit's reviews. The Unit appreciates the efforts of the CEB secretariat and the support it provides to it.

16. The Unit's programme of work will require further collaboration with CEB, particularly the High-Level Committee on Management, which established a cross-functional task force on risk management – a topic that the Joint Inspection Unit will review in 2019.

17. The Unit continued its participation as an observer at the annual meeting of United Nations representatives of internal audit services, at the meeting of the United Nations representatives of investigative services and in the United Nations Evaluation Group's 2018 Evaluation Week.

B. Reports issued in 2018

18. In 2018, the Unit completed six system-wide reports and one single organization report. Together, the reports covered the following topics: review of internship programmes in the United Nations system; progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2011/3](#)); review of management and administration in UNOPS; review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations; opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation; enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system; and strengthening the policy research uptake in service of the 2030 Agenda.

Summaries of key findings and recommendations of reports in 2018

Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2018/1](#) and [Corr.1](#))

19. The report provides recommendations and a benchmarking framework for inclusive internships for consideration by the organizations of the United Nations system, their governing bodies and executive heads. The content is aligned with the ongoing United Nations reform on human resources and the priorities contained in the Secretary-General's report on an overview of human resources management reform for the period from 2017 to 2018 ([A/73/372/Add.1](#), para. 94). In paragraph 35 of its resolution [71/263](#), the General Assembly welcomed the internship programme and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that it contributed to the achievement of United Nations objectives and the learning experience of the participants. Implementation of the recommendations in the report and the consideration of the benchmarking framework for inclusive internships are expected to facilitate the achievements of those objectives.

20. The report reviews the policies and practices of the internship programmes in a diverse range of organizations of the United Nations system and in several international organizations that are suitable comparators (IADB, IFAD, IMF and the World Bank). It also identifies opportunities that will improve the use and the potential of internship programmes. Equally important is the report's presentation of the status of progress and the challenges faced by organizations in their efforts towards efficient and effective use of internship programmes and in ensuring inclusiveness by providing equal opportunities to all young professional talents, taking into account gender and geographical balance.

21. The report includes seven recommendations intended to strengthen coherence, effectiveness and accountability in the management and use of internship programmes in the United Nations system. While some of the recommendations contained in the

report could have cost implications, the possible costs would need to be seen in context of the exposure to reputational risks.

22. A key component of the report is a benchmarking framework for good practices in internship programmes, divided into four sections, addressing: (a) the application process; (b) the internship period; (c) completion of the internship; and (d) alignment of internship programmes with the values of the United Nations. The benchmarks have been defined on the basis of the information collected during the review, proposing good practices and measures to foster inclusive and fair internship programmes, as a tool to manage the talent-pool and a means to promote the empowerment of young people and the rejuvenation of the composition of the Secretariat.

Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3) (JIU/REP/2018/2)

23. This review was conducted pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly in its resolutions [71/244](#) and [72/237](#) that the Unit review the progress made in the implementation of the 12 recommendations contained in the its report on South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2011/3](#)). Since 2011, notable progress had been made on the implementation of those recommendations. A system-wide policy framework and operational definitions of South-South and triangular cooperation had been provided. The majority of the United Nations entities covered by the review had established at their headquarters dedicated units or focal points for such cooperation. Measures to improve coherence, coordination and reporting on such cooperation within the United Nations system had been implemented. Almost half of the entities covered by the review had achieved the targeted allocation of core budget and extrabudgetary resources for South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives; nevertheless, inadequate resources had been a major stumbling block in further advancing support to such cooperation.

24. The governance of South-South and triangular cooperation and the portfolio of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation were reviewed, and the strategic framework of the Office for the period from 2014 to 2017 was developed and implemented. Consultations with Member States should be pursued in order to improve the functioning of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. The rules of procedures and the inclusiveness and working arrangements of the Committee should also be improved. Measures to further strengthen the Office had been implemented. Reports produced by the Office for the General Assembly and the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation could be streamlined in order to further enhance the efficiency of the Office.

25. The leadership and coordination role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in the United Nations system-wide approach was appreciated by the majority of the respondents to the Joint Inspection Unit questionnaire for the review. Suggestions regarding enhancement were made in the areas of resource mobilization and knowledge-sharing. The Office could provide more support and guidance in mobilizing funds and develop a resource mobilization strategy. It could also provide more regular and timely updates on new developments on South-South and triangular cooperation, including information on funding and partnership opportunities, and a more systematic exchange of experiences.

Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (JIU/REP/2018/3)

26. UNOPS is a unique entity in the United Nations system that acts as the system's operational arm by supporting the implementation of peacebuilding, humanitarian and development projects. The main objective of the 2018 review was to provide an independent assessment of the regulatory frameworks and related practices in the management and administration of the organization and to identify opportunities for improvement. The distinctive features of UNOPS, in particular its self-financing nature and its service delivery mandate, were taken into consideration. The report confirmed the specific culture of the organization, its high degree of flexibility and its strong and successful business orientation.

27. Against the overall positive assessment of the management and administration in the organization, the review identified a few areas in which action was deemed necessary to strengthen integrity and accountability. To that end, three formal recommendations were made, two addressed to Member States through the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board, and one to the Executive Director.

28. Independent oversight committees play a critical role in assisting both the governing bodies and the executive heads in strengthening oversight and in ensuring the independence and effectiveness of the internal audit function. The review recommended that the terms of reference for the UNOPS Audit Advisory Committee be revised for adoption to align them to the requirements of leading practices and good governance, in particular with regard to mandate, independence, composition and procedures for the appointment of the members of the Committee.

29. Considering the magnitude of UNOPS engagements, with a total project delivery of \$1.84 billion in 2017, one recommendation was for continued attention to be paid by Member States to the contingency provisions and for the status of the operational reserve, including its threshold, to be revisited at regular intervals. The recommendation to strengthen the ethics framework, notably by establishing a full-time ethics officer position at a senior level, was welcomed by UNOPS executive management, which, as a first step, initiated the recruitment process for such a position.

30. The report also contains a series of informal recommendations that are suggestions for improvement, in areas such as oversight, executive management, human resources management and information and communications technologies.

31. In item 9 of its decision 2018/23, the Executive Board took note of the UNOPS response to the Joint Inspection Unit review ([DP/OPS/2018/6](#)).

Review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2018/4)

32. The review was undertaken following a proposal from UNESCO to assess whistle-blower policies and practices to ensure that whistle-blowers are accorded adequate levels of protection. The proposal coincided with several high-profile cases of whistle-blowers from United Nations system organizations going public for a variety of reasons in recent years. The report assessed protection against retaliation policies, processes and procedures and their implementation across 28 United Nations system organizations. It included 11 recommendations, of which 2 were addressed to the legislative bodies and 9 to the executive heads.

33. The review found that, of the 23 existing policies on protection against retaliation, covering 28 participating organizations, none fully met all requirements of best-practice criteria for such policies. There were deficits in the independence of key functions – head of oversight, ethics and Ombudsman – that supported the implementation of protection against retaliation policies, including the absence of terms limits, the dual-functioning of independent positions and no direct annual reporting to governing bodies. The reporting and handling of misconduct/wrongdoing and retaliation complaints were hindered by data discrepancies, vagaries on the mechanisms for reporting, delays at various levels and lack of standards in handling cases. Consequently, the findings of a survey with nearly 16,000 respondents on the subject matter revealed low levels of satisfaction with the handling of cases and considerable underreporting due to a combination of personal fears and risks and a lack of confidence in systems, functions and processes.

34. To address such deficits, the report recommends that legislative bodies ensure that policies and procedures are put in place by 2020 to address specifically allegations against executive heads; that functions with a key role in misconduct/wrongdoing and retaliation cases are appropriately independent; and that those functions report regularly on their activities to the legislative body. Executive heads are called upon, inter alia: to ensure targeted training for managers on the subject matter; to revise protection against retaliation policies in line with best practices; and to ensure clear reporting channels, appeals mechanisms and standard operating procedures for handling misconduct and retaliation cases.

35. The report will be presented to the General Assembly in 2019, following the receipt of the comments of CEB on the report.

Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (JIU/REP/2018/5)

36. The review concluded that significant efficiencies could be realized through inter-agency cooperation in the delivery of administrative support services. The current practice of parallel administrative structures, especially at the country level, was unnecessarily expensive. While country-level consolidation of support services had long been mandated, actual accomplishment had been modest.

37. Due to current data gaps, it was not possible to project savings from common business operations with accuracy. Nonetheless, the scale of opportunity was assessed as highly significant and meriting pursuit – in the range of 10–15 per cent of current spending, or about \$300 million to \$500 million. The report emphasized that the complexity of advancing common business operations should not be understated. Therefore, though efficiency gains could be significant, their realization would require sustained effort, time and investment.

38. Initiatives such as the “Delivering as One” initiative and the business operations strategy had not yielded the desired results with respect to common business operations. Although Hanoi, Brasilia, Cabo Verde and Copenhagen were sometimes referred to as “integrated country-level service centres”, none of them offered a ready template for the consolidation of common business operations. The joint office in Cabo Verde remained the single joint office, although it had been intended to develop 20 others. It offered an approach that could be relevant for United Nations country teams with small programme volumes.

39. The review found that bureaucratic barriers still impeded cooperation, that the mutual recognition of each other’s policies and procedures was not mature, that the

inter-agency mechanisms to support common business operations needed review and that members of United Nations country teams were unable to make progress at the same pace. It recommended that measures be taken to overcome bureaucratic barriers through hosting arrangements, that the joint office model be applied more widely, and that mutual recognition be applied as a vehicle for capacity consolidation. Given that over 75 per cent of administrative personnel and spending at the country level were accounted for by five organizations, the review recommended that they be designated to drive the development of consolidated arrangements.

40. The review recommended that a board or forum be established for shared United Nations system services to develop the business case for and the operational design of global shared services. It also emphasized the need to identify the resources devoted to administrative support functions, irrespective of funding source, to clarify how efficiency was to be defined, and to develop performance indicators to drive improvement and publicly post performance.

Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2018/6)

41. The review was undertaken following a proposal from the United Nations Secretariat to assess the current status of accessibility for persons with disabilities to United Nations system conferences and meetings. The proposal was timely, given the large volume of meetings organized by United Nations system entities and the need to ensure that persons with disabilities – who constitute about 15 per cent of the global population – are able to participate fully in public decision-making processes. The report identifies obstacles and impediments as well as good practices to enhance accessibility and includes actionable recommendations to improve the current situation. It contains 10 recommendations, of which 1 is addressed to the legislative bodies and 9 to the executive heads. In addition, 19 informal recommendations outline further suggestions for improvements.

42. The review found that legislative mandates for addressing accessibility were missing in most specialized agencies, that only three entities had a formal dedicated policy on accessibility and that no international standards on accessibility were utilized system-wide. However, several organizations had prepared instructive guidelines on accessibility that could be utilized to develop policies and benchmarks. That had translated into most organizations not providing many of the essential information and communications technology (ICT) and other services that would make meetings and conferences more accessible. Field offices lagged considerably behind their headquarters counterparts in the provision of accessible services while provisions for accessible services in offsite locations were not adequately monitored.

43. To address such deficits, the review outlined measures that included: establishing accessibility focal points; developing standard operating procedures for accessibility-related operational activities; better consideration of accessibility-related costs; the advance dissemination of meeting information and collection of user satisfaction feedback; the establishment and utilization of accessibility centres; the enhanced utilization of ICT tools; undertaking accessibility assessments; incorporating accessibility considerations in procurement processes; greater utilization of inter- and intra-agency coordination mechanisms to share good practices; ensuring staff training on disability inclusion and accessibility matters; incorporating accessibility-related questions into staff surveys; improving data collection and establishing key performance indicators on accessibility matters; ensure periodic reporting on the state of accessibility to legislative bodies and a role

for oversight bodies in monitoring and evaluating the state of accessibility; and mainstreaming disability inclusion and accessibility in the work of United Nations system organizations.

44. The review's findings will be presented to the General Assembly in 2019, following the receipt of the comments of CEB on the report.

Strengthening the policy research uptake in service of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (JIU/REP/2018/7)

45. The review intended to acknowledge the role of policy research as a unique asset of the United Nations system and to elevate its visibility in decision-making. The concluding report proposes ways to make research production and uptake more efficient and transparent. It represents the first ever system-wide review on policy research uptake. The report offers evidence on the existing policies and institutional mechanisms, deficiencies and good practices and outlines ways for the United Nations system to produce and use research more effectively. A case study on migration illustrates the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative research for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

46. The review examined the convergence of both internal and external factors that contributed, during the entire research cycle, to the quality and relevance of the final products, and to better relationship between the suppliers and the users of research.

47. Mapping and documenting how organizations produce internally policy research was the first area of interest. The review showed considerable variations in the way organizations comprehend and operationalize research activities. Among others, the review found that the quality assurance for policy research and uptake was not always consistent throughout organizations or integrated into the organizational strategic vision. There was insufficient clarity with respect to the categorization of various research products and suitable monitoring frameworks for capturing their use and relevance.

48. The other area of interest was the actual use by the United Nations system of research produced externally, by universities and other research entities. By consulting major academic networks, the report generates reflections and out-of-the-box insights on the existing challenges and possible solutions from independent perspectives.

49. The review recommended actions that were expected to enhance capacities for research uptake by further strengthening system-wide opportunities for collaborative research among United Nations organizations, on the one hand, and to make the best use of external knowledge resources and to build or consolidate partnerships with the academic and research communities, on the other hand. The report contains 12 recommendations: 1 is addressed to the General Assembly; 1 to the Economic and Social Council; 3 to the Secretary-General; and 7 to executive heads of United Nations system organizations.

C. Investigations

50. With regard to investigations, the Joint Inspection Unit focuses on alleged violations of regulations and rules and other established procedures by executive heads, heads of internal oversight bodies, officials of the organizations other than staff members and, on an exceptional basis, staff of organizations that do not have an in-house investigation capacity.

51. In 2018, the Unit received a number of complaints, including one from a Geneva-based United Nations entity, which fell outside the Unit's investigative mandate and purview. The other allegations reported to the Unit concerned senior management of a participating organization of the Joint Inspection Unit. Those complaints have not been further assessed, as they were referred to the competent body of the organization in question. Nevertheless, the Unit continues to be appraised of the actions taken.

D. Acceptance and implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Web-based tracking system

52. The web-based tracking system is a core application for the Unit and for participating organizations as an online tool to monitor and update the status of recommendations as well as for reporting and statistical analysis of the acceptance and implementation of recommendations.

53. The agreement with the United Nations Secretariat in the form of a service-level agreement to provide hosting and maintenance services for the Unit's web-based tracking system and its migration from the previous service provider were successfully concluded in 2018.

54. New functionality for the web-based tracking system that was requested by the Unit is being developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology. The new version of the software offering additional functionality is expected to be implemented in the first quarter of 2019.

Number of recommendations

55. The table below indicates the average number of recommendations by report, note and management letter, which increased from 6.4 in 2012 to 7.4 in 2018.

Number of Joint Inspection Unit reports, notes and management letters and recommendations, 2012–2018

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total 2012–2018
Reports, notes and management letters								
System-wide and several organizations	13	5	7	5	11	9	6	50
Single-organization	4	2	3	6	25	2	1	42
Total, reports, notes and management letters	17	7	10	11	36	11	7	92
Recommendations								
System-wide and several organizations	65	28	61	33	74	56	49	317
Single-organization	44	6	16	16	26	20	3	128
Total, recommendations	109	34	77	49	100	76	52	445
Average number of recommendations by output	6.4	4.9	7.7	4.5	2.8	6.9	7.4	4.8

Source: Web-based tracking system, January 2019.

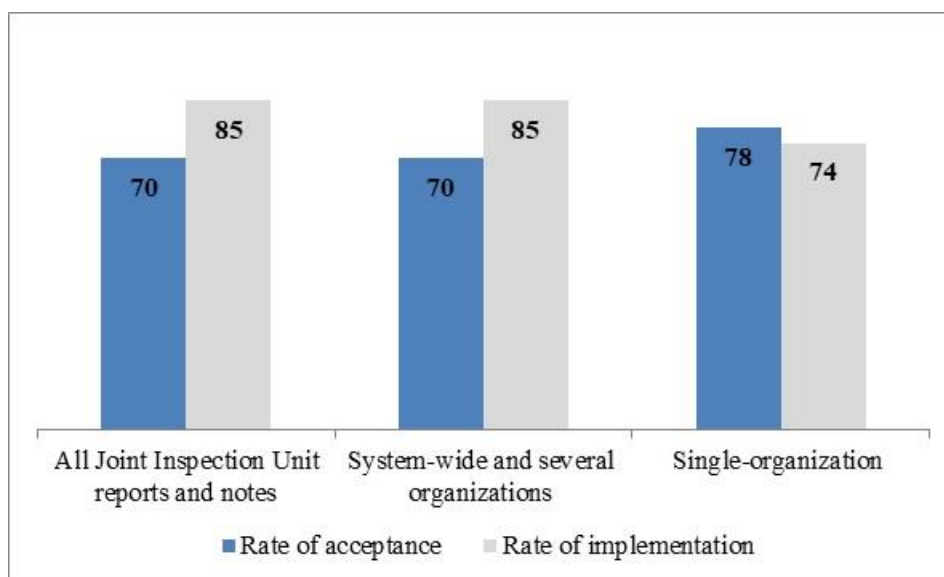
Acceptance and implementation rates of system-wide and single organization recommendations

56. The average rate of acceptance of recommendations made between 2010 and 2017 was 78 per cent for single organization reports and notes, and 70 per cent for system-wide reports (see figure below).¹ During the same period, the implementation rate of recommendations that had been accepted in single organization reports and notes was 74 per cent, and 85 per cent for system-wide reports.

57. A factor in the implementation rate was that, in the 15 reviews of management and administration performed in single organizations between 2010 and 2017, three had significantly low rates of implementation. The Unit commends the organizations for the action taken to implement its recommendations (see annex II, showing the aggregated acceptance and implementation rates by participating organizations from 2010 to 2017).

Figure
Average rate of acceptance of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations and rate of implementation of accepted recommendations (2010–2017)

(Percentage)



Source: Web-based tracking system, January 2019.

¹ As at January 2019, no input for 2017 had been provided by UNAIDS, UNDP, UNODC and UNWTO.

Chapter II

Outlook for 2019

58. The Joint Inspection Unit is focused on improving organizational effectiveness by enhancing transparency and accountability, and learning from good practices, coordination and efficiency to help organizations make the best use of available resources, as stipulated in article 5 of its Statute. The need is growing for such support by independent external oversight, in an environment of reform that demands accountability for the effective and efficient use of resources, integrity, learning and changes in culture and modes of operation in order to enhance effectiveness and impact. The Unit will continue to respond to that demand in 2019 and ensure that the programme of work will be delivered in a timely manner and with a high level of quality.

59. Eight projects that were started in 2018 will be completed in 2019. A further eight projects complete the programme of work for 2019. While six of the eight projects in the 2019 programme of work involve system-wide reviews, the Unit has added two reviews of management and administration to ensure that reviews of single organizations continue to be a significant feature of its programme of work.

60. The current strategic framework of the Joint Inspection Unit covers the period from 2010 to 2019. A significant activity for the Unit in 2019 is the development of a successor strategic framework for the next 10 years (2020–2029). The strategic framework provides an opportunity for the Unit to reiterate its unique mandate as the only independent, system-wide, external oversight body in the United Nations system for inspection, evaluation and investigation, and to define how it will carry out that mandate in the future. The Unit will assess its accomplishments under the previous framework and apply lessons learned to develop a strategic framework that takes into account the system-wide commitment to support the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements, organizational reforms and other changes and challenges. The strategic framework will be submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed seventy-fourth session as part of the annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2019.

61. In 2019, the Unit will update its outreach strategy to enhance effective interaction with stakeholders, Member States and participating organizations. Outreach activities will include an increase in engagement with the leadership of organizations in order to exchange information on emerging challenges and the contribution that independent external oversight can make. Engagements will include presentations to the Joint Inspection Unit by invited heads of organizations and departments.

62. In its resolution [72/269](#), the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to legislative organs of participating organizations to consider fully, discuss and take concrete action in a timely manner on the relevant recommendations issued by the Unit. It also encouraged the executive heads, including the Secretary-General, to improve their coordinated response to recommendations of the Unit through CEB. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also requested the executive heads of participating organizations to establish a direct reporting line from the Joint Inspection Unit focal point to the top management. The Unit will follow up and monitor the implementation of those aspects of the resolution, and report on progress in its annual report for 2019.

* See [A/66/34](#), annex I, on the revised strategic framework of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2010–2019.

Chapter III

Programme of work for 2019

63. In preparing its programme of work, the Unit considered at its winter session 2018–2019 a wide range of topics resulting from consultations with its participating organizations and other oversight and coordinating bodies. The programme of work adopted by the Unit in December 2018 includes six system-wide projects and two management and administration reviews (see annex V).

64. The workplan for 2019 includes eight new projects (see summaries below). The work of the Unit will comprise the projects for 2019, as well as work to complete the eight projects carried forward from the 2018 workplan.

Summaries of projects in the programme for work for 2019

Review of policies and contemporary practices in outsourcing of services in the United Nations system organizations

65. The legislative and regulatory framework for external outsourcing by the United Nations system organizations to commercial service providers was put in place almost two decades ago. Since then, organizations and practices have evolved and grown significantly in breadth and scope. Those developments – and the absence of any oversight reports on the subject matter in over a decade – make it opportune to review the contemporary requirements and practices of external outsourcing across the system. Such a review would assess the adequacy of policies and guidelines on outsourcing and the need for any possible adjustments. It would also look at organizations' compliance with the legislative criteria for outsourcing, including cost-effectiveness and efficiency, safety and security, maintenance of the organization's international character, maintenance of the integrity of procedures and processes, and avoidance of negative impacts on staff.

66. The review would assess what is covered by outsourcing, the definitions used and the potential reputational risks associated with reliance on external suppliers. It would seek to assess the need for any changes in legislative and regulatory frameworks in the light of ongoing reforms of organizational management and the development system, the adequacy of internal control frameworks and governance arrangements over activities and services outsourced, and coordination among entities on matters related to outsourcing, and to identify good practices and lessons learned. It would draw upon the work done in this area by the oversight entities and the extent of implementation by organizations of their recommendations, including the Joint Inspection Unit studies [JIU/REP/1997/5](#) and [JIU/REP/2002/7](#).

Review of staff exchange programmes and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations

67. Staff exchange and other forms of inter-agency mobility have long been provided for in the United Nations system and encouraged, at least in a rhetorical sense. This review will examine the current status and utilization of staff exchanges and other forms of inter-agency mobility, distinguishing between time-limited measures that include an expectation of return of staff and those that do not. It will endeavour to assess whether the requirement for greater horizontal cooperation in the United Nations system in support of the 2030 Agenda and the envisaged changes in the configuration of the United Nations country teams suggest an enhanced need for access by organizations, for defined periods of time, to knowledge and expertise contained in other organizations in the United Nations system or other relevant organizations or institutions.

68. The review will assess the adequacy of existing arrangements to enable such access. It will also review the mechanisms in place to enable inter-agency mobility of any kind and whether they respond adequately to the workforce needs of organizations and to the professional development aspirations of staff. In doing so, the Unit will review the status of recommendations made in its 2010 report on the inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2010/8](#)), which addressed issues related to inter-agency mobility.

Multilingualism in the United Nations system

69. Since its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly has repeatedly recognized multilingualism as a core value of the Organization. Against that backdrop, actions have been taken in the Secretariat, under the stewardship of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism, to ensure that requirement is reflected in how the United Nations operates. However, those efforts remain uneven across the United Nations system and have yet to bear fruit in the Secretariat.

70. The Secretary-General, through the Coordinator for Multilingualism, is taking steps towards the development of a consistent policy framework on multilingualism. Indeed, in its resolution [71/328](#) on multilingualism, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General, through his role in CEB, if necessary by means of the development of a consistent policy framework, to support a comprehensive and coordinated approach on multilingualism within the United Nations system, taking into consideration the relevant recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on multilingualism ([JIU/REP/2011/4](#)).

71. The review will determine how United Nations entities have translated in their operations the upgrading of multilingualism to the status of core value of the Organization. It will also make recommendations in support of the mainstreaming of multilingualism throughout the United Nations system, in connection with the preparation of a consistent policy framework on multilingualism. Furthermore, the study will follow up on the previous reports of the Joint Inspection Unit ([JIU/REP/2002/11](#) and [JIU/REP/2011/4](#)) and review the current staffing arrangements and funding mechanisms of language services, identify best practices and recommend adequate measures to address the above-mentioned issues and related ones, such as the recruitment of staff, the use of modern technologies, access to information, the distribution of documents and the development of the United Nations website towards official language parity, among others.

Policies, programmes and platforms to support learning in the United Nations system

72. The Joint Inspection Unit will undertake a United Nations system-wide review of policies, programmes and platforms to support learning. The review will attempt to identify existing good practices, in particular in using e-learning platforms and other training initiatives, which can contribute to enhancing capacity-building and the adequacy of training policies and programmes with respect to the mandates of United Nations system organizations. Such adequacy will be considered both under substantive relevance and in terms of efficiency in the use of resources allocated for learning.

73. While the review will seek to explore ways to improve the management of individual organizations' specific learning policies, programmes and platforms, a particular focus will be placed on exploring opportunities for system-wide coordination, collaboration and cost-sharing, as well as on potential synergies with and between various learning and training providers. Special attention will be paid to

the role of new technologies in learning, from a dual perspective: the use of technologies for learning, on the one hand, and learning about the use of new technologies, on the other hand.

74. Building on the findings of previous reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, the review will make recommendations with a view to integrating coherently the learning activities and the policy research uptake into a broader strategic framework for knowledge management in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

Review of management and administration in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

75. The General Assembly, in its resolution [72/279](#), endorsed the first phase of the Secretary-General's proposed approach to revamping the United Nations development system at the regional level. ECLAC is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, and its purpose is to contribute to the economic and social development of Latin America and Caribbean States. The management and administration review will be placed in the context of the broader and current repositioning exercise. It will examine the contribution expected of ECLAC, its division of labour with other United Nations system regional structures, and the adequacy of its management and administration processes, governance and organizational structure to meet expectations to provide effective support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional and national levels. The review will also follow up on recommendations made in other reviews of the Joint Inspection Unit, including the 2013 review of management and administration in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([JIU/NOTE/2013/2](#)).

United Nations common premises: current practices and future requirements

76. The need to establish common premises at the country level has been emphasized for decades in successive resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular those concerning the operational activities for development. Most recently, in its resolution [72/279](#), the Assembly, in considering proposals for the repositioning of the United Nations development system, welcomed measures by the Secretary-General to advance common business operations, where appropriate, including common back-offices, and with the target of 50 per cent common premises by 2021, to enable joint work and generate greater efficiencies, synergies and coherence. The Secretary-General has reported that, of about 2,900 premises worldwide, only 16 per cent are common premises based on the definition applied.²

77. Common business operations are intended to: (a) yield substantial savings that could be redeployed to programmes; (b) better integrated technologies and apply advanced management practices; (c) increase the quality of services provided in terms of client satisfaction and compliance with risk metrics and controls; and (d) allow United Nations entities to focus on their mandates and programmatic functions. Common premises could improve cost efficiency through the reduction of operational costs, the effective utilization of shared resources, enhanced security and a unified presence at the national and subnational level.

78. The Unit will examine lesson learned from past experiences in the development of common premises and review current practices in order to inform the development of a realistic strategy to meet future needs.

² See www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/4_%20Common%20business%20services%20and%20back-office%20functions.pdf.

Review of the status of implementation of enterprise risk management in the United Nations system organizations

79. Enterprise risk management is a structured, consistent and continuous process across an organization for identifying and managing opportunities and threats that affect the achievement of the organizations' objectives. Nearly a decade has passed since enterprise risk management was introduced in the United Nations system organizations. It has become an essential tool of good governance and accountability for the governing bodies, the executive heads and line management.

80. The review will provide an independent assessment of the implementation of enterprise risk management to follow up on the Unit's previous recommendations (JIU/REP/2010/4); to assess the level of integration of enterprise risk management into the organizations' strategies and operations and how well it has become a decision-making tool; to review the risk governance framework that assigns clear roles and responsibilities to the governing bodies, executive heads and line management, as well as the oversight bodies, such as the Oversight Committee, external and internal auditors and evaluation units, based on the three lines of defence model; to identify benchmarks and good practices in the United Nations system and multilateral organizations; and to identify the role that enterprise risk management can play in the effective and efficient delivery of major reform initiatives and the 2030 Agenda.

Review of management and administration review in the World Meteorological Organization

81. Founded in 1873 as International Meteorological Organization, WMO was established in 1950. As a specialized agency of the United Nations, WMO is dedicated to international cooperation and coordination in the field of meteorology (weather and climate), hydrology and related geophysical sciences. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies and national meteorological and hydrological services, the organization supports the monitoring and protection of the environment. WMO contributes to policy formulation at the national and international level.

82. The report is part of the series of management and administration reviews of participating organizations carried out periodically by the Unit. The main objective of the review is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the regulatory frameworks and related practices concerning the management and administration of WMO, highlighting the areas of concern, the areas in need of improvement and the challenges faced.

83. The review is designed to identify opportunities for further improvements, such as in the governance of the organization, its organizational structure and executive management, its strategic planning, its financial and human resources management, information management and technology, and its oversight mechanisms. In its first review of the management and administration of WMO in 2007 (JIU/REP/2007/11), the Joint Inspection Unit made a total of 27 recommendations, 13 of which were addressed to the WMO governing body and 14 to the executive management. The status of their implementation and continued relevance will be taken into consideration as appropriate.

Annex I

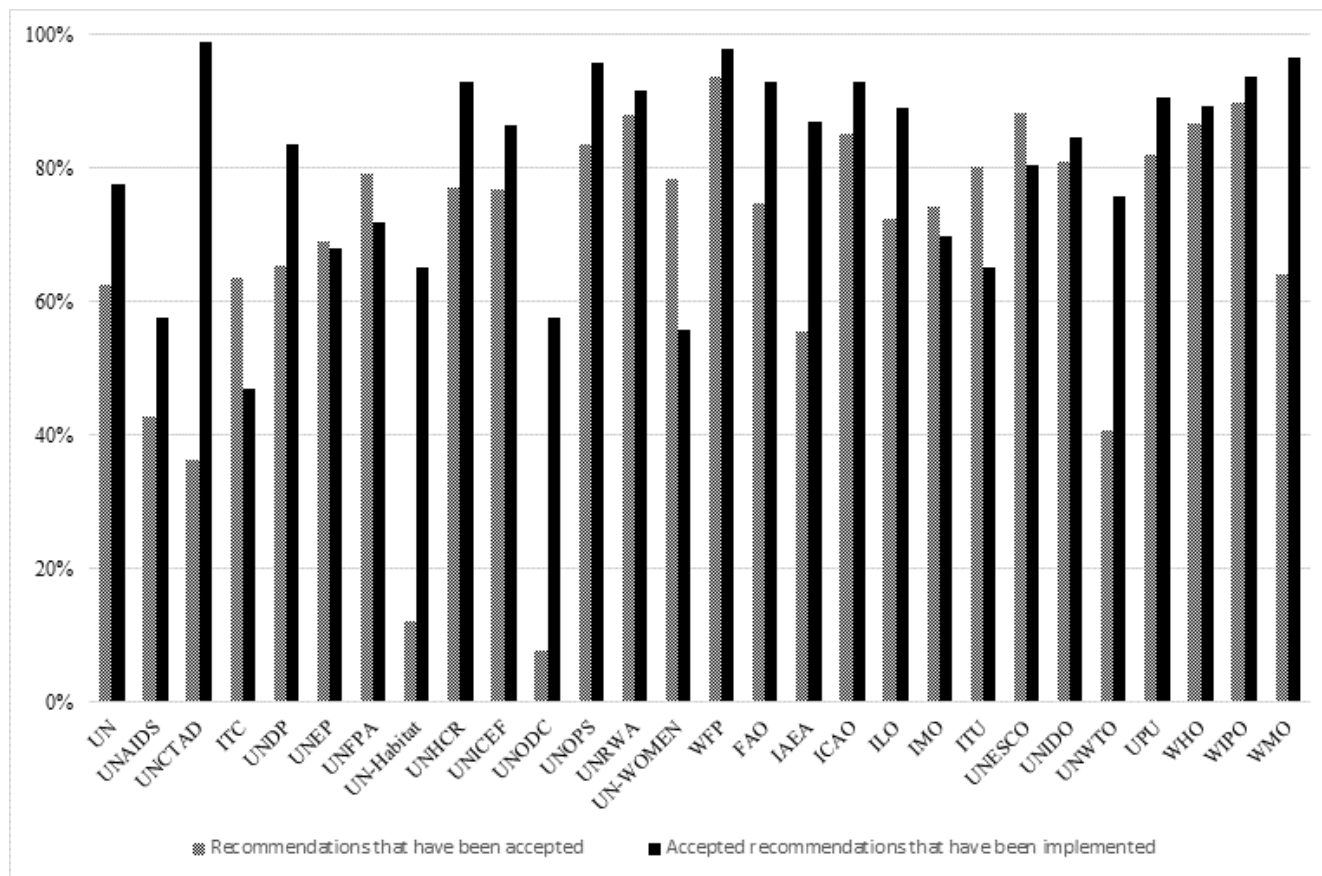
Status of implementation of the workplan for 2018 as at 31 December 2018

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Symbol/completion date</i>
Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system	JIU/REP/2018/1 and Corr.1
Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3)	JIU/REP/2018/2
Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	JIU/REP/2018/3
Review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations	JIU/REP/2018/4
Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation	JIU/REP/2018/5
Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system	JIU/REP/2018/6
Strengthening the policy research uptake in service of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	JIU/REP/2018/7
Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system	To be completed in 2019
Organizational change management in the United Nations system: lessons learned and strategies for the future	To be completed in 2019
Review of oversight committees in the United Nations system	To be completed in 2019
Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system entities	To be completed in 2019
Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	To be completed in 2019
Review of management and administration in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	To be completed in 2019
Review of management and administration in the International Civil Aviation Organization	To be completed in 2019
Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function	To be completed in 2019

Annex II

Status of acceptance of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations, and implementation of accepted recommendations, by participating organizations, 2010–2017

(Percentage)



Annex III

List of contributing organizations and their percentage share in the costs of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2018–2019

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
FAO	3.5
IAEA	1.6
ICAO	0.6
ILO	1.8
IMO	0.2
ITU	0.5
PAHO	4.2
UNAIDS	0.8
UNDP	14.5
UNESCO	2.2
UNFPA	2.8
UNHCR	9.3
UNICEF	13.5
UNIDO	0.7
United Nations	15.1
UNOPS	1.9
UNRWA	3.7
UN-Women	0.8
UNWTO	0.1
UPU	0.2
WFP	13.8
WHO	7.1
WIPO	1.0
WMO	0.3

Source: CEB.

Note: The United Nations entry includes the United Nations Secretariat, UNITAR, ITC, ICSC, the International Court of Justice, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and United Nations University. It excludes tribunals, special political missions and peacekeeping operations.

Annex IV

Composition of the Joint Inspection Unit

1. The composition of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2018 was as follows (each inspector's term of office expires on 31 December of the year indicated in parentheses):

- Gopinathan Achamkulangare (India) (2022)
- Aicha Afifi (Morocco) (2020)
- Jean Wesley Cazeau (Haiti) (2022)
- Eileen A. Cronin (United States of America) (2021)
- Petru Dumitriu (Romania) (2020)
- Jorge T. Flores Callejas (Honduras) (2021)
- Keiko Kamioka (Japan) (2019)
- Jeremiah Kramer (Canada) (2020)
- Nikolay Lozinskiy (Russian Federation) (2022)
- Sukai Elie Prom-Jackson (Gambia) (2022)
- Gönke Roscher (Germany) (2020)

2. In accordance with article 18 of the Statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, which provides that each year the Unit shall elect from among the inspectors a Chair and a Vice-Chair, the Bureau of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2019 is as follows:

- Sukai Elie Prom-Jackson (Gambia), Chair
- Petru Dumitriu (Romania), Vice-Chair

Annex V

Programme of work for 2019^a

<i>Project No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Type</i>
A.443	Review of policies and contemporary practices in outsourcing of services in the United Nations system organizations	System-wide
A.444	Review of staff exchange programmes and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations	System-wide
A.445	Multilingualism in the United Nations system	System-wide
A.446	Policies, programmes and platforms to support learning in the United Nations system	System-wide
A.447	Review of management and administration in the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Single
A.448	United Nations common premises: current practices and future requirements	System-wide
A.449	Review of the status of implementation of enterprise risk management in the United Nations system organizations	System-wide
A.450	Review of management and administration in the World Meteorological Organization	Single

^a Subject to change during the year.