

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.¹

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.

¹ 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 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.

