

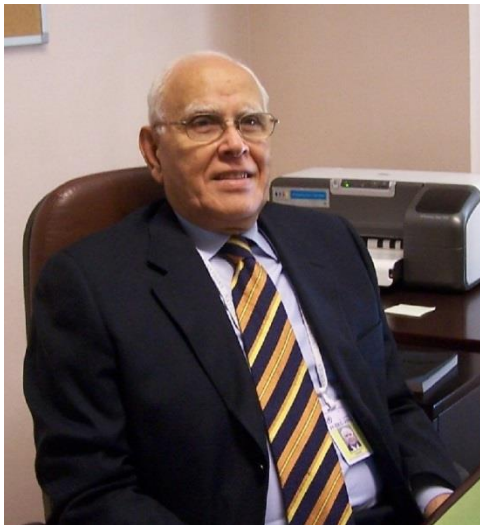


Interview: H.E. Ambassador Mounir Zahran, Former Chair and Inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit

This article is part of an ongoing series to commemorate the Joint Inspection Unit's 50th anniversary and highlight the JIU's work and achievements over the last 50 years.

How would you assess your experience in the JIU from a professional perspective?

Based on my experience in the JIU from 2008 through 2012, I found that JIU played an important role as an independent external oversight body in the United Nations system organizations that are participating organizations in the context of its Statute provisions. Since my departure from the Unit by end of 2012, I am not aware of any development which may have affected the efficiency or the effectiveness of the oversight role of the Unit. In addition, while the Unit made progress in its own reform, the reform itself is a process and should be a work in progress. The Unit often encounters external factors that may affect its performance.



**H.E. Ambassador Mounir Zahran
Former Chair and Inspector, JIU
2008-2012**

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For instance, Member States have an important role in the selection of the candidates that they submit to fill vacancies in the positions of Inspectors, but also in their selection and appointment on the basis of the requirements as stipulated in the JIU (Articles 2-4) Statute. Member States also play a vital role with regard to the provision of the necessary budgetary resources that would enable or restrict the ability of the Unit to perform its duties as it should.

What major changes in the Unit have you witnessed during your term as Inspector?

Major changes have indeed taken place during my term in office as Inspector. I refer in particular to the improvement of the Internal Working Procedures (IWP). The Working Group on IWPs adopted the JIU Evaluation Norms & Standards. That achievement was critical for the work of the Inspectors.

In your opinion, what have been the Unit's main accomplishments in implementing its oversight mandate from a system-wide perspective?

The main JIU accomplishments till 2012 were important evaluation/review reports and recommendations addressed to the Legislative bodies and Executive Heads, inter alia, in “the Selection and Conditions of service of the Executive Heads in the United Nations Organizations”, “the Ethics Function, the Audit and Investigation functions in the UN system

organizations”, “Accountability frameworks in the United Nations Organizations” (which is considered by many organizations as a landmark of the JIU oversight function), “South/South and Triangular Cooperation”, and many others. Several of these reports were instrumental in spearheading significant positive changes to these Organizations.

From your perspective, what have been the major challenges for the Joint Inspection Unit in fulfilling its mandate by providing relevant, useful and timely system-wide independent oversight?

The major challenges are mostly related to the main JIU functions as stipulated in Article 5, namely Investigation and Inspection. The performance of the said functions needs full cooperation by the Executive Heads and the high officials in the management of all UN organizations.

What changes have you observed in the way that the Unit has been interacting with its stakeholders?

Changes have taken place, but need further improvements. I noticed improvements in the cooperation with Member States and some Executive Heads in interacting with the JIU in the area of "evaluation". However, the replies to the JIU questionnaires often take more time than they should.

At the end, Inspectors have to wait for too long, for replies that are not provided within specific time-frames. Personal contacts should take place more frequently with the regional groups in Geneva and New York, by a division of labour among the Inspectors who come from the five regional groups.

“I noticed improvements in the cooperation with Member States and some Executive Heads in interacting with the JIU in the area of evaluation”

In which way would you like to see the JIU evolve in the period up to 2030?

The SDGs are the responsibility of Member States but also that of the United Nations Organizations, particularly the participating organizations; the JIU has a role to play, together with Member States in the implementation of the said goals, in particular, to evaluate the participating organizations' contribution to that end.