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**PLENARY MEETING**  
**(PL 3.2)**

**Report by the Secretary-General**

**COMMENTS ON THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (JIU) REPORT**

This document presents the comments of the Secretary-General on the JIU Report entitled “Review of Management and Administration in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)”.

Yoshio UTSUMI  
Secretary-General

## I. BACKGROUND

1 To obtain and provide additional input to the reform process, by letter of 28 April 2000, the Secretary-General requested the Joint Inspection Union (JIU) of the United Nations System to conduct a study on the management and functioning of the ITU. Relations between the ITU and the JIU are generally established pursuant to Resolution 57 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994).

2 A draft of the JIU Report was tendered to the Secretary-General on 5 April 2001, along with a letter inviting him to submit factual corrections and comments on the draft. In response, the Secretary-General submitted a set of factual corrections on the draft Report, as well as the comments of Directors on the substance of the Report and its Recommendations and a list of their factual corrections.

3 The final version of the JIU Report was received by the Secretary-General on 11 May 2001 and was posted on the ITU Council website that same day. The JIU Report is submitted to the Council as Document 37 under agenda item PL 3.2.

4 Resolution 57 instructs the Secretary-General to submit to Council those JIU Reports that have a bearing on the Union, "together with comments he considers appropriate...". Under the Statute of the JIU, the final version of a JIU report that concerns only one organization "and comments thereon of the executive head" shall be transmitted to the competent organ of that organization (Art. 11). Accordingly, this Report constitutes the comments of the Secretary-General on the JIU Report.

5 Under Resolution 57, the Council is instructed to "consider the JIU Reports submitted by the Secretary-General, and to take action thereon as it deems fit."

## II. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

6 In preparing this Report, the Secretary-General, based on discussions at the Policy and Strategy Committee, decided only to comment specifically on those Recommendations that are directed to the Secretary-General, or that should have been so targeted. In the case of Recommendations directed to the legislative organs of the Union, pursuant to the above-cited procedures, it will be up to the Council to make a first determination concerning the suitability of any of the Recommendations and then to report its conclusions to the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2002.

7 The decision to limit these Comments to certain Recommendations should not necessarily be construed as an endorsement of the remaining content, conclusions and analysis found in the body of the Report. Given the length of and limited time to study the Report, it was not possible to make comments on all of the recommendations and points contained therein. Moreover, there are different viewpoints on many of these issues. While the Secretary-General and Directors provided a list of factual corrections on the draft version to the JIU, some of these points were not revised in the final JIU Report.

8 On the whole, there are a number of useful Recommendations and points in the JIU Report and the Secretary-General would like to thank the members of the JIU team for their efforts. It should also be recognized that there are linkages among the Recommendations and, in that light, they benefit from being viewed as a whole.

### III. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

#### **Recommendation 6 (page vii) - Delegation of Authority**

9 Similar to other UN agencies, delegation of authority at the ITU is based in part on the provisions of the basic instruments and more specifically on various office memoranda. Efforts are already underway to review the situation and to prepare a simplified and comprehensive structure to delegate authority. An internal working group established by the Secretary-General to examine delegation of authority for administrative and financial matters (as referred to in the JIU Report) resumed its work recently and will prepare a comprehensive framework to be submitted to Council 2002 for its information, but not for approval (as the JIU states), as the delegated authority would be from the Executive Head, i.e. the Secretary-General.

#### **Recommendation 7 (page vii) - Planning**

10 a) *Strategic Plan*: This Recommendation, which concerns Strategic Planning, relies on a misreading of the Constitution. Since the amendments to Article 11 adopted in Minneapolis, the Secretary-General is no longer tasked to prepare the Strategic Plan, but instead is asked to prepare materials towards a Strategic Plan (see CS/74A). A document with such materials is being presented to Council (see Document 38), in which it has already been noted that the sector Advisory Groups have called for a streamlined Strategic Plan. The Secretary-General already presents an annual Activities Report to the Council, which describes actions taken with respect to the current Strategic Plan.

11 b) *Operational Plans*: Pursuant to Minneapolis Res. 72, the Secretary-General is already proposing that a better and consistent cycle be adopted with respect to the Operational, Financial and Strategic Plans of the Union. This matter is fully addressed in Council Document 20. The sectors already report on implementation of their Operational Plans to their respective Advisory Groups, thus a separate reporting requirement to Council, as JIU recommends, might be duplicative and is not required under Res. 72. Moreover, given differences in the goals and tasks of each Sector, comparison of their respective operational plans may not be easy.

12 c) *Budget*: Since 1999, management of the ITU has taken many steps to improve the appearance and presentation of the budget and has moved to activities-based budgeting. Performance indicators are already included in the Operational Plans of the Sectors and General Secretariat, which are posted on the Council website.

#### **Recommendation 10 (page viii) - Budget Process**

13 Because the process of the reallocation of costs is inherently complex, efforts already have been made in the 2000-01 Budget Document and again in the 2002-03 Proposed Budget to explain the cost allocation process with a view to greater transparency. It should be noted that this process was endorsed by Council and fully described in Council Document C98/15. Nonetheless, further

efforts will be made to provide greater clarity on the cost allocation process. A special information session is planned during the first day of Council 2001 to explain the structure of the Budget.

14 At the Secretary General's suggestion, additional information, including graphs have been included in the 2002-03 Proposed Budget that demonstrate more clearly the relationship between Sector Member contributions and budgets for the Sectors.

**Recommendation 11 (page ix) - Human Resources**

15 11 a) *Staff Regulations and Staff Rules*: This recommendations can be agreed and the same recommendations has been made by the Working Group on Reform (WGR).

16 11 b) *Geographical and Gender Representation*: A plan of action and proposed procedures aimed at improving the geographical and gender representation. First and foremost it should be recalled that merit must remain the primary consideration for the recruitment of staff. Any action plan and procedures should start from this premise. Since the ITU is relatively small such an action plan and procedures may lead to unnecessary rigidity and complications in recruiting staff. For instance the ITU has only 275 staff members in the Professional and higher categories subject to geographical distribution and 189 Member States. Any system of desirable ranges would be impractical. The ITU has normally around 80 nationalities in the Professional and higher categories. To increase this number would be difficult since we do not receive applications from about half of the countries at all. Especially for a high-tech organization it is important to keep its competitive edge. If any action plan and procedures are to be submitted they should be very flexible and not impede the recruitment of qualified staff.

17 11 c) *Recruitment, Vacancies and Contracts*: This recommendation can be agreed to.

**Recommendation 12 (page ix) - Documentation and Publications**

18 Of course, the Secretary-General continually reviews the distribution of tasks related to documentation and publications, in an effort to find the optimal mix. The distribution of tasks between the General Secretariat and the Bureaux is under review to ensure that no overlap exists in this respect. The Report already acknowledges that the Union enjoys high quality and efficient conference services and common services, so the present system is obviously working well.

**Recommendation 14 (page ix) - Information Systems**

19 While an integrated information system is a laudable goal, some software is highly technical in nature and clearly needs the cooperation of the sector concerned. Although there are references to inadequate consultation before new software systems are introduced (paragraph 129), the example refers to a case where the IS Department does not provide the systems to the sector concerned. Within the constraints posed by the present budget climate and the structure of the ITU, the secretariat is already moving towards a central approach to information technology.

**Recommendation 15 (page x) - Internal Auditor**

20 *A) Annual Report:* This Recommendation has already been largely implemented. As noted in the body of the report (see paras. 134 and 135), a report of the Internal Auditor is already provided to the Council. Indeed, a consolidated annual report of the activities of the Internal Auditor was transmitted, as an information document and for the first time, to the 2000 Council (Doc EP/17). The consolidated annual report of activities of the Internal Auditor relative to the year 2000 is being transmitted to Council 2001 through Document C01/EP/04.

21 *B) Upgrading :* The upgrading of the Internal Auditor post and other recommended strengthening of staff is provided for in the 2002-03 Proposed Budget.

**Recommendation 16 (page x) - Risk Profile**

22 This Recommendation seems to be entirely generic with little appreciation for the circumstances of the ITU. Unlike other and larger UN agencies, the Union and its staff do not routinely handle large sums of money nor engage in related activities of a high-risk nature. The JIU Report presents no evidence that a risk profile is needed for the Union, nor that adding another layer of bureaucracy (e.g. Inspector Generals) would improve management. It should be noted that internal audit projects are prioritized and selected based on a risk assessment approach.

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