

**REVIEW OF THE ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE OFFICE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
(UNHCR)**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations has repeatedly noted the importance of enhancing the effectiveness of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and its follow-up system and has reaffirmed that the effectiveness of the JIU is a shared responsibility of the Unit, member States, and the secretariats of the participating organizations.¹

2. In its resolution 54/16, the General Assembly endorsed the proposal of the Unit to establish a system for the handling of JIU reports and recommendations by its participating organizations. The proposal, entitled “Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit”, was attached as an annex to the Unit’s annual report for 1997.² Subsequently, the Unit undertook the negotiation of specific follow-up agreements with the secretariats of its participating organizations, which were ratified by their respective governing bodies between 2000 and 2005. As the United Nations General Assembly is the legislative body of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office is bounded by resolution 54/16, which endorsed the follow-up system.

3. In 1998, the Unit started tracking the action taken by legislative bodies on its recommendations. That tracking system evolved over the years into a web-based tracking system (WBTS), which was introduced in 2002. The WBTS serves as an online platform allowing participating organizations to access and update the status of consideration of JIU reports and the acceptance and implementation of recommendations. The General Assembly in its resolution 69/275 requests the heads of participating organizations to make full use of the web-based system and to provide an in-depth analysis of how the recommendations of the Unit are being implemented.³

4. The Unit is committed to further enhancing the effectiveness of its follow-up system and therefore decided to include in its programme of work for 2015 a review of the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations by its participating organizations during the period 2006-2012. The most recent years have been excluded from the analysis since it takes some time for reports to be considered by legislative bodies and for recommendations to be implemented by management. All recommendations prior to 2006 had been closed and their acceptance and implementation were no longer tracked.

5. The review is being conducted in two phases. The objectives of the first phase are to review:

- The acceptance and implementation of recommendations by JIU participating organizations, based on the statistics provided in the WBTS, to prompt action to clear recommendations outstanding for five years or more; and
- The process of consideration of JIU reports by the legislative bodies of organizations in order to identify shortcomings and delays in the process.

6. A questionnaire on the process of handling JIU reports, notes and management letters was sent to the JIU focal points at each organization. The results of the first phase of the review are being presented in a series of management letters addressed to executive heads of participating organizations.

7. The second phase will identify good follow-up practices at organizations and draw lessons to enhance the follow-up process.

8. The present management letter, which is addressed for action to the High Commissioner of UNHCR includes:

¹ General Assembly resolutions 50/233, 54/16, 62/246, 63/272, 64/262, 65/270, 66/259, 68/266 and 69/275.

² A/52/34.

³ OP.15.

- A comparison of the acceptance and implementation rates for the period 2006-2012 in order to position UNHCR within the spectrum of JIU participating organizations;
- A trend analysis of the acceptance and implementation rates at UNHCR for the period 2006-2012; and
- A review of recommendations formulated during the period 2006-2009 still outstanding, the acceptance of which is “not available” or “under consideration”, and/or the implementation of which is “in progress”, “not started” or “not available”.

9. The intended analysis of the process of handling and considering JIU reports by UNHCR could not be carried out, since the reports are not taken up by the Executive Committee.

10. Comments on the draft management letter were sought from UNHCR management and taken into account in finalizing the letter. In accordance with article 11, paragraph 2, of the JIU statute, the present management letter was finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

II. ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A. High rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations

11. As shown in the table below, at the time this review was initiated in February 2015, UNHCR ranked 4th in the acceptance and 8th in the implementation of JIU recommendations among all participating organizations and entities considered in our review for the period 2006-2012. By the time this management letter was finalized in May 2016, the rate of implementation has slightly increased to 91.4 per cent, while the rate of acceptance remains the same. UNHCR's acceptance and implementation rates are among the highest of all organizations (see annex I for more details). **The Inspector commends UNHCR management on these results.**

Table 1
Rates of acceptance and implementation (2006-2012)*

	UNHCR	All organizations
Number of recommendations	311	7692**
Number of accepted recommendations	268	5000**
Number of implemented recommendations	239	4020**
Rate of acceptance	86.2%	65%
Rate of implementation	89.2%	80.4%

*As of February 2015.

** Number of recommendations multiplied by the number of organizations concerned, to which recommendations are addressed for action.

B. Decreasing trend of acceptance and implementation

12. It can be further noted that both the rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations fluctuated over the period to decrease by 2012 (see annex II for more details). **The Inspector invited UNHCR management to analyse the reasons for this trend and report to JIU by August 2016.**

Table 2
Trend of acceptance and implementation (2006-2012)*

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of recommendations	26	38	48	39	57	65	38
Rate of acceptance	88.5%	94.7%	79.2%	82.1%	80.7%	92.3%	86.8%
Rate of implementation	95.7%	94.4%	89.5%	84.4%	95.7%	83.3%	84.8%

*As of February 2015.

13. UNHCR explained that one of the reasons for this “fluctuation” on the rate of acceptance is the relevance of specific JIU reports and recommendations to the Organization’s mandate and work. Further, it is often not possible to follow-up on recommendations addressed for action/decision to legislative body, which is the United Nations General Assembly in case of UNHCR. In this regard, it is suggested that all future JIU reports shall not indicate the legislative organ (“L”) of UNHCR in the annex table entitled “Overview of action to be taken by participating organizations on the

recommendations of JIU” but rather address those recommendations to the General Assembly. The Inspector takes due note of this suggestion and will bring it to the attention of the Unit.

C. Higher rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations addressed to the executive head

14. Likewise in the most of participating organizations, the UNHCR’s rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations addressed for action to the executive head during the period 2006-2012 were higher than the rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations addressed for action to the legislative body. In principle, recommendations addressed to executive heads are more easily accepted and implemented since they do not entail significant policy changes or costs requiring the approval of member States.

15. The UNHCR’s response to the JIU questionnaire indicated that JIU reports are not submitted to the UNHCR Executive Committee since they are considered by the General Assembly, which is the UNHCR legislative body. Yet, the General Assembly’s rate of acceptance of JIU recommendations is quite low (61.5 per cent), as compared to the high rate of acceptance of UNHCR’s legislative body reported in the WBTS. **The Inspector invites UNHCR management to analyse this issue and report back to the JIU.**

Table 3
Rates of acceptance and implementation by addressee (2006-2012)*

	UNHCR executive head	UNHCR legislative body
Rate of acceptance	89.2%	78.4%
Rate of implementation	92 %	81.2%

*As of August 2015

16. In its comments to the draft management letter UNHCR acknowledges this discrepancy attributed to the need of further clarifying the relevance of JIU recommendations addressed to the Organization’s legislative body vis-a vis the distinct role of the UNHCR’s Executive Committee with advisory role and the General Assembly.

D. Long-outstanding recommendations for five years or more

17. A review of 151 recommendations in 23 JIU reports and notes addressed for action to UNHCR during the period 2006-2009 showed that, as of May 2016, there were 10 outstanding recommendations for five years or more (see table 3 below).

18. Most recommendations were pending implementation (90 per cent) by UNHCR secretariat. Action by UNHCR is required to clear these long-outstanding recommendations, as applicable. Five years or more after being sent for action no recommendation should appear as acceptance “under consideration” and implementation “in progress”. They should be either accepted or rejected and their implementation of those accepted for the most completed.

Table 3
Outstanding recommendations for five years or more (2006-2009)

Report number	Recommendation number	Current status
JIU/REP/2006/2	6	Implementation: In progress
JIU/REP/2008/6	1	Implementation: In progress
	2	Implementation: In progress
	3	Implementation: In progress

Report number	Recommendation number	Current status
	7	Implementation: In progress
	8	Acceptance: Under consideration
JIU/REP/2009/6	7	Implementation: In progress
JIU/REP/2009/8	7	Implementation: In progress
	10	Implementation: In progress
	12	Implementation: In progress
Total outstanding recommendations		10

Recommendation 1

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should ensure that action is taken to clear long-outstanding recommendations in the WBTS and report to JIU by 31 August 2016.

19. By the time this management letter was being finalized, UNHCR has indicated that it has updated the status of four recommendations; one remains in progress of implementation until the end of 2016 while five could not be updated since they were addressed to the legislative body. Since these latter recommendations have already been accepted, UNHCR will take action to modify their status of acceptance.

III. CONSIDERATION OF JIU REPORTS BY UNHCR LEGISLATIVE BODY

20. According to JIU records, 24 reports containing at least one recommendation addressed to UNHCR's legislative body were sent to the Organization for action during the period 2010-2012; none of them was considered by the Executive Committee (EXCOM). The UNHCR's response to the JIU questionnaire indicated that as the General Assembly is its legislative body and the JIU reports to it, only a summary of UNHCR's work with JIU is presented to the EXCOM (whose role is mainly advisory) during the meetings that take place twice a year in March and October, as part of the Inspector-General's report. The deliberations of the Fifth Committee are attended by UNHCR liaison office staff in New York to ensure that JIU developments are adequately addressed.

21. According to the response to the questionnaire, JIU reports are internally distributed electronically to the focal points in the divisions and bureaux for onward distribution to the relevant staff who contributed to the preparation of the report as well as those responsible for implementing the recommendations.

22. We would appreciate receiving a response to this management letter and recommendations by 31 August 2016.

Annex I
Rates of acceptance and implementation by organization (2006-2012),
as of February 2015

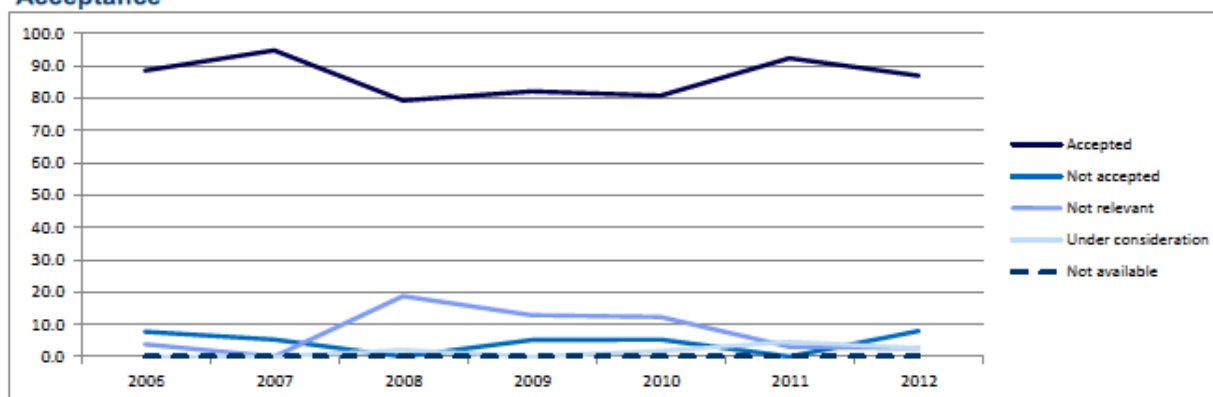
	<i>(percentage)</i>		<i>(percentage)</i>
	<i>Accepted</i>		<i>Implemented</i>
FAO	93.7	OHCHR	100.0
UNRWA	91.2	FAO	97.3
WFP	89.6	ICAO	94.1
UNHCR	86.2	WFP	93.4
UNFPA	85.7	WMO	92.8
WHO	83.6	UNIDO	92.6
UNIDO	82.9	UNESCO	90.4
UNDP	82.3	UNHCR	89.2
UNESCO	81.9	WHO	88.3
UNOPS	81.0	UNEP	86.7
ICAO	80.8	UNCTAD	86.6
UNICEF	80.4	UNRWA	82.4
UNEP	78.7	UNOPS	82.0
UNAIDS	77.8	ILO	80.5
IMO	72.8	All organizations	80.4
ILO	68.2	UNFPA	80.1
UN	67.0	WIPO	78.2
All organizations	65.0	UNWTO	73.7
WMO	63.9	UN	69.8
WIPO	56.3	UNDP	69.5
ITU	47.4	UNICEF	66.3
OHCHR	38.5	IAEA	61.3
IAEA	35.3	UN-Habitat	61.2
UNCTAD	32.8	UNODC	57.9
UPU	25.7	IMO	57.2
UNODC	22.4	UNAIDS	51.4
UN-Habitat	19.2	ITC	50.0
ITC	18.2	UPU	46.8
UNWTO	6.3	ITU	46.2
CEB	0.0	CEB	0.0
UN-WOMEN	0.0	UN-WOMEN	0.0

Annex II

UNHCR trend of acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations (2006-2012), as of February 2015

Period: 2006 - 2012 Document Type: REPORT, NOTE, LETTER System Type: All

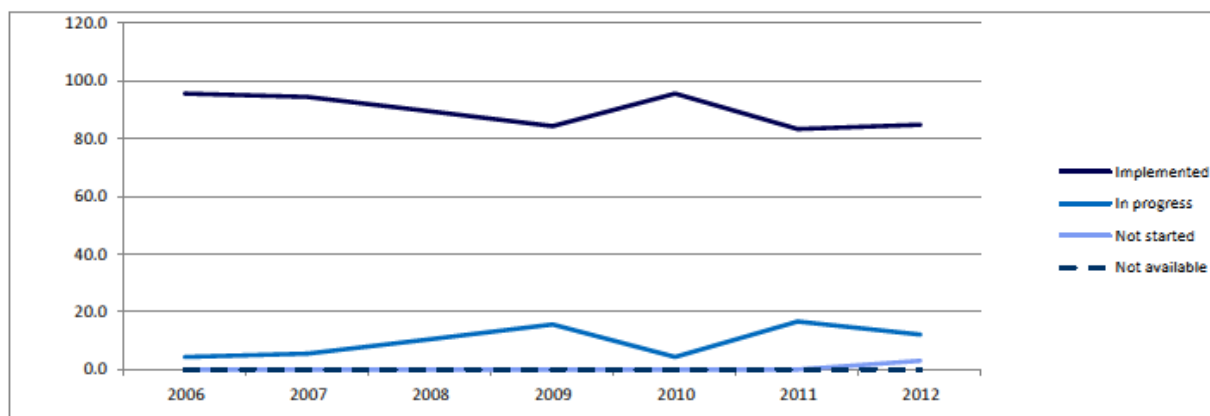
Acceptance



%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Accepted	88.5	94.7	79.2	82.1	80.7	92.3	86.8
Not accepted	7.7	5.3	0.0	5.1	5.3	0.0	7.9
Not relevant	3.8	0.0	18.8	12.8	12.3	3.1	2.6
Under consideration	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	1.8	4.6	2.6
Not available	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Values	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Accepted	23	36	38	32	46	60	33
Not accepted	2	2	0	2	3	0	3
Not relevant	1	0	9	5	7	2	1
Under consideration	0	0	1	0	1	3	1
Not available	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Implementation



%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Implemented	95.7	94.4	89.5	84.4	95.7	83.3	84.8
In progress	4.3	5.6	10.5	15.6	4.3	16.7	12.1
Not started	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Not available	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Values	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Implemented	22	34	34	27	44	50	28
In progress	1	2	4	5	2	10	4
Not started	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Not available	0	0	0	0	0	0	0