

**REVIEW OF THE ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE UNITED NATIONS
ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (UN-WOMEN)**

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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 negotiation on specific follow-up agreements with the secretariats of its participating organizations, which were ratified by their respective governing bodies between 2000 and 2005. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) created in 2010 as an independent entity, with effect from 1 January 2011, by General Assembly resolution 64/289, became also *mutatis-mutandis* bounded *de jure* by resolution General Assembly 54/16, which endorsed the follow-up system. Officially, UN-Women became a JIU participating organization in 2012, when the relationship was formalized with the nomination of a JIU focal point and systematic inclusion of UN-Women in the reviews undertaken by the Unit and in the web-based tracking system (WBTS).³ From 2013, the Organization also started contributing to cost-sharing of the jointly-funded JIU budget.⁴

3. In 1998, the Unit started tracking the action taken by legislative bodies on its recommendations. That tracking system evolved over the years to the above-mentioned WBTS, 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.⁵

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 years 2013 onwards 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/implementation was no longer tracked.

5. The review is being conducted in two phases. The objectives of the present first phase are twofold. The first objective is 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. The second objective is to review 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.

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 A/67/34, para.54.

⁴ A/68/34, Annex III.

⁵ OP.15.

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

8. Since UN-Women became a JIU participating organization in 2012, it practically falls out of the scope of the present first phase of the review, which covers the period 2006-2012 for all other JIU participating organizations, in particular with regard to the first objective of comparing the rates of acceptance and implementation among organizations, conducting a trend analysis of the acceptance and implementation rates by organization during this period and following-up on long-outstanding recommendations for five years or more.

9. The present management letter is addressed for action to the Executive Director of UN-Women. Comments on the draft management letter were sought from UN-Women 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

10. At the time this review was initiated in February 2015, UN-Women was not yet inputting information in the WBTS on the rate of acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations addressed for action to the Organization from 2012 onwards.

11. However, in June 2016 when this management letter was being finalized, the rate of acceptance by the Organization for the year 2012 was 92.6 per cent and the rate of implementation was 56 per cent, as indicated in the table 1 below. UN-Women ranks the third highest in the acceptance among all participating organizations and entities considered in our review, well above the average of organizations; however, it ranks the second lowest in the rate of the implementation, far below the average, as shown in the table below. **The Inspector commends UN-Women management on the results with regard to the acceptance of JIU recommendations and encourages further efforts to improve their implementation.**

Table 1
Rates of acceptance and implementation (2012), as of June 2016

	UN-Women	All organizations
Number of recommendations	27	1135*
Number of accepted recommendations	25	703
Number of implemented recommendations	14	619
Rate of acceptance	92.6%	61.9%
Rate of implementation	56%	88.1%

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

III. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS BY UN-WOMEN LEGISLATIVE BODY

12. From 2012 to 2015, the JIU sent for action to UN-Women 18 reports containing at least one recommendation addressed to the legislative body of the Organization. Those reports included 113 recommendations, of which, 77 have been accepted and 43 implemented according to data extracted in June 2016 from the WBTS. 22 recommendations were addressed to the legislative body, of which 73 per cent have been reported as accepted.

13. In its response to the JIU questionnaire, UN-Women indicated that JIU reports are shared with internal stakeholders in order to raise awareness to recommendations, as well as to reach consensus on the acceptance and implementation of assigned recommendations. At this time, JIU reports are not shared with member States, but the Organization is reviewing the relevant provisions of the JIU statute and will address the matter accordingly.

14. The JIU noted, while reviewing information publicly available on the Organization's website, that the only session at which the JIU appears to be referenced is the first regular session of 2014 (agenda item 2 on evaluation). Under this agenda item, the Executive Board discussed the assessment of the UN-Women evaluation function, which was based on the professional peer review of the UN-Women evaluation function by the United Nations Evaluation Group and the external analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system by the Joint Inspection Unit.⁶

15. It was also noted that the UN-Women Executive Board considers other oversight reports. Almost every Board's session from 2012 to 2016 has an agenda item dedicated to evaluation and /or audit matters. These include reports of the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office (IEO); specific evaluation reports and joint evaluations by various United Nations funds and programmes: the annual reports on internal audit and investigations activities⁷; the reports of the Board of Auditors, the reports of the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC) and of the Audit Advisory Committee (AAC), as well as the related management responses to these reports. During the above-mentioned period, none of the 18 JIU reports requiring legislative action was tabled for consideration.

16. The Inspector therefore invites UN-Women management to institute reporting to the Executive Board on the JIU reports addressed for action to the Organization, as currently done at the most of the JIU participating organizations, in order to comply with the relevant provisions of the JIU statute (articles 11.4 and 12), to which UN-Women has adhered to mutatis mutandis.

17. The above-mentioned provisions of the JIU statute require that:

- Immediate action be taken by the executive heads to distribute JIU reports, upon receipt, to the member States of their organization;
- The JIU reports be submitted at the next meeting of the competent organs of the organizations, together with the joint comments of executive heads within the framework of the CEB, as applicable, which should be ready not later than 6 months after their receipt, and any comments of the respective executive head on matters that concern his/her organization;
- The JIU be informed of decisions taken by the competent organ on the reports of the Unit, and;
- Expeditious implementation of approved/accepted recommendations is ensured by executive heads.

⁶ NW/2015/CRP.1; JIU/REP/2014/6.

⁷ Services provided by the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) of UNDP under a Service Level Agreement with UN-Women.

18. In line with good practices to enhance transparency and accountability, such report to the Executive Board should contain:

- A brief summary and comments for each JIU report issued of direct relevance to the Organization and its recommendations, with hyperlinks to the relevant report and CEB comments, to facilitate access to them on an economical and effective manner;
- A status matrix indicating the acceptance or rejection of the recommendations addressed specifically to the legislative body, as well as to the executive head, and the official responsible for implementation, and comments thereon, as applicable;
- The implementation status of recommendations from the previous years' reports; and
- A draft decision for action by the Executive Board to endorse/take note of the report and comments thereon on the status of recommendations.

19. **Subsequently, the Executive Board should take effective action to endorse/take note of the reports and relevant action should be recorded in the records of the meetings. Relevant information on the consideration of reports should be input in the WBTS** (date and document reference of executive head's comments and action taken by legislative body).

Recommendation 1

The Executive Director of UN-Women should set up a system of reporting to the Executive Board on JIU reports and recommendations, in line with relevant provisions of the JIU statute, by the next annual session of the Board in June 2017.

20. In its response to the draft management letter, UN-Women indicated that the Organization is committed to strengthening compliance with the JIU statute. It welcomes the above recommendation and confirms that steps are already underway to introduce reporting to the Executive Board by the annual session in June 2017. The Inspector is pleased to take note of this positive response by UN-Women.

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