

HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY WHO

Prepared by

Sumihiro Kuyama

Joint Inspection Unit



**Geneva
1999**

HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY WHO

Prepared by
Sumihiro Kuyama

Table of Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Matters of concern relating to the handling of JIU reports:	
1. Organization practices for distribution of JIU reports to the States members	2
Recommendation 1	
2. Criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative bodies	3
Recommendation 2	
3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered	3
Recommendation 3	
4. Secretariat papers (on JIU reports) submitted to legislative bodies, and decisions by legislative bodies on JIU reports/recommendations	4
Recommendation 4	
5. Follow-up actions by secretariats on the implementation of JIU recommendations	6
Recommendation 5	

HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY WHO

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/233 of 7 June 1996 has established the principle that "*the impact of the Unit (JIU) on the cost-effectiveness of activities within the United Nations system is a shared responsibility of the Member States, the Unit and the secretariats of the participating organizations*".

In this context, the Joint Inspection Unit, for its part, has been making efforts to fulfill its own responsibility which is certainly one of the necessary conditions for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of its activities.

While continuing our efforts, JIU has reviewed the practices of the participating organizations in their handling of JIU reports.

The organizations covered in the exercise are, in addition to WHO, the United Nations (including 4 of its affiliated bodies: UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP) and the 11 other participating organizations (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, UPU, ITU, WMO, IMO, WIPO, UNIDO and IAEA), using the JIU reports produced during the last five years (1994 - 1998) as samples.

The matters examined in the exercise are mainly:

1. Distribution practices of JIU reports to the States members;
2. Criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative bodies;
3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered;
4. Secretariat papers (on JIU reports) submitted to legislative bodies, and decisions by legislative bodies on JIU reports/recommendations (e.g., specific decisions on recommendations or only 'take note' of reports and comments thereon, or no decision at all), and
5. Follow-up actions by secretariats on the implementation of JIU recommendations.

On each of these matters, this Note* presents first the current practice of WHO, followed by JIU comments and recommendations addressed to the Director-General of WHO.

The Joint Inspection Unit looks forward to working closely with WHO's Director-General (and her secretariat) on ways to improve the handling of its reports.

*Separate Notes will be prepared on each organization.

II. MATTERS OF CONCERN RELATING TO THE HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS

1. Distribution practice of JIU reports to the States members

1.1 *Current practice of WHO*

JIU reports are made available to the WHO's Executive Board members upon request only. In other words, the current practice of WHO is to not distribute JIU reports generally to all States members.

1.2 *JIU Comments and Recommendations*

JIU Statute Article 11, paragraph 4(c) stipulates that "upon receipt of [JIU] reports, the executive head or heads concerned shall take immediate action to distribute them, with or without their comments, to the States members of their respective organizations".

The availability of JIU reports to the States members of the respective organizations is considered to be the very first step for enhancing "the impact of the Unit on the cost-effectiveness of activities within the United Nations system".

Towards this end, and as a supplement to the distribution of the hard copies, JIU intends to make its reports available on line through its planned Website, .

RECOMMENDATION 1:

- (1) *In compliance with JIU Statute Article 11, paragraph 4(c), the Director-General of WHO is encouraged to "take immediate action to distribute" JIU reports upon receipt of them. However, if the immediate distribution is not practical, then, the Director-General is invited to consider annexing the full text of JIU reports to the Secretariat papers (on JIU reports), submitted to the relevant legislative organ(s) of WHO (see 4.2 (b)).***
- (2) *At the same time, and as a supplement to the distribution of the hard copies, the Director-General may wish to inform States members of WHO of JIU reports received and encourage them to access the JIU Website (once established) for the reports.***

2. Criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative bodies

2.1 Current practice of WHO

In addition to the JIU annual reports, generally all system-wide reports (as well as other reports which WHO considers relevant, e.g., JIU/REP/95/6: "*Investigation of the Relationship Between Humanitarian Assistance and Peace-keeping Operations*") are taken up.

2.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations

The current practice of WHO, as indicated in 2.1 above, could be reinforced through meaningful interactions and dialogues, as recommended below.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

- (1) Upon receipt of the first draft of a JIU report for comments, the Director-General would clearly indicate whether the report is, in her opinion, of interest or relevance to WHO; and**
- (2) JIU, by taking into account the comments in (1) above, would indicate which reports the Unit believes should be considered by the relevant legislative organ(s) of WHO when JIU submits "the original version [of the report]" to the Director-General, in accordance with Article 11, paragraph 4(a) of the Statute.**

3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered

3.1 Current practice of WHO

JIU reports were taken up customarily as one of the sub-items under agenda item "*Collaboration within the United Nations System and with Other Intergovernmental Organizations*". However, it appears that this practice was modified in the case of EB 103 (Executive Board at its 103rd session, January 1999); i.e., "*Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit*" was listed as a sub-item under agenda item "*Matters for Information*".

In the meantime, it now has been suggested informally that JIU reports could first go to the Administrative, Budgetary and Finance Committee (ABFC) for discussion, to be subsequently referred to the Board.

3.2 *JIU Comments and Recommendations*

For the purpose of facilitating an effective consideration of JIU reports by legislative bodies, it is important to place the reports under appropriate agenda item(s).

Accordingly, the United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/233, in operative paragraph 4, requested the United Nations Secretary-General, and invited other executive heads, "to take the necessary measures to ensure that the thematic reports of the Unit are listed under the appropriate substantive agenda items of ... legislative organs".

RECOMMENDATION 3:

(1) *On the basis of the spirit behind operative paragraph 4 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/233, the Director-General may wish to review and improve the current arrangements of WHO for handling the reports of JIU, ensuring in particular that:*

- a) *JIU reports be taken up by an appropriate committee (with the possibility of Inspector(s) introducing reports) before being referred to the relevant plenary legislative organ(s);***
- b) *JIU reports be placed under appropriate agenda item(s)* in the light of their contents; and***
- c) *sufficient time be allocated for consideration of JIU reports.***

(2) *In any event, the practice of placing JIU reports under the agenda item "Matters for Information" should be discontinued.*

* *In this respect, the WHO secretariat may wish to consult with JIU prior to a decision.*

4. Secretariat papers (on JIU reports) submitted to legislative bodies, and decisions taken by legislative bodies on JIU reports/recommendations

4.1 *Current practice of WHO*

- (a) Usually a very brief summary of JIU reports, together with the Director-General's comments, is submitted to the Executive Board. (These comments are sometimes too general and not specific on the JIU reports in question; e.g., document EB 97/30.)**

- (b) The paper in (a) above contains a very brief suggested action by the Executive Board:

i.e., *"The Board may wish to ... express its agreements (with JIU recommendation(s)) or otherwise with comments of the Director-General, and request ..."* (e.g., EB 99/25, para 18; EB 101/22, para 25). This language has, however, changed in the case of EB 103: *"The Director-General recommends that the Board take note of the (JIU) reports and the (WHO) comments"* (EB 103/31).

- (c) As indicated in (b) above, it appears, at least in the recent past, that the WHO Secretariat used to encourage the Executive Board to fully consider JIU reports and to express its own position on the reports (recommendations), rather than just endorse the Director-General's comments thereon. However, what was actually happening was that the Board was simply agreeing to the Director-General's comments;

The Board, having considered the reports of JIU ..., thanked JIU ... and expressed its agreements with the Director-General's comments thereon ... (e.g., Decision EB 97(12), EB 99(16)).

4.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations

By inviting *"the legislative organs of ... participating organizations to take concrete action on the recommendations of the Unit"*, the General Assembly, in its resolution 50/233, intended to improve the impact and effectiveness of the JIU, and to facilitate the follow up on (implementation of) JIU recommendations approved by the respective legislative organs.

In this context, it is important that:

- (a) the statutorily-required comments¹ on JIU reports by the executive heads and/or ACC should be prepared in time for the relevant meetings of legislative organs in order to facilitate an effective and timely consideration of JIU reports before they have become obsolete;
- (b) secretariat papers submitted to legislative organs should assist in leading to concrete actions on each of the recommendations contained in JIU reports by ensuring, inter alia, that, unless "immediate action to distribute" JIU reports is taken, full text of the reports is annexed to the secretariat papers as referred to in Recommendation 1, instead of continuing the practice of presenting just the titles or a very brief summary of JIU reports;
- (c) legislative organs do not limit action on JIU recommendations to just taking note of them, or to endorsing the comments by the executive heads and/or ACC. Instead, legislative organs should take specific actions as indicated in Recommendation 4².

¹ The statutorily-required comments on JIU reports (Article 11.4 (d) and (e)) are not often prepared in a timely manner. Furthermore, these comments, generally speaking, are not necessarily consistent with the earlier comments made on the first draft of JIU reports (cf. Recommendation 2 (l)).

² Similar recommendations have already been made in the JIU annual report, A/38/34.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The Director-General is urged to encourage the relevant legislative organ(s) of WHO to take specific decisions (endorse, modify or reject) on each of the recommendations contained in the JIU reports, basically along the following lines:

- (a) Approves recommendations ..., and ...;***
- (b) Approves recommendations ..., and ...taking into account the comments thereon by the Director-General (and/or ACC; and/or the debate in the session);***
- (c) Reserves its position on recommendations ...;***
- (d) Does not approve recommendations ..., and***

5. Follow-up actions by secretariats on the implementation of JIU recommendations

5.1 Current practice of WHO

There is no formal follow-up system in place with regard to the implementation of JIU recommendations³.

5.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations

- (a)** The implementation of JIU recommendations is the final and most important step in assuring the effectiveness of JIU activities.

In this context, Article 12 of the JIU Statute stipulates:

“Executive heads of organizations shall ensure that recommendations of the Unit approved by their respective competent organs are implemented as expeditiously as possible. Such implementation may be subject to verification by the competent organs of the organizations ...”

- (b)** The issues covered in this Note have been elaborated in the annex (“Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit”) of JIU annual report, A/52/34.

³ There is, however, a practice established with regard to the implementation of recommendations of the External Auditor (see, for instance, EB99/9).

RECOMMENDATION 5:

- (1) *On the basis of Article 12 of the JIU Statute, and following the good practices in some other organizations⁴, the Director-General of WHO may wish to submit regularly to the relevant legislative organ(s) status reports concerning the measures taken on the implementation of the approved JIU recommendations, as well as on the recommendations not requiring legislative actions but agreed-upon by the Director-General and/or ACC.*

Such status reports could also include information (analysis) on the impacts derived from implementation of JIU recommendations.

- (2) *The Director-General may also wish to encourage the relevant legislative organ(s) to approve a follow-up system on JIU reports along the line proposed in the annex of JIU annual report (A/52/34).*

⁴ (1) The United Nations General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it report on the implementation of the recommendations of the JIU as early as 1972 (res. 2924B (XXVII) of 24 November 1972). Subsequently, in one of its most recent resolution (res. 52/220 of 13 February 1998), the General Assembly requested "that the individual sections of the programme budget for the biennium 2000 - 2001 contain a summary of the relevant recommendations of the internal and external oversight bodies and, for each recommendation, information on the follow-up action taken." (2) UNESCO's Executive Board included, in one of its recent decisions, a provision to the effect that the Director-General should report regularly on the implementation of the approved recommendations. (3) WMO Executive Council recently approved a resolution which contains the provision that the WMO Secretary-General should give careful consideration to the implementation, as appropriate, of the JIU recommendations which are pertinent to WMO, and to report to the Council. (4) IMO Council endorsed "the intention of the IMO Secretary-General to make every effort to observe the new procedures (i.e., the follow-up system contained in the annex of JIU annual report A/52/34) at least in respect of the JIU reports which are of direct relevance to the work of IMO."