

HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY UPU

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I. INTRODUCTION

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 its own 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 UPU, the United Nations (including 4 of its affiliated bodies: UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP) and the 11 other participating organizations (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, 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;
2. Criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative organs;
3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered;
4. Secretariat papers/comments (on JIU reports) submitted to legislative organs, and decisions by legislative organs 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 Note¹ presents the current practice of UPU, followed by JIU comments and recommendations addressed to the Director General of UPU.

The Joint Inspection Unit looks forward to working closely with UPU’s Director General, and his secretariat, on ways to improve the handling of its reports.

¹ Separate Notes are being prepared for each organization.

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

1. Distribution practice of JIU reports

1.1 Current practice of UPU

JIU reports are distributed to members of the UPU's legislative organ(s) "on the basis of a single copy per delegation".

This practice was established by Executive Council² decision CE 25/1971 ("*Reproduction and Distribution of the Reports of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit*") as indicated below:

"The Executive Council decided that reports of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit for submission of the EC should be reproduced in the most economical way: they will be distributed to EC members on the basis of a single copy per delegation. These reports will not be reproduced in the final (French) "Documents du Conseil executive" but kept by the International Bureau³ Documentation Service at the disposal of postal administrations wishing to consult them." ("*Compendium of Resolutions and Decisions of the Executive Council*" 1995)

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".

As a supplement to the distribution practice of UPU, JIU intends to make its reports available on-line through its planned Website.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

As a supplement to the distribution practice of UPU, the Director General, upon receipt of JIU reports in accordance with the JIU Statute, Article 11, paragraph 4 and Recommendation 2 (2), may wish to inform UPU members of the titles of the reports received as well as of the available option of accessing the reports on the JIU Website (once established).

² The Executive Council is now called the Council of Administration (CA). The functioning of the Council of Administration is basically the same as that of the Executive Council.

³ The International Bureau, established by the Treaty of Berne in 1874, provides secretariat and support facilities for the UPU's legislative organs, i.e., the Universal Postal Congress and the two UPU Councils (the Council of Administration (CA) and the Postal Operations Council (POC)).

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

2.1 Current practice of UPU

JIU reports of particular interest to UPU are taken up.

2.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations

The current practice of UPU, 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 indicate whether the report is, in his opinion, of relevance to UPU; 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 UPU 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 UPU

JIU reports are considered within the context of an annex to the UPU’s Secretary-General’s⁴ report on the “*Relations with the United Nations and other international organizations*”.

3.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations

For the purpose of facilitating an effective consideration of JIU reports by legislative organs, it is important to place the reports under appropriate substantive 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:

On the basis of the intent of operative paragraph 4 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/233, the Director General may wish to arrange that:

- (a) JIU reports are placed under appropriate substantive agenda item(s) in the light of their subject matter; and**
- (b) sufficient time is allocated for consideration of JIU reports, with Inspector(s) introducing reports as an established practice.**

⁴ In UPU, the term “Secretary-General” is used as far as the Director General’s relations with (UPU’s) legislative organs are concerned

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

4.1 Current practice of UPU

- (a) Titles of JIU reports with comments by the UPU Secretariat are submitted in an annex to the Secretary-General's annual report (see 3.1 above). In this context, it is noted that:

"The Executive Council instructed the International Bureau to send (the) Technical Cooperation Committee⁵ in future a brief summary of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit reports for the part concerned with technical cooperation." (Decision CE 38/1971 / Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit)

- (b) The UPU Secretariat occasionally provides a suggested action on JIU reports/recommendations by the legislative organ(s). The general practice of the legislative organ(s) is just to 'take note' only.

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 United Nations 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 comments 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 as indicated in (c) below; and
- (c) legislative organs do not limit action on JIU recommendations to just taking note of them, or to just endorsing the comments by the executive heads and/or ACC. Instead, legislative organs are urged to take specific actions along the lines proposed in Recommendation 4⁶ below.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The Director General is urged to encourage the relevant legislative organ(s) of UPU to take specific decisions (endorse, modify or reject) on each of the pertinent 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 ...; and***
- (d) ***Does not approve recommendations***

⁵ The Technical Cooperation Committee has been replaced by the Postal Operations Council (POC) (see footnote 3).

⁶ A similar recommendation had already been made in the JIU annual report contained in United Nations General Assembly document A/38/34, which was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/229 of 20 December 1983.

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

5.1 Current practice of UPU

According to the Secretariat, no follow-up is undertaken in the formal sense, but, in practice, some of the recommendations are taken into account within the context of the management/activities of UPU.

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) This issue has been addressed in an annex (“Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit”) to the JIU annual report contained in United Nations General Assembly document A/52/34⁷.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

- (1) ***The Director General of UPU is invited to proceed with the implementation of the follow-up system on JIU reports along the line proposed in the annex of JIU annual report A/52/34.***
- (2) ***In this context, and on the basis of Article 12 of the JIU Statute as well as following the good practices in some other organizations⁸, the Director General 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 accepted by the Director General and/or ACC.***

Such status reports could also include information and analysis on the impact derived from implementation of JIU recommendations.

⁷ The proposed follow-up system contained in the JIU annual report has just been endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999

⁸ (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 resolutions (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 a 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”