

# HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY UNICEF

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## HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY UNICEF

### 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 the United Nations (including 4 of its affiliated bodies: UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and WFP) and the 12 participating organizations (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, 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 regarding 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 Note<sup>1</sup> presents the current practice of UNICEF, followed by JIU comments and recommendations addressed to the Executive Director of UNICEF.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Separate Notes are being prepared for each organization.

## II. MATTERS OF CONCERN RELATING TO THE HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Distribution practice regarding JIU reports

#### 1.1 Current practice of UNICEF

All JIU reports relevant to UNICEF (*“reports that touch upon issues that directly involve UNICEF”*) are made available at the Annual Session of the Executive Board.

#### 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 current practice of UNICEF, JIU intends to make its reports available on-line through its planned Website.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

- (1) *With a view to ensuring that JIU reports are available to the UNICEF Executive Board members, the JIU reports submitted for action in accordance with the JIU Statute, Article 11, paragraph 4 and Recommendation 2(2) below, should be transmitted to the Executive Board in full as part of the documents containing the statutorily required comments of the Executive Director/ACC. This should be done sufficiently in advance of the Executive Board meetings to allow appropriate time for review of the reports (see also section 4).***
- (2) *Alternatively, or as a supplement to the above, the Executive Director, upon receipt of JIU reports, may wish to inform the Executive Board 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), in addition to advising them to access General Assembly documents for hard copies or electronically through the Optical Disk System (ODS) of the United Nations Secretariat for the JIU reports.***

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<sup>2</sup> UNICEF began the formal presentation of JIU reports to its Executive Board in 1998. Accordingly, the information on current practices provided here basically reflects those installed since then.

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

### *2.1 Current practice of UNICEF*

JIU reports of relevance to UNICEF are taken up.

### *2.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations*

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

#### **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

- (1) *Upon receipt of the first draft of a JIU report for comments, the Executive Director would:***
  - (a) *indicate whether the report is, in her opinion, relevant to UNICEF; and, if not, indicate why; and***
  - (b) *ensure that the comments are specific in addressing each of the recommendations of the report, including indication whether some or all of the recommendations could be accepted by her without legislative action.***
- (2) *JIU would take the comments in (1) above into account in deciding whether the Unit believes the report in final form should be submitted to the Executive Director, in accordance with Article 11, paragraph 4(a) of the Statute, for consideration by the Executive Board.***

### **3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered**

#### *3.1 Current practice of UNICEF*

JIU reports are considered as part of the agenda item "*Report of the Executive Director*".

#### *3.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations*

For the purpose of facilitating effective consideration of JIU reports by legislative organs, it is important to place the reports under appropriate substantive agenda item(s), as a contribution from a subsidiary body of the UNICEF Executive Board, assuring at the same time sufficient time for consideration.

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 Executive Director may wish to arrange that:***

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

#### **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 UNICEF*

- (a) The Secretariat paper contains a brief summary of JIU reports, together with the implications (if any) for UNICEF.
- (b) The paper does not contain any suggested action by the Executive Board, and the Board 'takes note' of the report. (In other words, there has not yet been a case where the Board has taken specific action on any JIU recommendation).

##### *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 on JIU reports 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 4<sup>3</sup> below.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

***The Executive Director is urged to encourage Executive Board of UNICEF 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 Executive Director (and/or ACC; and/ or the debate in the session);***
- (c) Reserves its position on recommendations ...; and***
- (d) Does not approve recommendations ....***

<sup>3</sup> Similar recommendations 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 UNICEF

There is no follow-up in a formal sense. According to the UNICEF Secretariat, however, "*The recommendations contained in various JIU reports, where appropriate, have been taken into account by UNICEF in its activities*" (Executive Board document E/ICEF/1998/4, part II, Annex II, para. 2)<sup>4</sup>.

### 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/52/34<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The UNICEF reports on follow-up to decisions of the General Assembly and ECOSOC which were prepared semi-annually for the Board during the period 1995-1997 contained reference to those JIU recommendations which have a bearing on reform-related issues (e.g., JIU/REP/94/8: "*United Nations system common premises and services in the field*"; JIU/REP/95/9 "*The involvement of the United Nations system in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance*"; JIU/REP/96/3: "*Coordination of Policy and Programming frameworks for more effective development cooperation*", etc.). In addition, the annual reports of the Executive Director and reports on specific programmatic matters as well as budget documents and reports on administrative issues addressed recommendations contained in other more specific JIU reports (e.g., JIU/REP/94/9: "*Execution nationals des projects*"; JIU/REP/95/2: "*Accountability, management improvement, and oversight in the United Nations system*"; JIU/REP/96/6: "*Inspection of the application of United Nations recruitment, placement and promotion policies*"; JIU/REP/98/4: "*Review of financial resources allocated by the United Nations to activities by Non-governmental Organizations*", etc.). That reporting took place at the time of the presentation of the annual reports of UNICEF to ECOSOC, during the Regular Sessions (of the Board) in January and the Annual Sessions (of the Board) in June, in the years consecutive to the finalization of the JIU reports.

<sup>5</sup> The proposed follow-up system contained in JIU annual report A/52/34 has just been endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999.



**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

- (1) *The Executive Director of UNICEF 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 organizations<sup>6</sup>, the Executive Director may wish to submit regularly to the Executive Board 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 Executive Director and/or ACC.***

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

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<sup>6</sup> (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 (155 EX/52) taken in October 1998, a provision to the effect that the Executive Director 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".