

HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY UNESCO

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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 Recommendation 1	2
2. Criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative organs	2
3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered Recommendation 2	3
4. Secretariat papers/comments (on JIU reports) submitted to legislative organs, and decisions by legislative organs on JIU reports/recommendations Recommendation 3	4
5. Follow-up actions by secretariats on the implementation of JIU recommendations	5
Recommendation 4	

HANDLING OF JIU REPORTS BY UNESCO

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 UNESCO, 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, 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;
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 UNESCO, followed by JIU comments and recommendations addressed to the Director-General of UNESCO.

The Joint Inspection Unit looks forward to working closely with UNESCO’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 UNESCO

JIU reports are usually annexed to the Secretariat papers (see 4 below) submitted to the UNESCO 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*”, and, in this context, UNESCO’s practice as indicated in 1.1 above, is considered to be appropriate.

Nevertheless, as a supplement to the current practice, JIU intends to make its reports available on-line through its planned Website.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

As a supplement to the current distribution practice of UNESCO, the Director-General, upon receipt of JIU reports, may wish to inform UNESCO States 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. Criteria for selecting JIU reports to be taken up by legislative organs

2.1 Current practice of UNESCO

In addition to the JIU annual reports, generally all system-wide reports (as well as other relevant reports, such as JIU/REP/95/6: “*Investigation of the relationship between humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations*” and JIU/REP/98/3: “*The United Nations University*”) are taken up, once ACC comments thereon become available.

2.2 JIU Comments and Recommendations

UNESCO practice, as indicated above, could be regarded as a model for other organizations.

3. Agenda items under which JIU reports are considered

3.1 Current practice of UNESCO

JIU reports have recently been placed under agenda item "*Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNESCO*", which is one of the sub-items of the agenda item entitled "*Relations with Member States and International organizations*".

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).

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*".

In this connection, the UNESCO practice of allocating sufficient time for examining JIU reports, with the Inspector(s) introducing reports, is also considered a good model for others.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

On the basis of the intent of operative paragraph 4 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/233, the Director-General may wish to consider to place JIU reports under appropriate substantive agenda item(s) in the light of their subject matter.

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 UNESCO

- (a) Rather extensive summaries of JIU reports (in addition to the reports themselves, as referred to in 1.1 above), together with the comments of the Director-General/ACC are submitted to the Executive Board.
- (b) As a practice of UNESCO, the Secretariat papers in (a) above contain a draft decision suggested by the Secretariat.

(c) On the basis of a suggested draft decision, the Executive Board comes up with a decision which tends to be more specific (and with additional elements(s)) than the one suggested by the Secretariat.

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 comments² 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 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 4³ below.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Director-General is invited to encourage the relevant legislative organ(s) of UNESCO 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***

² The statutorily-required comments on JIU reports (Article 11 4 (d) and (e)) are not always prepared in a timely manner. Furthermore, these comments, generally speaking, appear to be, once in a while, at variance with the earlier comments made on the first draft of JIU reports. In order to facilitate preparation of the final drafts of JIU reports as well as the subsequent decision-making process on them, comments on the first drafts should be specific in addressing each of the recommendations of the JIU reports, including indication whether some or all of the recommendations could be accepted by the executive heads without legislative actions.

³ 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. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the UNESCO Executive Board was "invited to clearly adopt or reject any recommendation of the JIU concerning UNESCO" in the guidelines presented by the Director-General in his report (of 20 August 1998) on UNESCO's cooperation with JIU (155 EX/45, para. 8). In this context, the decision (157 EX/Decision 9.7.2) adopted on the JIU report on oversight (JIU/REP/98/2) is considered to be a good model.

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

5.1 Current practice of UNESCO

The following is a brief summary of the information as provided by the UNESCO Secretariat on the matter (for more details, see attachment): *

* It is to be noted, however, that in approving the guidelines referred to in footnote 3, the Special committee of the Executive Board added another provision to the effect that the Director-General should report regularly on the implementation of the approved recommendations as well as the guidelines (155 EX/52)

(a) If decisions mention only 'take note' or 'take into account', no special follow-up is normally expected by the Executive Board.

(b) If, however, a specific decision is made, then follow-up actions are taken as illustrated below:

- i) In a number of instances (e.g., JIU/REP/95/3, JIU/REP/95/13 and JIU/REP/96/3), relevant reports were/will be prepared and presented to the Executive Board as a follow-up to the decisions made at the Board.
- ii) In other cases (e.g., JIU/REP/95/5, JIU/REP/95/7, JIU/REP/96/3, JIU/REP/96/7, JIU/REP/97/1 and JIU/REP/97/6), a number of follow-up actions were/will be taken with respect to the specific aspects requested in the Board's decisions.

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, and the proposed follow-up system contained there has just been endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

- (1) *The Director-General of UNESCO is invited to proceed with the implementation of the follow-up system on JIU reports along the lines 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 Statue in addition to the above-mentioned Executive Board decision (see 5.1), as well as following also the good practices in some other organizations⁴, 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.

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 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) 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 (3) 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'

ATTACHMENT: FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS* ON THE JIU REPORTS SINCE 1994

(* as reported by the UNESCO Secretariat)

95/3 (149 EX) The adopted decision invited the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board at its 150th session a report on UNESCO plan in the field of telecommunications, the IRDP and its implementation. A "Report by the Director-General on UNESCO's plan in the field of telecommunications and related information technologies and its implementation. Electronic transfers to Member States" was submitted to the Executive Board at its 150th session (ref 150 EX/22)

95/5 (149 EX) The adopted decision invited the Director-General to take all possible practical measures for the effective and efficient implementation of the relevant parts of the Beijing Platform for Action, in accordance with the System-wide Medium-term Plan for the Advancement of Women (1996-2001) and UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy and Agenda for Gender Equality. Specifically a new coordination mechanism was set up in 1996, which collaborates regularly with the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality. Gender mainstreaming practice was reinforced through specific programmes in the fields of competence of the Organization and gender sensitive training of UNESCO staff has been strengthened. Collaboration with international NGOs concerned with women and gender equality was enhanced. The number of women in professional and high-level posts was increased within the UNESCO Secretariat through promotion and recruitment policy.

95/7 (150 EX) The adopted decision invited the Director-General to further associate UNESCO with UN system-wide endeavours in the field of science and technology in Asia and the Pacific. These efforts included the Asian Symposium on Medical plants, spices and other natural products (Hanoi, Sep 1998), a UNESCO Seminar on the chemistry of natural products (Thailand, Oct 1998), and International meeting on "Frontiers of physics" (Manila, Oct 1998) and the Conference of the Asian Association of Biology Education (Manila, Dec 1998).

95/13 (154 EX) The implementation of the approved recommendations contained in this report was reported to the Executive Board at its 155th session in the "Report by Director-General on the Execution of the Programme Adopted by the General Conference" (ref 155 EX/INF 3, II, Strengthening of the United Nations system's capacity for conflict prevention)

96/3 (152 EX) The adopted decision invited the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board at one of its next sessions a Plan of Action on the implementation of the recommendations of the JIU and ACC aimed at reinforcing coordination of international cooperation for development. The decision has been implemented through UNESCO's active participation in several UN coordination mechanisms and among them the CCPOQ and its Working Group on Resident Coordinators, as well as, at country level, through its involvement in Country teams, and in the elaboration of Country Strategy Notes (CSN), Common Country Assessments (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The Director-General has taken a year ago the initiative of launching with the Administrator of UNDP, a process of revising the cooperation agreement between UNDP and the Specialized Agencies. The Administrator of UNDP and the Director-General of UNESCO will report jointly on progress made during the April 1999 ACC session. UNESCO's Secretariat reports every year to its Executive Board on the topic of development cooperation to which it presents, in the fall session, a document entitled "Development cooperation policies and activities implemented with extrabudgetary funding".

96/7 (152 EX) The adopted decision invited the Director-General to follow the matter carefully. The issue concerning geographical distribution of the staff is regularly discussed at the Executive Board.

97/1 (154 EX) The adopted decisions, which requested that the Director-General take account of this JIU report when formulating the draft guidelines for presentation to it at its 155th session, was well taken into account when the guidelines for the rational implementation of decentralization (ref 155 EX/19) were drafted.

97/5 (155 EX) The adopted decisions invited the Director-General to report to the Executive Board at its 157th session (Oct/Nov 1999) on the impact of outsourcing in UNESCO and to propose and outsourcing policy for consideration by the Executive Board.

97/6 (155 EX) The approved decisions invited the Director-General to strengthen cooperation with the UN system and its institutions of training and research and renew his efforts in training activities within UNESCO. Cooperation between UNESCO and the United Nations Staff College (UNSC) was strengthened. During a visit of the Director of UNSC to UNESCO in January 1999, which included a meeting with the Director-General of UNESCO, substantive discussions were held to determine the modalities of future cooperation between UNESCO and UNSC. Furthermore, UNESCO has also responded to a UNSC questionnaire in relation to the types of courses to be offered by the College.