

**REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA**

Prepared by

***Juan-Luís Larrabure  
Even Fontaine Ortiz***

**Joint Inspection Unit**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the review is to identify areas for improvement in the administrative and management practices of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and its organizational structure, in the light of the recent reform initiatives in the United Nations Secretariat.

The main *raison d'être* of UNOG being to provide services to its various clients, from Member States delegations to the United Nations entities in Geneva, and given the weight of UNOG in the use of Secretariat resources, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) considered it meaningful to undertake such a review.

As both the Board of Auditors (BOA) and the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) have extensively considered specific issues, this review concentrates on those areas where it was felt that particular value could be added by JIU, such as human resources management, security activities, support services, conference services, issues of coordination and provision of services, the Office of the Director-General and managerial practices. This note covers only general issues related to management and administration in UNOG.

This review was prepared between April 2006 and April 2007. The Inspectors appreciate that there have been recent changes in the senior management team, and take note of some preliminary measures that have been taken to address certain issues. They acknowledge that some of the issues and deficiencies identified below are in the process of being addressed.

Below are the general findings and conclusions of the Inspectors. In the process of writing this note, the Inspectors have come across a series of particular cases and problems that require investigation and/or management decisions by the Secretary-General and his representatives. The Inspectors will issue in the coming months a series of management letters outlining these specific cases/problems and submit them to the Secretary-General and/or senior UNOG management for action as appropriate.

### **Main findings and conclusions**

#### **General management issues**

- Over the last few years, UNOG has been confronted with prolonged job vacancies, especially affecting senior management positions. In addition, frequent changes in managerial positions have deprived divisions and services of leadership, vision and strategy. These two factors have resulted in a lack of continuity in management approach.
- The Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2000/4) describing the functions of UNOG, lacks clarity with respect to the division of responsibilities between UNOG and United Nations Headquarters, and reporting lines. The Inspectors believe that a revised bulletin should describe more explicitly the operational responsibilities of UNOG and the role of Headquarters in developing policies and

procedures and monitoring their implementation.

- The Inspectors found several cases of appointments/promotions to high-level managerial positions of people close to retirement age and, while understanding that in some cases this might be justified, believe this practice should be carefully monitored in order to avoid unnecessary turnover at senior level, and provide younger managers with adequate career development.
- Enhanced attention needs to be paid to ensure that staff occupying managerial positions have an adequate mix of substantive and managerial skills, and cultural sensitivity should be made a priority.
- Similarly, it appears that some managers within UNOG not only lack managerial competencies, but also core competencies such as communication, teamwork, and client orientation.

### **Human resources management**

- The fact that the post of Chief, Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) was vacant for about 32 months, combined with a high turnover of human resources management professionals in that Service, resulted in a void of leadership, reflecting a lack of succession planning.
- In accordance with various General Assembly resolutions, no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State. However, the Inspectors note that there is a high concentration of staff of two particular nationalities within UNOG. If this trend persists, it could lead to potentially negative effects in terms of deteriorating staff morale and declining confidence in leadership.
- The Performance Appraisal System (PAS) is the fundamental management tool which links individual work plans with those of departments and offices. The Inspectors found that the PAS was not consistently prepared, implemented and monitored, thus transforming this vital agreement between staff and supervisors on expected individual results into a time-consuming and subjective exercise, with little value added. Under such conditions (and taking into account the inadequacy of training plans), the concept of career management cannot be properly applied within UNOG.
- With regard to the effectiveness of the counselling, mediation and joint staff management mechanisms, the Inspectors noted with concern that:
  - the UNOG Staff Counsellor operates in isolation;
  - the United Nations Ombudsperson is located in New York and tends not to provide adequate services to UNOG;
  - the Geneva Joint Appeals Board (JAB) and the Joint Disciplinary Committee (JDC) are perceived by UNOG staff members as partial and ineffective.
- While human resources officers from Headquarters and their counterparts in offices away from Headquarters meet once a year in a one-week workshop, the Inspectors believe that an area of such importance requires more frequent contact to discuss best practices, interpretation and application of regulations and rules and for consultation on policy issues (videoconferencing could be used for this

purpose).

### **Security matters**

- As in other units in UNOG, the Security and Safety Section (SSS) has dual reporting lines, on the one hand to the Director, Department of Safety and Security (DSS) at Headquarters, and on the other, to the Director-General of UNOG. The Inspectors are particularly concerned about the issues of accountability that are raised by this dual reporting structure and believe that these arrangements need to be reconsidered.
- In order to comply with Headquarters minimum operating security standards (H-MOSS), UNOG developed a project to enhance security. The management of the implementation of this project was inadequate and the planning process notably lacked a comprehensive approach, resulting in questionable priority setting.
- In addition, the Inspectors observed various deficiencies/incidents pointing to design flaws and other limitations of the security systems in place.
- With regard to the management of SSS, the Inspectors learned that there were instances indicating serious management deficiencies.

### **Central Support Services**

- Since the construction of the Palais des Nations compound, there have been no comprehensive works undertaken to maintain the buildings. The Inspectors learned that insufficient funds are allocated to maintain the buildings adequately. The Inspectors are of the view that given the considerable age of the buildings, priority needs to be given to the preparation of a Capital Master Plan for the Palais des Nations compound.
- The Inspectors learned that a considerable number of messengers are allocated to specific users and perform various tasks not related to the distribution of mail. The Division of Administration should continue the exercise of rationalizing the mail distribution system and these posts should be absorbed into the users' staffing tables/budgets.

### **SAFI**

- In 2004, OIOS issued a report on the audit of SAFI which noted serious shortcomings related to legal, operational and security aspects. Some recommendations have since been acted upon. However, the lack of clarity concerning the legal status of SAFI, together with the safety and security risks prompted by its location inside the Palais des Nations compound, has convinced the Inspectors that this facility should be located outside the compound, and such a commercial facility should not be owned and exploited by a staff representative organ.

### **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

- The Inspectors noted that within UNOG there are at least four units/sections discharging ICT functions, independently from the Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS). Given the omissions and lack of clarity in the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2000/4) in the area of ICT,

ICTS lacks an official mandate and is not fully recognized as a central service provider. Furthermore, the level of Chief of Service is not adequate for the tasks of ICTS.

### **Conference Services**

- In 2003, during an audit of the Publishing Service, BOA recommended the development of production costs monitoring to increase transparency and accountability, as well as to allow for benchmarking against outsourced services. The Inspectors are concerned that decisions such as concluding/renewing leasing agreements for printing equipment appear to be taken without considering the actual utilization of printing capacity. The Inspectors are of the view that the current internal printing capacity is excessive and that working in two shifts is not justified.
- There is a shared concern among translators with respect to inadequate workload standard-setting for translations. The current tendency to focus on the quantity of translations to the detriment of quality should be balanced by a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement. The Language Service has developed a pilot project and implemented computer-assisted translation (CAT) software. The Inspectors noted with concern that prior to the implementation of this software, there was no in-depth cost-benefit analysis taking into account the investment required.

### **UNOG as a service provider**

- While recognizing the specific needs of its clients, UNOG should seek the harmonization of practices among its clients (formalized by Memorandums of Understanding) and transparent cost-recovery methods to ensure rational allocation of resources and fairness of treatment.
- The Inspectors are pleased to note that the UNOG Division of Administration is taking into consideration client satisfaction as an important performance indicator for the services it provides and has recently made progress in this direction by establishing client satisfaction questionnaires. However, it is essential that UNOG entities providing services be informed about the results of these surveys to ensure the usefulness of this feedback as a performance assessment tool.
- The Inspectors consider that there is greater opportunity for increased use of common services in Geneva. In this respect, UNOG should review areas such as security and safety services, printing services, financial services (payroll), information technology and telecommunications services, and diplomatic pouch services.<sup>1</sup>

### **Recommendations**

In addition to the management letters that will be issued in the coming months, the Inspectors have made 16 recommendations outlined below. The background and justification for each recommendation can be found in the note itself.

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<sup>1</sup> See JIU/REP/2000/5 (United Nations Common Services at Geneva, part II).



**Recommendation 1 (See para. 9)**

The Director-General should design a proper strategy with long-term objectives and targets for UNOG, submit it to the Secretary-General, and if required, through him to the General Assembly for approval, and disseminate it to all staff at UNOG and its clients.

**Recommendation 2 (See paras. 10-13)**

Once the strategy is in place, the Director-General should implement it using the results-based management (RBM) principles contained in the benchmarking framework approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/257.

**Recommendation 3 (See paras. 14-18)**

The Director-General should ensure that the recruitment, placement and promotion of staff, in particular at the P-5 level and above, is carried out in accordance with the benchmarks approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/257.<sup>2</sup>

**Recommendation 4 (See paras. 19-20)**

The Director-General should ensure that a comprehensive management training programme that focuses on managing staff in a United Nations context (cultural sensitivity, staff and financial rules, team building, integrity, etc.) be established and made a prerequisite for any staff moving to management functions.

**Recommendation 5 (See para. 22-23)**

The Director-General should benchmark the staff/management consultative mechanisms to ensure that it is clear to the staff that they constitute a forum where their voice is heard.

**Recommendation 6 (See para. 37)**

The Director-General should ensure that qualified candidates for General Service posts willing to travel to Geneva at their own expense to participate in interviews are provided with a United Nations official invitation.

**Recommendation 7 (See paras. 40-42)**

The Director-General should ensure that the overall strategy for UNOG is reflected in a proper work programme for UNOG as a whole and at the division, service, section and unit levels. Based on this work programme, the Director-General should instruct UNOG managers to align the current implementation of the PAS system to the corresponding cascading objectives of the work plan in accordance with the benchmarks approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/257 (See A/59/617, Part III, A).

**Recommendation 8 (See paras. 48-51)**

The Director of Administration should ensure that the UNOG Medical Services Section, without prejudicing the confidentiality of medical cases, keep updated information on sick leave and its causes and play a more proactive role in verifying the information provided in medical certificates, in particular in chronic cases of

<sup>2</sup> See A/59/617, part III, section C (Contractual arrangements), benchmark 3 and para. 59.

extended or recurrent sick leave and recommend courses of action to the managers concerned.

**Recommendation 9 (See paras. 73-78)**

The Secretary-General should give priority to the preparation of a Capital Master Plan for the Palais des Nations compound, which should also take into account the imperative to secure adequate archiving solutions.

**Recommendation 10 (See paras. 79-80)**

The Director of Administration of UNOG should implement the previous decision of rationalizing the mail distribution service by attributing the posts to the services concerned to be absorbed by them, which appears to be the most reasonable and cost-effective solution.

**Recommendation 11 (See paras. 83-85)**

The Director-General should address without delay the problems related to SAFI described in paragraphs 84-85 of the present note and implement the recommendations of OIOS in its report "Audit of SAFI".

**Recommendation 12 (See para. 86)**

The Director-General should ensure that SAFI operations are contracted out, following a competitive process, to a commercial entity (like the catering services), which would be entirely responsible for establishing clear legal and governance frameworks and effective internal controls, thus avoiding any risk to the image of, and potential contingent liabilities affecting, UNOG.

**Recommendation 13 (See para. 86)**

The Director-General should take action to locate SAFI outside the Palais des Nations compound, in compliance with H-MOSS requirements.

**Recommendation 14 (See paras. 88-92)**

The Secretary-General should pursue his efforts to ensure that the position of Chief, Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS) should be at the same level as the chiefs of other Services within the Division of Administration.

**Recommendation 15 (See paras. 125-129)**

The Director-General, as chairperson of the Geneva Management Ownership Committee (GMOC), should seek further the commitment of the executive heads of the Geneva-based United Nations organizations to common services initiatives.

**Recommendation 16**

The Director-General should carefully review those issues pointed out in this note that were not the subject of specific recommendations or management letters with a view to resolving/implementing them (see annex III).

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
BOA	Board of Auditors
CAT	computer-assisted translation
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)
CPAG	Common Procurement Activities Group
CSD	Conference Services Division (UNOG)
DGACM	Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (Headquarters)
DPI	Department of Public Information (Headquarters)
DSS	Department of Safety and Security (Headquarters)
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GMOC	Geneva Management Ownership Committee
GS	General Services
H-MOSS	Headquarters minimum operating security standards
HRM	human resources management
HRMS	Human Resources Management Service (UNOG)
ICT	information and communication technology
ICTS	Information and Communication Technology Service (UNOG)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JAB	Joint Appeals Board
JAC	Joint Advisory Committees
JDC	Joint Disciplinary Committee
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JMS	Joint Medical Services
KIMRS	Key Item Management Reporting System
MSS	Medical Services Section (UNOG)
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
OAH	Offices of the United Nations Secretariat away from Headquarters
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management (Headquarters)
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAS	Performance appraisal system
PPBS	Programme Planning and Budget Section (UNOG)

RBM	results-based management
SAFI	Service d'achats et de commande des fonctionnaires internationaux
SCC	Staff Coordinating Council (UNOG)
SDLS	Staff Development and Learning Section (UNOG)
SLA	Service level agreements
SSS	Security and Safety Section (UNOG)
UBS	Union Bank of Switzerland
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIS	United Nations Information Service
UNLP	United Nations Laissez-Passer
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Among Offices of the United Nations Secretariat away from Headquarters (OAH), the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) is the largest in terms of staff employed, with 10.3 per cent of the total<sup>3</sup>. The Office has occupied the Palais des Nations since 1946, and now provides administrative and conference services and support to United Nations entities in Geneva, Bonn, Turin and a number of field offices engaged in a wide range of areas.

2. As part of its management and administration series, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conducted a review of the management and administration of UNOG, given its importance in the use of the Secretariat's resources and its role in the discharge of many of its vital functions. The objective of the review was to identify areas for improvements in the administrative and management practices of UNOG in the light of the recent reform initiatives in the United Nations Secretariat.

3. The review took into account the findings of several previous reports issued by JIU, and in particular JIU/REP/98/4 (United Nations common services at Geneva, part I), JIU/REP/2000/5 (United Nations common services at Geneva, part II), JIU/REP/2000/6 (Delegation of authority for the management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat) and JIU/REP/2004/5 (Overview of the series of reports on managing for results in the United Nations system). The Inspectors have also reviewed a number of reports prepared by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Board of Auditors (BOA), which have extensively considered issues such as procurement activities, payroll management, information and communication technology management, security and safety activities, office space management at the Palais des Nations and conference services.

4. Therefore, this review concentrates on those areas where it was felt that particular value could be added by JIU, such as human resources management, security activities, support services, conference services, issues of coordination and provision of services, the Office of the Director-General, managerial practices and the implementation of results-based management.

5. In accordance with the internal standards and guidelines of JIU and its internal working procedures, the methodology followed in preparing this note included a preliminary desk review, questionnaires, interviews<sup>4</sup> and in-depth analysis. Client satisfaction questionnaires were sent to UNOG clients and a staff survey<sup>5</sup> was prepared and disseminated to UNOG staff. The Inspectors conducted interviews with UNOG officials and clients, as well as with staff members upon request. In addition, a special telephone line was established to allow managers and staff members of UNOG, as well as of those entities which receive services from UNOG, to express any ideas, suggestions and comments with a view to improving service delivery, effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>6</sup> Comments from UNOG management on the draft note have been sought and taken into account in finalizing it.

6. In accordance with article 11.2 of the JIU statute, this note has been finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

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<sup>3</sup> A/60/310, para. 45.

<sup>4</sup> During the preparation of this review, the Inspectors conducted some 120 interviews with UNOG staff members and client organizations.

<sup>5</sup> A staff survey was disseminated to a sample of UNOG staff members (1,236), with the closing date of 28 February 2006; the number of responses was 461, which represents a rate of 37 per cent.

<sup>6</sup> See Information Circular IC/Geneva/2006/9.

7. The Inspectors wish to express their appreciation to all who assisted them in the preparation of this note, and particularly to those who participated in the interviews and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise.

8. The present note is of a general nature. In the course of this review a series of specific cases and issues were identified. They will be followed by management letters addressed, as necessary, to the Secretary-General and/or other managers concerned.



## **II. GENERAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

### **A. United Nations Office at Geneva long-term strategy**

9. The Inspectors recognize that while a results-based budgeting framework exists, the various administrative units within UNOG are scattered throughout different sections of the programme budget document (A/60/6): Office of the Director-General (Section 1, C2); Division of Administration (Sections 28E and 32, B2); Security and Safety Service (Section 33); Conference Management (Section 2, C2, sub-programmes 2-4); Library Services: (Section 2, C2, sub-programme 5); and Strategic communication services (Section 27, sub-programme 1). However, there is no single document dealing comprehensively with UNOG that would allow a results-based management (RBM) strategy be put in place. The review revealed that UNOG acts as a service provider without paying much attention to the need for a long-term strategy. Having discussed the yearly Senior Managers' Compact with the Director-General and reviewed the different work programmes within UNOG (for those divisions which have one), the Inspectors are of the opinion that the lack of vision, together with a lack of accountability, constitute the root of the shortcomings faced by UNOG. The Compact is perceived as the Director-General's personal work programme, but it is not used as the main directive for UNOG operations. It is impossible to fully implement an RBM system if there is no proper vision and strategy for UNOG from which all objectives would cascade down.

### **B. Need to revise the Secretary General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2000/4)**

10. The Secretary General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2000/4) describing UNOG functions lacks clarity with respect to the division of responsibilities and reporting lines of UNOG (Division of Administration, Conference Services Division (CSD), United Nations Information Service (UNIS)) and the various departments concerned which are located at United Nations Headquarters. According to the bulletin, the Director of the Division of Administration is said to be "accountable first and foremost" to the Director-General as "a partner in administration for programme implementation", but "also accountable to the central administration for the appropriate utilization of resources, both human and financial", while the Director of CSD is "accountable to the Director-General for the implementation of policies, procedures and practices established by the Under Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services".

11. The Inspectors believe that a revised bulletin should describe more explicitly the operational responsibilities of UNOG and the role of Headquarters in developing policies and procedures and monitoring their implementation, as well as the appropriate reporting lines. For example, with regard to UNIS, there are differences between the bulletins describing its reporting lines in Geneva (ST/SGB/2000/4) and Vienna (ST/SGB/2004/5). Furthermore, ST/SGB/2000/4 also describes somewhat superficially the core functions of UNIS and should be revised. While ST/SGB/2000/4 states that the Director of UNIS is accountable only to the Director-General in Geneva and fails to mention the reporting line of UNIS Geneva to the Department for Public Information at Headquarters, ST/SGB/2004/5 explicitly mentions that UNIS Vienna is accountable to the Director-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information at Headquarters. In addition, reporting line changes with respect to the Safety and Security Section (SSS), which is no longer a part of Central Support Services, should also be properly reflected. This lack of clarity could generate misinterpretations and tensions especially as efforts are undertaken within the general framework of reform to strengthen the monitoring and cohesiveness of central departments

such as the Department of Public Information (DPI), the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) and the Department of Safety and Security (DSS).

12. The existing bulletin is not comprehensive as it does not refer to the entire spectrum of clients (approximately 20 United Nations departments and offices as well as 22 entities of the United Nations common system), and refers only to administrative and other support services provided to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and financial, budgeting and accounting services provided to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC). Support services provided by UNOG in the area of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are not included, with the exception of a reference to the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).

13. In response to a finding by BOA that services rendered by the Division of Administration of UNOG have not been defined precisely, and that the entities serviced have never been listed by UNOG, the latter has stated its intention to include the list of all entities it services in a revised bulletin which was to be prepared by the end of 2002<sup>7</sup>. In March 2005, OIOS reiterated the need to expeditiously revise ST/SGB/2000/4 and to properly reflect the provision of services by UNOG to a variety of United Nations entities. The Inspectors are glad to note that at the end of May 2007, a draft text for a new bulletin was submitted to the Secretary-General for his consideration and approval. At the date of drafting this note, however, the revised Secretary-General's bulletin has yet to be finalized. It is imperative that one be issued to present an updated and comprehensive picture of the role and functioning of UNOG.

The following recommendation is intended to enhance coordination and cooperation.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The Director-General should design a proper strategy with long-term objectives and targets for UNOG, submit it to the Secretary-General, and if required, through him to the General Assembly for approval, and disseminate it to all staff at UNOG and its clients.**

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced effectiveness.

#### **Recommendation 2**

**Once the strategy is in place, the Director-General should implement it using the results-based management (RBM) principles contained in the benchmarking framework approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/257.**

### **C. Protracted vacancies and high turnover in managerial positions**

14. Over the last few years, UNOG was confronted with prolonged vacancies, especially affecting senior management positions. The Inspectors intended to make an analysis of posts that had been vacant for more than six months during a four-year period. This exercise proved to be unfeasible, as IMIS was incapable of producing the data required. Consequently, the Inspectors focused on vacancies related to senior management positions. The most notable, seriously affecting the smooth functioning of UNOG, were the following:

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<sup>7</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh session, Supplement No.5 (A/57/5), volume I.*

Post title/level	Post number	Aggregated vacancies (including Special Post Allowance (SPA) periods) 1 January 2000 – 31 August 2006 (months)	Date vacancy filled
Chief, Financial Resources Management Service / D-1	500206	43 <sup>8</sup>	1 March 2003
Chief, Human Resources Management Service / D-1	500211	32	11 September 2006
Chief, Language Service / D-1	500231	18	1 December 2003
Chief, Interpretation Service / D-1	500355	13	1 December 2005
Director, Division of Administration / D-2	500190	15	14 January 2006
Chief, Publishing Service / D-1	501377	15	31 December 2004
Chief, Safety and Security Section/ P-5	501440	12.5 (for an additional 9-month period the incumbent's contracts were renewed on a monthly basis)	4 October 2006

15. Together with protracted vacancies, frequent changes in managerial positions have deprived divisions and services of leadership, vision and strategy. In some instances, senior managers have assumed their functions for periods of less than two years, which is considered insufficient to become acquainted with specific issues, to formulate strategies, to plan and to build trust within their teams. Overall, the resulting lack of continuity in the management approach, and the disruptions caused by successive appointments and separations have been counter-productive, leading to delays and indecisiveness in the decision-making process, ineffective staff management, a reactive instead of proactive approach and deficient information sharing. The subsequent absence of vision and strategy, compounded by the cascading down of the "Officer-in-Charge effect" (which often puts a strain on, already limited operational resources) and the ensuing lack of effective supervision on acting managers, has had a negative impact, both strategically on the implementation of United Nations reforms, and operationally on the provision of services.

#### **D. Appointment/placement of senior managers**

16. One of the root causes of the situation described above results from the practice of appointing/promoting to high-level managerial positions officials close to (within three years of) retirement age, mainly due to poor career and succession planning. While understanding that in some cases where special skills are required this might be justified, the Inspectors believe this practice should be carefully monitored in order to avoid unnecessary turnover at senior level and provide younger managers with adequate career development.

17. The Inspectors were made aware of at least one case of a senior officer who was recruited for a particular post within the Office of the Director-General, for which the person was indeed qualified. After less than two years in the function, based on a managerial decision, the person was transferred to a post of chief of service, without possessing the required experience and skills for that post, which caused dissatisfaction among the staff of the service concerned. Based on this opposition, the person was again transferred as a chief of another service within the same division - a position that requires special managerial and technical

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<sup>8</sup> This post was vacant before 1 January 2000.

skills that the incumbent appears not to possess. The Inspectors wish to point out that attempting to solve a problem by moving a staff member to a position for which he or she is not qualified clearly shows poor management practices by the most senior UNOG administrators. Furthermore, the Inspectors were told that UNOG management requested OIOS to undertake an investigation to look into this person's alleged inefficiency in the current position. If this were true, it would appear that the same senior managers who took the decision to put this individual in a senior managerial position for which that person is not qualified, then wanted to make a case of non-performance in that post. The Inspectors feel that those individuals who took the decision in the first place are responsible and should be held accountable.

18. Another example of arbitrary decision-making is the transfer of a P-5 post from the Terminology and Technical Documentation Section (Languages Service) to the Documents Management Section (Central Planning and Coordination Service). At that time, the Documents Management Section did not have in its staffing table a P-5 position, and the transferred post was used to accommodate the promotion of a P-4 member of staff. The Terminology and Technical Documentation Section was left without the post of Chief of Section from 1 May 2004 until 1 December 2006, when a P-5 post was transferred from the French Translation Section. The Inspectors acknowledge that this transfer was made following a decision under the purview of the manager. However, they noted with concern the lack of transparency affecting this transfer, and question the underlying reasons to transfer the post from a core function to an administrative/non-core function. They also noted that this post is classified as a language post and yet is occupied by a non-language member of staff.

19. The Inspectors also noted that enhanced attention needs to be paid to ensure that staff who are occupying managerial positions have an adequate mix of substantive and managerial skills, including respect for diversity. The Staff Development and Learning Section (SDLS) provides training and maintains attendance statistics on various courses, including mandatory managerial competencies training (People Management Programme, Supervisory Skills, and Career Development for Managers and Supervisors), which have been offered since 2002. The Inspectors reviewed statistics on training attended during the period 2002-2005 by staff in managerial positions, and/or with supervisory responsibilities, and were disappointed to find that the participation of certain divisions was very low. The Inspectors are pleased to note that this issue is currently being addressed, as about 40 per cent of the senior managers of UNOG CSD attended the managerial competencies training during December 2005 and December 2006. It should be noted that, in addition to the courses listed above, a mandatory half-day programme on Ethics, and a two-day Performance Management Programme (which is mandatory for those with responsibility as first or second reporting officers) were introduced in 2007 at UNOG. However, the effectiveness of this training needs to be evaluated in the near future using clear indicators of success, such as surveys, to determine any improvement in supervisor/supervisee communication, any reduction in the number of administrative grievance cases filed, improvement in goal setting in the PAS system, and other issues.

20. It is of paramount importance to introduce new and existing staff members, particularly those appointed to managerial positions, to the international norms and standards proclaimed by the United Nations and to promote their full implementation in the daily activities inside the Organization. Future induction courses should incorporate adequate coverage of labour norms and universal standards.

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced controls and compliance.

**Recommendation 3**

**The Director-General should ensure that the recruitment, placement and promotion of staff, in particular at the P-5 level and above, is carried out in accordance with the benchmarks approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/257.<sup>9</sup>**

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced efficiency.

**Recommendation 4**

**The Director-General should ensure that a comprehensive management training programme that focuses on managing staff in a United Nations context (cultural sensitivity, staff and financial rules, team building, integrity, etc.) be established and made a prerequisite for any staff moving to management functions.**

**E. Managerial competencies****Vision and leadership**

21. Responses to questionnaires and feedback during interviews with UNOG staff and clients revealed that managerial skills need to be strengthened, especially with respect to providing vision and leadership. Clients and staff alike repeatedly denounced the faltering leadership over the past seven years. Based on this feedback, the Inspectors noted with concern that, within UNOG, ensuring managerial excellence does not appear to be of the utmost priority.

**Empowering others**

22. Moreover, responses to questionnaires and feedback during interviews with UNOG staff and clients revealed that managers seem to give little importance to empowering their staff, failing to involve them when making decisions affecting their work, and preferring to adopt the *fait accompli* management style. There is also a perception that managers seek to control staff representation. Furthermore, mention must also be made of the perception that certain promotions and/or placements of members of the Staff Coordinating Council (SCC) and/or their relatives have come about through favouritism and collusion. Rivalries among the various staff unions at UNOG further exacerbate this perception.

**Building trust**

23. Management should make more effort to institutionalize an approach of openness and sharing and to provide the necessary direction, guidance, and support to the staff. In addition, more should be done to build trust and confidence among staff. It is worrisome to see that the level of confidence in the senior management, according to responses to the staff survey, is rather low (44.4 per cent of the respondents have confidence in the Director-General, 42.9 per cent in the director of their respective division and 50.4 per cent in the chief of their respective service). Among the management deficiencies frequently cited by respondents were: the lack of ability and will to deal with difficult problems; reticence about discussing issues raised by staff; failure to recognize good work and give credit to good performers; lack of consultation when establishing workload and productivity indicators (especially for translators); lack of transparency and objectivity in the promotions exercise; and an autocratic management style, instilling fear of retaliation. Equally worrying is the fact that 31.8 per cent

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<sup>9</sup> See note 2 above.

of the respondents to the questionnaire do not feel comfortable enough to report incidents of unethical behaviour as, inter alia, they perceive a culture of impunity and negligence. For example, information provided to the Inspectors would indicate that, during the period in question, very few staff-management meetings at the highest local level (Joint Advisory Committees (JAC)) were held and, on those rare occasions where JAC did meet, no meaningful results were obtained. That is one of the reasons why, from top to bottom, the UNOG management culture is not thought by staff to be accountable and transparent.

The following recommendation is intended to enhance accountability.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**The Director-General should benchmark the staff/management consultative mechanisms to ensure that it is clear to the staff that they constitute a forum where their voice is heard.**

#### **Performance management**

24. Many respondents to the staff survey deplored their managers' tolerance of low performance and saw it as one of the main reasons for deteriorating staff morale. The management's level of tolerance of low performance and other specific issues, as indicated by respondents, is shown in the table below. The information in the last two rows of this table is cause for some concern to the Inspectors. There is a perception among staff that many managers are either looking the other way, or through their behaviour, allowing low performance, misuse of funds, harassment, etc. UNOG management should seriously consider studying further the reasons why staff members perceive their supervisors as poor managers.

Issues	Perceived level of management tolerance (per cent)		
	Zero tolerance	Neutral	Encouraging
<b>Low performance</b>	33	57	10
<b>Conflict of interests</b>	46	46	8
<b>Work place harassment</b>	62	32	6
<b>Fraud, misappropriation, misuse of funds</b>	67	29	4
<b>Breaches to safety and security</b>	67	27	6

## **F. Core competencies**

25. Based on information provided and interviews held, it appears that some managers within UNOG not only lack managerial competencies and core competencies such as communication, teamwork and client orientation, but also lack basic knowledge of the fundamental norms and standards of behaviour promoted by the United Nations.

#### **Communication and teamwork**

26. Responses to questionnaires and feedback during interviews with UNOG staff and clients revealed that within UNOG, the organizational culture and work processes are not favourable to collaboration, or sharing information and knowledge in a common approach towards problem solving. Working in isolation (as opposed to teamwork), lack of cooperation, compartmentalization and antagonism, seem to be generalized and deep-rooted in the UNOG culture, and need to be eliminated. There is no system in place for information and knowledge sharing. With some exceptions, meetings as a communication forum (at unit/section/service

level), are not held regularly, do not have a prior agenda, and minutes of the meetings are not prepared and distributed to participants. Preference is usually given to informal meetings or exchanges of electronic mail, documentation and other reading material. At the division level, communication is unsatisfactory: 26.7 per cent of respondents indicated that two-way (top-down and bottom-up) communication was not adequate to support effective decision-making and operational processes; 23.4 per cent of respondents indicated that there was communication to some extent; 32.9 per cent did not know; and 17 per cent indicated that there was appropriate communication.

### **Client orientation**

27. The Inspectors sought the views of UNOG clients with respect to the quality of the services provided by UNOG. Interviews were held with the majority of Geneva-based clients, and a satisfaction questionnaire sent. The criticisms heard repeatedly by the Inspectors regarding services included the continuing decline in quality and responsiveness, and the prevalence of personal relationships over institutionalized channels. The lack of response from UNOG officials with respect to enquiries from clients was considered unproductive. Some clients deplored the lack of available mechanisms for regular consultations between UNOG management and clients, where issues such as quality, timeliness, information sharing and increased transparency of cost recovery methods could be addressed. The Inspectors appreciate that some of the difficulties are generated not only by the inadequate UNOG response, but also, on the clients' side, by delays, insufficient coordination and lack of capacity. However, they strongly believe that UNOG needs to adopt, in the context of the provision of services, an institutional accountability framework and a proactive attitude. Generally, UNOG should endeavour to cultivate a service-oriented culture.

28. The Inspectors appreciate that following changes in the senior management team, notably in the positions of the Directors of the divisions of Administration and Conference Services, as well as in the position of Chief, Human Resources Management Services (HRMS), some of the issues and deficiencies noted above are being addressed.

### **G. Use of retirees**

29. Another issue of concern brought to the attention of the Inspectors is the use of retirees in areas not requiring special skills, or where the best, most experienced retired professionals are vital for the smooth running of certain activities (such as conference services) or to meet a temporary need.<sup>10</sup> However, this practice should not be used widely to remedy the negative consequences of insufficient succession planning. In many instances, staff members and managers are rehired shortly after their retirement.<sup>11</sup> While the use of retirees is a useful and accepted practice in areas requiring special skills, the present trend in the use of retirees (for the most part former staff members) poses a danger of encouraging revolving door practices. It is not only a potential source of favouritism, but also a harmful way to reduce work opportunities for younger staff, as confirmed in Administrative instruction "Retention in service beyond the mandatory age of separation and employment of retirees" (ST/AI/2003/8, para. 5.1).

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<sup>10</sup> See JIU/REP/2007/4 entitled "Age structure of human resources in the organizations of the United Nations system".

<sup>11</sup> Based on information provided by the Division of Administration, during the period 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2005, a total of 250 retirees were rehired by UNOG. Among this population, 198 retirees were hired within the Conference Services Division (either as translator, interpreter, reviser or text processing clerk).

### III. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

30. United Nations Office at Geneva Human Resources Management Services (HRMS) plays a key role in managing not only the human resources of UNOG but also the various entities it services. Within its delegated authority, HRMS helps managers in implementing their substantive mandates, provides human resources management (HRM) services to a number of clients, monitors compliance with the relevant regulations and rules, ensures policy harmonization and plays a coordinating role in HRM activities. Its ultimate aim is to promptly place suitable staff where needed, and to ensure the full implementation of quite often mutually restrictive United Nations staff policies (for instance, with regard to geographical distribution, special gender measures and mobility), and staff regulations and rules, including fair and transparent recruitment, placement and promotion practices; ensure staff personal and career development, using mobility as a fundamental tool, to match organizational needs; and ensure the swift, fair administration of justice.

31. In response to the client satisfaction questionnaires<sup>12</sup> sent by JIU for this note, various clients judged HRMS as very deficient in terms of its ability to provide services. Amongst the recurring concerns pointed out were the continuous deterioration of the quality of services delivered by HRMS over the last five years. The replies to the questionnaires also showed serious concern about delays in service delivery (especially for recruitment and the management of field staff), inconsistent and inflexible interpretation of rules, lack of transparency, relegation of administrative tasks to substantive offices while retaining authority, and a priori assuming that clients and staff are unreasonable in their requests. This assessment was corroborated by the Inspectors throughout their interviews with many managers, other officials and staff. HRMS highlighted that there were cases where the clients themselves contributed to the delays and inefficiencies.

32. Information provided to the Inspectors shows that significant steps have been made since the arrival of the new Chief of HRMS to increase responsiveness, restore the partnership and improve working relationships with clients. HRMS has institutionalized the practice of meeting regularly on a monthly basis with clients, to define their needs, establish responsibilities, listen to complaints and share information.

#### A. Lack of leadership and succession planning

33. The post of Chief, HRMS (D-1) was vacant for about 32 months. During this period, the Deputy Chief of the service occupied the post for a period of 24 months on an interim basis. The post was advertised and re-advertised three times. The Director-General advised the Inspectors that he considered the candidates recommended as a result of the first two advertisements as not duly qualified. The post was filled only in September 2006. This was detrimental to the effective functioning of HRMS, and deprived it of leadership, vision and strategy.

34. During the period December 2003 – December 2006, there was a high turnover of human resources management professionals in HRMS, due to retirement, promotions, secondment and separations. This impacted on the overall capacity of HRMS to provide quality services in a timely manner. The Inspectors came across at least one situation where HRMS chose temporary replacements to fill a vacant Professional post, instead of promptly announcing the vacancy in order to select a suitable candidate. The Deputy Chief of HRMS informed the Inspectors that in his capacity as deputy, he did not consider it fair to recruit/promote human

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<sup>12</sup> A total of 23 client organizations of UNOG were surveyed, out of which 12 replied.



resources officers, as the future chief of HRMS should be given the opportunity to select his/her collaborators. The Inspectors feel that if the gap in filling a particular post had been limited to a few months, this explanation could have been satisfactory. Since the actual gap in filling one particular P-4 post was 22 months, this explanation is not to the Inspectors' satisfaction. In another instance, a promotion exercise to a P-5 position in the Spanish Interpretation Section was delayed, although it was clear that with the only incumbent P-5 interpreter on active duty about to retire and the other P-5 on special leave without pay (approved by the Deputy Chief of HRMS) prior to retirement, there would be no P-5 interpreter left in the Section. It must be added that no promotion exercise to a P-5 position in the Spanish Interpretation Section had been carried out for more than five years prior to that time. The examples mentioned above point to a lack of succession planning, a perceived existence of bias, and, in the Inspectors' opinion, could have a detrimental effect on the quality of services provided and result in delays in the decision-making processes.

## **B. Geographical distribution**

35. The overall distribution of UNOG staff on geographical posts as of 31 December 2006 is shown in annex II. Regarding the distribution of staff by level on geographical posts as of 31 December 2006, the Inspectors observed a high concentration of staff of two particular nationalities, especially at the P-5 and D-1 levels. This concentration is noticeable, in particular, within the Library, Central Planning and Coordination Service, and the Buildings and Engineering Section.

36. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/206A, 53/221, 55/258 and 57/305, "no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State" (resolution 57/305, para. 37). General Assembly resolution 59/266 also reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that "as a general rule, no national of a Member State succeeds a national of that State in a senior post and that there is no monopoly on senior posts by nationals of any State or group of States" (resolution 59/266, section IV, para. 13). As has been the case elsewhere, this rule has not been complied with at UNOG. The Inspectors are concerned that inequitable geographical distribution, together with a lack of succession planning, could in the future lead to a further concentration of senior position posts occupied by staff members of particular nationalities. They wish to underscore the potential negative effects that this trend will have in terms of deteriorating staff morale and declining confidence in leadership. UNOG should make more progress towards ensuring equitable representation of Member States, especially at senior and policy level positions, and to strive for a senior management structure which better reflects the broader composition of the Secretariat.

37. With respect to General Service staff, it should be recalled that although this category of staff should be locally recruited (see staff rule 104.6), it does not necessarily mean that the recruitment process should only consider candidates living in the immediate vicinity. In this regard, the Inspectors noted that about 40 per cent of the General Service staff are of one nationality. This percentage is notably higher in SSS. While it might be expected that a significant number of General Service staff are *frontaliers*, given the proximity of Geneva to France and while these positions are not subject to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, UNOG should undertake efforts to give equal chances to candidates from other countries to be considered and selected for these posts, particularly with regard to appointments and promotions within SSS. In this regard, host authorities should provide temporary entry facilities for candidates holding an official communication inviting them for an interview at UNOG. At the same time, UNOG should undertake efforts to facilitate the use of videoconferencing for interviewing candidates.

The following recommendation is intended to enhance accountability.

### **Recommendation 6**

**The Director-General should ensure that qualified candidates for General Service posts willing to travel to Geneva at their own expense to participate in interviews are provided with a United Nations official invitation.**

#### **C. Intra-service collaboration**

38. The Inspectors are of the view that communication and collaboration within HRMS needs to be strengthened. At the time of the review there were no formalized meetings at the service level, work was being done in isolation, and there were no mechanisms in place for staff performing similar duties for different clients to share information and knowledge. Staff of various units within HRMS expressed their discontent regarding compartmentalization and lack of information-sharing, affecting both work efficiency and staff development. UNOG clients expressed their dissatisfaction with respect to the lack of a prompt response to queries, opacity in decision-making, prevalence of personal relationships to the detriment of institutionalized lines of authority, and absence of adequate channels for sharing information for feedback purposes. There was no knowledge management mechanism in place to share knowledge and best practices, thus impeding less senior HRMS officers from benefiting from the experience and knowledge of highly skilled officers, especially when these retire or are transferred. HRMS officials explained these deficiencies as being due to shortages of staff and an increasing workload.

39. The Inspectors were pleased to note that HRMS has recently made good progress in solving the issue of intra-service communication and collaboration. In January 2007, the service organized a team-building exercise, bringing together all its staff. Monthly meetings are organized among chiefs of units, while human resources officers meet on a weekly basis to discuss various issues. To ensure consistency in interpreting regulations and rules, HRMS is planning to establish common standard operating procedures.

#### **D. Performance appraisal system**

40. According to the staff rules, for the purposes of accountability, staff should be evaluated for their performance, efficiency, competence and integrity through performance appraisal mechanisms. Administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/3 establishes a performance appraisal system (PAS) "to improve the delivery of programmes mandated by the General Assembly by optimizing performance at all levels". PAS, as part of the accountability framework within an RBM context, is the fundamental management tool which links individual work plans with those of departments and offices, allowing the setting of goals, activity and performance indicators, providing ongoing feedback and assessing performance. To be effective, the PAS should constitute the agreement between staff and supervisors on expected individual results and should be the basis for any personnel action (placement and promotion).

41. The Inspectors found that the PAS was not consistently prepared, implemented and monitored. Human resources officers, who are supposed to report on compliance with the PAS in the context of the human resources action plan, found it time-consuming and subjective, with little value added. HRMS was not in a position to provide statistics on PAS implementation at UNOG and service level, explaining that the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) in New York administered the e-PAS. This gives an indication of the lack of oversight with respect to the monitoring of PAS implementation. It was noted during interviews and through the responses to the staff survey that more should be done to improve the PAS, in order to incorporate fair, homogeneous, coherent, consistent, measurable and

predictable standards and rating criteria, so that it develops into an effective day-to-day management tool for measuring performance in a structured, fair and consistent manner.

42. The Inspectors also have reservations with respect to the capability of the PAS, as implemented in UNOG, to foster continuous development of staff by detecting training needs and providing feedback. Not all the heads of services/sections/units within UNOG were discharging their role to ensure a consistent and fair implementation of the PAS, in spite of the fact that the PAS should be a key indicator of the ability of the leadership to manage the performance of staff members. All of the above reasons could defeat the purpose of the PAS to improve the delivery of programmes through optimizing performance at all levels. The current situation has negative effects on staff morale and productivity, as well as a financial impact, as salary increments and new contracts are awarded irrespective of the level of performance. The Inspectors recognize that the problems in the current PAS system go beyond UNOG and affect the United Nations as a whole.

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced efficiency.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**The Director-General should ensure that the overall strategy for UNOG is reflected in a proper work programme for UNOG as a whole and at the division, service, section and unit levels. Based on this work programme, the Director-General should instruct UNOG managers to align the current implementation of the PAS system to the corresponding cascading objectives of the work plan in accordance with the benchmarks approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/257 (See doc. A/59/617, Part III, A).**

### **E. Career management**

43. Matching organizational needs and objectives with individual staff potential and career interests is a shared responsibility between the staff member and his/her first reporting officer, with HRMS playing an advisory and support role, with a view to enhancing staff mobility. The Inspectors noted that, within UNOG, the concept of career management is inadequately applied, as two important elements – career planning (setting developmental goals) and career pathing (identifying the paths necessary to attain those goals) are missing. In fact 38.1 per cent of the respondents to the staff survey considered that they did not have adequate opportunity to progress in their careers, 31.1 per cent believed that they had adequate opportunities only to some extent, while 24.8 per cent believed that they had adequate opportunity to progress in their careers.

44. There is no evidence that training is conceived and implemented as part of the career development of individual staff. According to SDLS, due to resource constraints, managerial and supervisory skills training are prioritized towards staff with current managerial and supervisory responsibilities, to the detriment of a proactive approach to preparing future managers/supervisors. UNOG lacks an adequate induction programme for new staff, and, in particular, for those promoted to managerial functions.

45. While training plans are formulated at the service level and consolidated by SDLS, the Inspectors are concerned about the adequacy and effectiveness of such plans, since the PAS is inconsistently applied, and training and development needs have not always been identified. Of the respondents to the staff survey, 37.7 per cent indicated that their office did not have an annual training plan based on the assessment of development needs for each staff member, 25.1 per cent indicated that there was a plan to some extent based on individual needs, while only 27.5 per cent said their office had a training plan based on individual needs. Not only

could this situation lead to a lack of effectiveness in using training funds, but it could, in the long run, increase the gap between organizational needs and staff competencies and skills, as training needs are left unmet.<sup>13</sup>

46. With regard to job classification and the issue of subcontracting short-term staff, the Inspectors are concerned about the hybrid system kept in place for sound operators. Having different job classifications for sound operators, as they are hired by outside firms supplying temporary services, is in the opinion of the Inspectors unwarranted. Furthermore, the Inspectors noted with concern the use of firms supplying temporary services and were given information that, if verified, could point to abuses in the use of this contractual modality. All this has contributed to a state of apprehension and low morale among the staff concerned.

47. The practice of subcontracting short-term staff by firms supplying temporary services is a matter of concern for the Inspectors, due to the fact that it seems to have become a back-door method of recruiting the relatives and friends of some UNOG officials. In this respect, the Inspectors are pleased to note that efforts have been made to address this issue, and provisions are now included in standard contracts with firms supplying temporary services prohibiting the recruitment of relatives of United Nations staff. The Inspectors suggest that the UNOG Administration continues to monitor this matter in order to prevent nepotism.

## **F. Medical Services**

48. For the period January 2002 to December 2005, the amount of sick leave taken by staff totalling more than the equivalent of one month per year was 23,365 days. Assuming an average of 210 working days per staff member per year, an equivalent of approximately 111 staff members were unable to work during that period due to various ailments. Detailed analysis of the distribution of cumulated sick leave days of more than one month within UNOG showed that the Services most affected were the Languages Service with 31.97 per cent (mostly the French, Russian, Arabic and Spanish typing units); the Central Support Services with 14.32 per cent (excluding SSS); the Publishing Service with 14.12 per cent; SSS with 10.26 per cent; the Central Planning and Coordination Service with 6.37 per cent, and HRMS with 5.66 per cent.

49. Based on statistics prepared by the then Joint Medical Service (JMS) during the period 1998-2001, a significant amount of sick leave days taken by United Nations staff in Geneva (including UNOG) were due to depressive conditions, from 39.08 per cent in 1998 increasing to 49.50 per cent in 2000 and 45.13 per cent in 2001. While more recent statistics on sick leave taken were not available, the Medical Services Section (MSS) confirmed that there are a significant number of work-provoked medical conditions, including depression, leading to absenteeism. To address the high incidence of work-related problems, UNOG hired an occupational psychologist from May 2005 on a part-time basis.

50. The above must be seen in connection with the high rate of permanent work lay-offs related to psychological problems (almost 50 per cent of the total) which take a very heavy toll on the pension resources of the United Nations. It is imperative to prevent or to curtail all instances of psychological abuse and mobbing of employees and to make accountable those managers responsible.

51. The Inspectors are of the opinion that MSS does not take sufficient action to follow-up on protracted medical conditions under its purview, in order to detect potential managerial

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<sup>13</sup> See JIU/REP/2006/7 entitled "Staff mobility in the United Nations".

deficiencies and/or potential abuse, with the aim of reducing the amount of sick leave and lost productivity. The Inspectors were told that in chronic cases of extended sick leave, the Section may request an independent evaluation, and the Inspectors are of the opinion that this measure should be constantly and consistently applied in all cases of extended sick leave. Moreover, they are concerned that many of these cases appear to be related to the lack of ability of some managers to operate in a multicultural working environment, combined with the lack of required oversight and accountability of those managers.

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced controls and compliance.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**The Director of Administration should ensure that UNOG Medical Services Section, without prejudicing the confidentiality of medical cases, keep updated information on sick leave and its causes and play a more proactive role in verifying the information provided in medical certificates, in particular in chronic cases of extended or recurrent sick leave and recommend courses of action to the managers concerned.**

### **G. Effectiveness of the counselling, mediation and joint staff-management mechanisms**

52. The Staff Counsellor is responsible for the general welfare of all staff administered by UNOG through provision of counselling, information and assistance to staff that may have an impact on their welfare and productivity. The Staff Counsellor advised that more than 50 per cent of her work was dealing with work-related matters, while her job description envisages that only 25 per cent should be allocated to this.

53. Although, by its very nature, the work of the Staff Counsellor requires discretion and the full respect of confidentiality, the success of his/her work depends to a great extent on communication with other sections within HRMS for obtaining information on individual cases and sharing knowledge. However, the Inspectors noted that the Staff Counsellor operates in isolation and lacks guidance, supervision and feedback from her supervisor, and has inadequate communication with her peers within HRMS. Information provided to the Inspectors shows that, since 1997 when the present incumbent joined UNOG, there has been no PAS to evaluate her performance.

54. The United Nations Ombudsperson is located in New York. This deprives staff at UNOG of the opportunity to have face-to-face conversations with the Ombudsperson, and the time difference becomes an impediment for telephone communications. While the Ombudsperson comes to Geneva on a yearly basis, it is unlikely that the incumbent could listen to and follow-up on all issues raised by UNOG staff. To fill the gap created by the remoteness of the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Staff Counsellor has to deal with increasing work-related conflicts.

55. The General Assembly approved the creation of three D-1 Chief of Branch positions in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, within existing resources, for the biennium 2006-2007. These positions are essential to further extend the coverage of the Office of the Ombudsperson and its impact, in accordance with paragraph 20 of resolution 59/283, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals for strengthening the Office of the Ombudsman through improved access to it for staff serving in different locations. The Inspectors support the creation of the three D-1 posts and stress the need to accelerate implementation. They call on the Secretary-General to take action in this sense without delay.

However, the Inspectors also point to the need for fully incorporating relevant and reliable feedback and accountability benchmarks and mechanisms for ombudspersons, facilitators and all persons involved in mediation, dispute-resolution or, in a wider sense, formally or informally related to the administration of justice in the United Nations.

56. There is also an urgent need for increased communication and collaboration between the Staff Counsellor and MSS. In addition, to ensure effective counselling, conflict resolution and staff welfare systems, performance indicators should be established for these functions and work performed should be monitored using those indicators.

57. The Geneva Joint Appeals Board (JAB) and the Joint Disciplinary Committee (JDC) cover approximately 11,000 United Nations staff members based in Geneva, Turin, Bonn and The Hague. The Inspectors are concerned that JAB and JDC are perceived by UNOG staff members as partial and ineffective. The members of the joint bodies are appointed or elected for a period of two years, are eligible for reappointment or re-election and should remain in office until their successors are appointed or elected.

58. The membership tenure for the previous joint bodies came to an end on 8 June 2005. It took more than 15 months to appoint/elect the new members. Thus, while the staff had selected its members for JAB and JDC, these members could not participate in the panels dealing with specific cases, as the Secretary-General (through the UNOG Administration) had not designated the members to represent him. The JAB/JDC Secretary explained the situation, inter alia, by the vacancy in the post of Director of Administration, and the lack of interest of staff members in becoming a JAB/JDC member given the additional workload involved. The Inspectors noted that there were very few guidelines and procedures for the composition of panels and on the allocation of cases to JAB/JDC members/panels (for example, members of a panel cannot belong to the same organization/entity as the appellant). Moreover, there is no requirement for any legal knowledge for panel members, and until recently no adequate legal training had ever been provided to them. However, the Inspectors noted that the JAB/JDC secretariat has organized legal training sessions for both Boards since November 2004. Therefore, the relevant jurisprudence references to a given case appear always to be suggested by the JAB/JDC Secretary who, in effect, also performs other duties for UNOG Administration and is therefore, ipso facto, in a situation of permanent conflict of interest. Moreover, once elected or chosen, there is no assurance that all the elected/appointed JAB/JDC members have an equal chance of being assigned to a panel/specific case. The Inspectors were provided with specific information of cases of members who had been elected by staff to the JAB/JDC, but had been unilaterally sidelined (that is, de facto excluded) because the Presiding Officer of JAB/JDC had considered them “not to be impartial” on account of the fact that they were representing the staff. The Inspectors noted, however, that other staff representatives have been appointed to these panels. These shortcomings have contributed to the perception among staff members of a lack of transparency and impartiality in these bodies.

59. As the weaknesses of the current internal justice system are not limited to UNOG only, the Inspectors are satisfied to learn that, as recommended by the panel of experts on the reform of the United Nations administration of justice, the Secretary-General has agreed to eliminate JAB and JDC and to replace them by professional dispute judges<sup>14</sup>. The Inspectors consider it equally important that the Secretary-General take the necessary action to ensure that all managers, particularly senior managers, refrain from interfering in or otherwise influencing staff representation bodies, such as unions or election groupings, in order to allow

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<sup>14</sup> See A/61/758, paras. 18-20.

for these important actors in the staff-management dialogue to perform their fundamental role in the promotion of accountability, transparency, efficiency and professionalism.

#### **H. The role of the Office of Human Resources Management**

60. The Inspectors are of the opinion that there is insufficient formal communication between OHRM (at Headquarters) and human resources management services in Offices of the United Nations Secretariat away from Headquarters (OAH), including Geneva. While human resources officers from Headquarters and OAH meet once a year in a one-week workshop, the Inspectors believe that an area of such importance requires more frequent gatherings to discuss best practices, interpretation and application of regulations and rules and for consultation on policy issues. The Inspectors consider that the available technologies, especially videoconferencing facilities, are a cost-effective way to organize such forums for discussion. Information provided to the Inspectors shows that OHRM should do more to encourage a participatory mechanism for consultations, and be open to suggestions, proposals and modifications by OAH. Also, when consulting other human resources management offices on specific issues, OHRM should make available enough time for them to come up with meaningful input.

#### IV. SECURITY MATTERS

61. The reorganization of the Security and Safety Section (SSS) has resulted in dual reporting lines for UNOG SSS, on the one hand to the Director, Department of Safety and Security Services, DSS at Headquarters and on the other, to the Director of Administration in Geneva, who reports to the Director-General of UNOG. The Chief of SSS reports regularly to the former, and receives policy direction and operational guidance, but the latter has overall responsibility for security at UNOG. The main problem observed by the Inspectors lies more in the lack of a clear division of responsibilities for each rather than the structure of dual reporting lines itself. The Inspectors are concerned about the issues of accountability that are raised by this dual reporting structure and believe that these arrangements need to be reconsidered.

62. Strengthening safety and security in UNOG has entailed the expenditure of substantial additional resources, which has been subject to audit by OIOS<sup>15</sup>. The Inspectors have reviewed these reports, as well as other relevant studies undertaken in 2005. The Inspectors concur with the findings and recommendations of these reports; they have also identified various shortcomings in the overall planning processes of UNOG SSS and believe that a more systematic, results-based approach would bring about the required improvements in strategic decision-making.

##### A. Headquarters Minimum Operating Security Standards projects

63. In order to ensure compliance with the Headquarters minimum operating security standards (H-MOSS), US\$ 44 million was allocated through General Assembly resolutions (see resolutions 56/286, 58/271, 58/295 and 59/276) for the two biennia 2002-2003 and 2004-2005, of which US\$ 21 million had been expended and committed as at 31 December 2005. On the basis of information received, the Inspectors feel that the process of selection of the consortium responsible for the architectural and engineering components of the security projects did not follow clear performance and experience criteria. As far as the Inspectors could detect, the selected consortium had only limited experience with implementing security projects. The Inspectors believe that a more balanced approach, selecting architects with proper credentials in dealing with security projects, could have been taken.

64. The management of the implementation of the security projects was inadequate, notably the planning process which lacked a comprehensive approach, resulting in questionable priority setting. Significant funds were allocated to the projects at the Chemin de fer and Pregny gates, while the perimeter fence of the United Nations compound was not secured, there being no systems in place to deter and detect potential intruders.

65. The Inspectors are also concerned that there could potentially be abuse of magnetic cards, posing a security risk. The current system allows for access to UNOG premises through unattended turnstiles outside working hours with magnetic cards, and does not have embedded controls to prevent access by multiple individuals with the same card. Following observations made repeatedly by Inspectors, UNOG SSS is working in collaboration with DSS at Headquarters to better secure the use of magnetic cards. The Inspectors very much hope that UNOG SSS can achieve concrete results in this respect before the end of 2007.

66. UNOG SSS is presently testing a computerized interface system to better control and more efficiently process passes for UNOG visitors, and SSS is working with Headquarters to find the best software to be used in this respect. The Inspectors were informed of the

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<sup>15</sup> See A/59/396 and A/60/291.



existence of technical guidelines on the use of the computerized system, but surprisingly, no official policy is in place to manage such a system. In this regard, the Inspectors are very concerned that there is no protocol to control and protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information included in the computerized database.

67. The following deficiencies/incidents point to design flaws and other limitations of the security systems in place:

- (a) In the context of the H-MOSS projects undertaken at the UNOG compound, OIOS recommended in 2004 the creation of a temporary post for a project manager responsible for managing day-to-day operations, supervising the consortium's work and coordinating activities with the various parties involved. A Project Coordinator post (P-4 level) was temporarily created (and staffed in August 2005) to coordinate the implementation and execution of the project in line with approved plans, schedules and financial resources. The Inspectors consider that the Project Coordinator did not have the same degree of authority, responsibility and accountability as a manager would have had. A project of such a magnitude would have largely justified the creation of a temporary position of Project Manager at a higher level. Moreover, when facing serious problems of authority and coordination, UNOG Administration decided to appoint as Project Coordinator the head of the Mailing, Pouch and Property Control Section, who did not possess any background on security and safety matters. The Inspectors were informed that the decision was taken because this official was a skilful trouble shooter.
- (b) The design of the gates is deficient: at the Chemin de fer gate there is not sufficient room for large delivery vehicles to turn round and leave in instances where security officers, after searching their load, foresee potential security risks (those vehicles have to actually enter the United Nations premises to be able to turn back); the portico built at the Pregny gate to protect security officers on duty against bad weather is not well-designed, and in fact, while excessively costly, does not provide any protection; moreover, there is not sufficient space on the causeway for the security officers checking vehicles, which increases the risk of accidents.
- (c) The hydraulic barrier at the Pregny gate malfunctioned, causing a serious accident; it had to be deactivated and is still not operational. Also, access through the Chemin de fer gate had to be interrupted following a failure in the functioning of the hydraulic barrier.
- (d) The room housing the computer systems supporting the electronic control of the Pregny gate was not properly secured; all the security staff on duty (sergeant and above, as well as personal protection staff) and all the technical staff have master keys to access the room. The Inspectors are of the opinion that access should be limited to the minimum to lower the risk of malicious acts.
- (e) One of the X-ray machines used in the visitors control area is oversized compared with current operational needs. The Inspectors learned that the machine is intended for airport use; it is only used occasionally, and the security staff did not have the opportunity to test it before it was bought. The level of radiation in the area where the X-ray machines are used is measured directly by the company that supplied them, and SSS technicians do not have the capacity to prevent risks related to radiation. In addition, the Inspectors learned with concern that SSS uses machines dedicated to the detection of explosive items (IONSCAN), which work with nickel 63, a radioactive element. As SSS does not yet have the internal capacity to conduct tests and assess problems regarding the use of these machines, the Inspectors are of the opinion that

this issue should be looked at very carefully. The matter will be followed up in a management letter to SSS, as it could have an impact on both the health of the staff operating this equipment and UNOG staff at large.

- (f) At the date of the report, a specialized X-ray machine that had been bought to scan deliveries in the mailing, pouch and merchandise area could not be installed, and was therefore not operational, as the premises to house it were not adequate and upgrading works were not finalized on time. The equipment was supposed to have been delivered on 1 March 2006. It was actually delivered on 12 May 2006, and had to be stored for three months at commercial premises for a fee of SwF 1,200. The equipment was set up in a temporary shelter on 12-13 February 2007. Additional fees amounting to SwF 11,850 had to be paid to the original supplier for necessary adjustments and tests for this equipment as it has not been used for some time. It is also to be noted that, so far, 18 months of the total warranty (24 months) have elapsed without the equipment having actually been used.
  - (g) A cache of micro cameras and microphones were discovered both in the Salon français in 2004 and in room C-108 in April 2006. The Inspectors were informed that an independent investigation was in progress to establish the age and technical specifications of this equipment, and an examination is to be undertaken by a specialized company. To prevent the installation of such microphones, SSS purchased a device to track active and non-active bugs and microphones (non-linear junction). As the Inspectors are very concerned about this problem, they stress the importance for SSS to monitor this issue seriously.
68. Another recurrent problem is that related to the access of staff and official participants to conferences held in UNOG, and the parking of vehicles. This problem reaches a peak during the annual gatherings of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the General Assemblies of the International Labour Organization (ILO), to which UNOG has subcontracted the use of conference rooms and assigned preferential parking places. The full implementation of H-MOSS would restrict the number of parking places (unilaterally decided by Headquarters) and exacerbate an already problematic situation. The Inspectors are of the opinion that any measures in this connection be taken in full transparency and with the involvement of all parties concerned. Suitable alternative solutions should be found. In this respect, the Inspectors wish to stress that environmental protection and the development of a sustainable transportation plan should not be considered as a means of justifying cuts in parking spaces within the UNOG compound.

## **B. Management issues**

69. Information provided to the Inspectors shows that there were instances indicating serious management deficiencies such as hiring and/or promoting staff who did not meet the minimum qualifications, vacancy announcements tailored to fit certain qualifications, a concentration of staff coming from the same geographical region, staff being employed without a contract, and inconsistencies between required qualifications in vacancy announcements for posts at the same level. The Inspectors reviewed vacancy announcements issued for the post of Security Sergeant (G-5) in three duty stations – Bangkok, Geneva and Vienna. While the vacancies published in Bangkok and Vienna required a minimum of six years working experience, the vacancy published in Geneva required a minimum of five years working experience. Unlike the vacancies published in Bangkok and Vienna, it also omitted to mention required competencies such as professionalism, planning and organizing and client orientation, and the requirement for physical and mental fitness. While the Inspectors

acknowledge that UNOG has the delegated authority to establish standard classifications for General Service positions, they are of the opinion that there should be uniformity in terms of experience and qualifications required, especially in the context of mobility.

70. A case in point was the *sui generis* classification and evaluation system put together by the SSS that incorporated creative definitions of linguistic competencies and a multiple point scale for integrity as requirements for the appointment and promotion of staff.

71. The Inspectors were informed that, in order to deal with multiple problems faced by SSS, it was decided to transfer the then Chief of Security and Safety Section. The Inspectors once again would like to point out that solving a management problem by transferring the incumbent to another position for which he/she may or may not be qualified is not the best management decision. It is also contrary to the principle of managerial accountability, which was not respected in this case.

72. Consequently, the post of Chief, Security and Safety Section was vacant for more than one year; prior to becoming vacant, the incumbent's contracts were renewed on a monthly basis over a nine-month period. The Inspectors are of the view that many of the problems encountered have been exacerbated by the high turnover and protracted vacancies in the senior management of UNOG SSS. This lack of continuity has undermined the quality of leadership of the Section, and appears to have negatively affected staff morale and performance.

## V. CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES

### A. Need for a Capital Master Plan

73. The Palais des Nations compound was built between 1929 and 1938 to host the former League of Nations. Upon the creation of the United Nations, it became the seat for UNOG. The Palais des Nations complex is the largest property of the United Nations system. Five smaller buildings (Villa Le Bocage, Bocage annex, Villa La Pelouse and its dependence, and Villa La Fenêtre) are part of the compound, while another building belonging to UNOG – Villa Les Feuillantines - is situated outside the compound.

74. The Palais des Nations has had two extensions added to it. Between 1950 and 1952, three floors were added to the K building, and the D building was built, inter alia, to accommodate temporarily the staff of WHO. From 1968 to 1973, the E building was constructed, which was designed to host the headquarters of UNCTAD and to meet the growing need for conference facilities. Today, the overall complex measures 46.6 hectares and has a perimeter of 3.5 kilometres, housing 34 conference rooms and almost 2,800 rooms (mostly used as offices).

75. Since its construction there have been no comprehensive works undertaken to maintain the buildings. In particular, conference room facilities have become, for the most part, obsolete or are inappropriate from the point of view of state of the art technical standards. Information provided to the Inspectors shows that there are insufficient funds allocated to maintain the buildings to a reasonable standard. While the international benchmark for allocating funds for buildings maintenance is 2 per cent of the value of the building, UNOG is given only 1 per cent for maintenance work. A proposal made in 2003 to hire a consultancy firm to prepare a study on the state of the buildings and the adequacy of a Capital Master Plan was not pursued due to lack of funds. The Inspectors note with appreciation that the refurbishment of some conference rooms has been done thanks to extrabudgetary funding.

76. The Inspectors are concerned about the lack of adequacy of the current archiving facilities. While responsibility for records and archives management is consolidated under the Registry, Records and Archives Unit, the documents themselves remain physically separated. The League of Nations archives are kept in the Library storage rooms, while the UNOG archives are kept in several storage areas, most of which are located in the basements of various buildings of the Palais des Nations. Management difficulties arise from the fact that these premises are widely dispersed. More importantly, in spite of efforts made to renovate and equip some of the storage rooms, these premises do not comply with international standards for the preservation of records and archives. Two incidents of water damage that seriously affected archival materials (one during the summer of 2003, and the second in July 2004) highlight the urgency of remedying this situation, given that the records and archives of the League of Nations and UNOG are an important heritage and source of information for the United Nations.

77. A general assessment survey conducted by an independent consultant following the July 2004 incident showed that “the current building conditions [...] do not constitute appropriate storage areas for either library or archival material intended for long-term preservation”. The survey concluded that even the purpose-built Library and League of Nations Museum no longer conform to current international standards, and that material both in the Library and other storage rooms are unduly exposed to potential fire and water damage as well as fluctuating environmental conditions, pollution, unauthorized access and theft. The consultant concluded that the scale of the problem, and the age of the existing buildings, make it unlikely that the existing storage areas can successfully be refurbished to current standards. In addition, Library officials informed the Inspectors that, given the increasing transfers of

documents to archives, the space available was exhausted at the end of 2006.<sup>16</sup> The urgency of finding an appropriate solution to ensure the safety of archives has been brought to light once more due to a new flooding incident that occurred on 7 June 2007.

78. Compared to the consideration given to security to protect the United Nations premises against terrorism, little attention has been paid to recurrent safety problems. For example, malfunctioning of the elevators in the Palais des Nations has been the subject of many complaints from delegates, staff, representatives of non-governmental organizations and outside visitors. Over 75 per cent of the elevators/escalators are more than 10 years old. Half of them were installed in the 1970s or earlier. The Inspectors recognize that the number of breakdowns has declined from 290 in 2001 to 211 in 2006, thanks to the introduction in 2004 of a type of contract unique to UNOG making repairs the responsibility of the manufacturers. The total cost of maintenance has been growing at more than 10 per cent per annum over recent years due to the need to repair old machines that require spare parts and equipment over and above the fixed maintenance cost provided for in the contracts. Unless a reasonable replacement policy for the elevators is established, this cost will soar in the future. Even if that cost is met, risks will continue to accumulate as spare parts will become more rare or simply unavailable, bringing elevators either to a permanent halt or a major breakdown.

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced effectiveness.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**The Secretary-General should give priority to the preparation of a Capital Master Plan for the Palais des Nations compound, which should also take into account the imperative of securing adequate archiving solutions.**

#### **B. Use of messengers**

79. Of the 28 staff included in the staffing table for the Mailing Distribution Unit (Mailing, Pouch and Property Control Section – Central Support Services) as messengers or mail clerks/assistants, approximately 15 staff are allocated to specific users (Languages Service (5), UNCTAD (3), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (1), OHCHR (2), Library (1) etc.). These staff perform various tasks not related to the distribution of mail, especially in the case of messengers attributed to the Languages Service, where they are mainly used to carry documents from the translation sections to the typing pools. While the staff costs (approximately US\$ 1,000,000 for 2004-2005) related to salaries and common staff costs for the five messengers allocated to the Languages Service are included in the budget of the Mailing Distribution Unit, more than 90 per cent of these costs should be attributed to the documents production chain, and therefore should appear in the budget of the Languages Service.

80. An initiative by the Division of Administration to rationalize the mail distribution system and to attribute posts to the users' staffing tables/budgets was not successful. Only the Information Service has absorbed one post with the intention of reclassifying it for better utilization. The Inspectors were informed that a previous Director of Administration had decided to proceed with the outposting of messengers to the receiving services as described above, but the latest Chief of Central Support Services decided to stop this course of action.

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<sup>16</sup> Of the 9,390 linear metres (lm) total capacity of storage space available, 8,200 lm were occupied in January 2006, and 1,170 lm were free.

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced efficiency.

**Recommendation 10**

**The Director of Administration of UNOG should implement the previous decision of rationalizing the mail distribution service by attributing the posts to the services concerned to be absorbed by them, which appears to be the most reasonable and cost-effective solution.**

**C. Visa issues**

81. In recent years, some staff members and United Nations officials have regularly faced problems in getting their entry visa to Headquarters and other duty stations where there is a United Nations presence. The UNOG Transportation, Visa and Travel Unit has consistently followed up on individual problems, and the Inspectors have been told that this issue has now been resolved. They will continue to monitor the situation over the coming years to ensure that this is indeed the case.

**D. Banking facilities**

82. According to information provided during the preparation of this review, the Inspectors noted that the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) was not offering all the services to which its clients were entitled, apparently discriminating against staff members of certain nationalities. In the opinion of the Inspectors, the United Nations cannot accept that a service provider violates the principle of equal rights among staff members and United Nations officials. The Inspectors are very satisfied to note that the Chief of Financial Resources Management Service has now solved this problem, and that UBS is accepting non-US dollar transactions requested by staff members of the United Nations system to all countries.

## VI. SAFI

83. In 2004, OIOS issued a report on the audit of the Service d'achats et de commande des fonctionnaires internationaux (SAFI) and detected serious shortcomings related to legal, operational and security aspects. Some recommendations have already been acted upon, especially those related to operational aspects (such as the proper management and control of stocks, and the legal aspects of the working and taxation status of SAFI employees in accordance with Swiss law). However, no active follow-up of the initial OIOS investigation has taken place to determine individual accountability for the mismanagement and irregularities that occurred with regard to the operation of SAFI.

84. The Inspectors are concerned that decisions have not been reached on crucial aspects related to the functioning of SAFI, as recommended by OIOS, mainly with respect to the lack of clarity on SAFI's legality (including the non-compliance with the law of the host country); the safety and security risks prompted by its location inside the United Nations compound; and its role vis-à-vis the financing of staff representation activities, its ownership by the staff, and the supervisory and fiduciary function played by SCC).

85. OIOS pointed out that during 2001-2002, SAFI remitted more than SwF 250,000 per year to SCC, or more than 54 per cent of its annual net surplus, while the fate of the remaining 46 per cent is unclear. However, it has been pointed out to the Inspectors that this was a one-time lump-sum payment to compensate for the failure of SAFI over several years to carry out the statutory annual remittances to the Staff Coordinating Council destined to finance staff welfare and related activities. In this regard, it should be noted that, as UNOG did not charge SAFI for the rental of its premises until July 2004, the profits made by SAFI may be lower than stated if all the overheads have not been properly accounted for. However, the Inspectors note with concern that amounts due from SAFI remain unpaid to date, and urge the Division of Administration to take the necessary measures in this regard. The Inspectors strongly believe that SCC, as the only staff representative body recognized by UNOG, should have its facilities and statutory activities fully financed by the United Nations. However, the activities of its individual unions or electoral lists and, in general, its staff welfare activities, should be financed, as is the case of the New York Staff Council, through membership fees. Without impinging in any way upon the right of independent unions to establish their membership fee policies, the Inspectors believe that not only would this enhance the sense of ownership by its members, but it would limit the potential risk of corruption and misuse of funds, leading to better accountability.

86. The Inspectors would like to recall that SAFI was originally established as a non-profit staff-owned cooperative serving the community of international civil servants of the United Nations system organizations based in Geneva. Over the years, the nature of the operation changed, a general supervisory and fiduciary role was assigned to the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council, and a Management Committee was established to carry out the control of day-to-day operations and to provide the required operational guidance to the SAFI manager with regard to commercial and staffing issues. The SAFI Management Committee is composed of three members elected by UNOG staff (not by the Staff Coordinating Council to which the Committee is supposed to report) and two members directly designated by the Director-General of UNOG. The Inspectors, while concurring with the need for a shopping facility for immediate necessities conveniently located for delegates and staff members, stress that this facility should be located outside the Palais des Nations compound, in compliance with H-MOSS requirements. Equally important, and in line with the opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs, such a commercial facility should not be owned and exploited by a staff representative organ. Instead, following a competitive process, it should be contracted out to a commercial entity, as is the case of the catering services, which would then be entirely

responsible for establishing clear legal and governance frameworks and effective internal controls, thus avoiding any risk to the image of, and potential contingent liabilities affecting, UNOG.

The following recommendation is intended to enhance accountability.

**Recommendation 11**

**The Director-General should address without delay the problems related to SAFI described in paragraphs 84-85 of this note and implement the recommendations of OIOS in its report Audit of SAFI.**

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced controls and compliance.

**Recommendation 12**

**The Director-General should ensure that SAFI operations are contracted out, following a competitive process, to a commercial entity (like the catering services), which would be entirely responsible for establishing clear legal and governance frameworks and effective internal controls, thus avoiding any risk to the image of, and potential contingent liabilities affecting, UNOG.**

**Recommendation 13**

**The Director-General should take action to locate SAFI outside the Palais des Nations compound, in compliance with H-MOSS requirements.**



## **VII. UN SPECIAL**

87. The Inspectors are also concerned about certain aspects of the operation of the publication UN Special. While recognizing its historical origin, they believe that there are certain grey areas about the legality of using the United Nations name, for a publication that is self-financed through publicity in its contents. Moreover and more important, the Inspectors were informed that part of the revenues are earmarked for the Staff Coordinating Council without any financial control attached. The Editor-in-Chief indicated that this operation has never been audited. The Inspectors intend to look into this issue in more detail.

## VIII. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

88. Given the omissions and lack of clarity in the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2000/4) in the area of information and communications technology (ICT), the UNOG Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS) lacks an official mandate and is not recognized as a central service provider. There is no formal delegation of authority by Headquarters for critical components such as IT security, Internet access, data network services, electronic mail services, IT desktop environment (deployment and development), software development or telecommunications services. It is therefore imperative, in order to eliminate fragmentation and duplication of work and to formulate sound policies and implement standards, that UNOG is given the necessary delegation of authority with respect to ICT. In addition, retention of authority at Headquarters for some corporate applications results in inefficiency. For example, user registration and troubleshooting for Secretariat-wide applications such as Galaxy and e-PAS and the Key Item Management Reporting System (KIMRS) can only be undertaken at Headquarters, with frequent delays in response that hamper the ability of managers at UNOG and the entities it services to discharge their responsibilities.

89. As it lacks the appropriate delegated authority, ICTS is deprived of a formal basis to set and implement compelling standards and policies with respect to IT security, data protection and confidentiality. There have been a number of instances where security breaches caused by the utilization of incompatible equipment and software by its clients provoked breakdowns affecting the entire UNOG network, leading to idle time, lost data, etc.

90. Not only does the current situation engender operational problems, affecting mission-critical systems, but from an efficiency and managerial point of view, it leads to duplication, lost economies of scale and therefore the waste of resources. The Inspectors noted that within UNOG there are at least four units/sections discharging ICT functions independently of ICTS: within the Library, SDLS, Central Support Services and Publishing Service (CSD). The Inspectors reviewed the 2006 training plan for the Division of Administration and the Library, and found that more than US\$ 45,000 was allocated to acquire technical expertise already available in ICTS. As an example, the IT Support Unit (within the Central Support Services) alone allocated US\$ 28,000 for training courses in 2006 benefiting four staff members (or US\$ 7,000 per person). For comparison purposes, the entire ICTS has a training budget of US\$ 68,000 to provide for the training of more than 80 staff members (or US\$ 850 per person).

91. While the Inspectors acknowledge the particularities, and therefore the specific skills, that various services require (especially CSD), they believe that the ICT field requires a level of specialization and continuous development that small offices cannot reach in an effective and efficient way. In 2005, ICTS tried to launch a consolidation project, but the idea gradually lost impetus due to a lack of interest from other stakeholders, and more importantly, due to the vacancy at the level of Director of Administration.

92. The Inspectors believe that a consolidation of ICT functions (such as helpdesk, desktop deployment and development, negotiating licences, file server management, data storage, ICT equipment disposal, security policies and the formulation of standards) within ICTS, through staff integration into ICTS specialized teams and pooling of financial resources, would be beneficial from both the operational and managerial point of view. To this effect, the grade of the post of Chief, ICTS should be reviewed to ensure parity with the post of chief in other similar services. The Inspectors took note of the comments made by the Advisory Committee

on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) disagreeing with the reclassification of the post of Chief ICTS from P-5 to D-1<sup>17</sup>. However, ACABQ based its analysis on outdated information. In fact, currently, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) does not use the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) but ICTS for the provision of information technology services. As a result, ICTS saw its volume of work significantly increase in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced effectiveness.

**Recommendation 14**

**The Secretary-General should pursue his efforts to ensure that the position of Chief, Information and Communication Technology Service (ICTS) is at the same level as the chiefs of other services within the Division of Administration.**

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<sup>17</sup> *Official records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth session, Supplement No. 7 (A/60/7), part VIII, para. VIII.52.*

## IX. CONFERENCE SERVICES

### A. Publishing Service – printing and reproduction activities

93. In 2003, during an audit of the Publishing Service, the Board of Auditors (BOA) recommended the development of production costs monitoring to increase transparency and accountability as well as to allow for benchmarking against outsourced services. It also recommended that the Publishing Service undertake regular monitoring of productivity standards, taking into account the performance of equipment used, with a view to assessing staffing requirements and supporting investment decisions, and completing a cost-efficiency analysis of its printing capacity.

94. Based on the interviews carried out, the Inspectors were informed that the Publishing Service has put in place a system that is able to analyse all the costs involved in producing publications. The position of the Publishing Service is that benchmarking internal printing costs against commercial printing cannot be meaningful. The Inspectors are of the view that, in line with the proposal 12 of the report of the Secretary-General on investing in the United Nations<sup>18</sup>, a detailed cost-benefit analysis of internal printing should be undertaken based on external benchmarks. This would help the Service to make informed decisions with respect to staff and equipment requirements, and planning and organizing the work (day shifts/night shifts, etc.).

95. The Inspectors are of the view that the current internal printing capacity is excessive, and that working in two shifts is not justified. They intended to analyse the utilization of the internal printing capacity by machine in terms of pages printed, in order to assess whether there is under-utilization of the current equipment, but the information required was not available. The Publishing Service asserted that any attempt to measure percentage utilization in terms of the number of pages printed would be inconclusive, as the number of pages does not reflect the complexity of the work involved in the production of a publication. The Inspectors acknowledge that the level of complexity for printing a publication does not reside exclusively in the number of pages, but consider that the number of pages printed by a machine for a given period compared with its printing capacity (as per technical specifications) is a fairly accurate indicator of the degree of utilization. The Inspectors are concerned that decisions such as concluding/renewing leasing agreements for printing equipment appear to be taken without considering the actual utilization of printing capacity. However, it remains to be seen what the effect will be on the activities of the Publishing Service of the establishment of the Human Rights Council, and the overall mid- and long-term repercussions of the expected considerable increase in meetings, and the reproduction of related documents.

96. In order to ensure the cost-effectiveness of printing activities, the Publishing Service should refer, for benchmarking purposes, to printing/reproduction standards and policies used in the private/public sector and other United Nations system organizations. It should undertake an analysis of its internal printing capacity, and analyse external benchmarks and outsourcing options, to establish, according to the estimated workload, the optimum staffing and equipment requirements for its printing/reproduction activities. The Inspectors also see the need to correlate printing and distribution activities, especially with the increased use of electronic distribution. Print on demand options should be further explored.

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<sup>18</sup> A/60/692, chap. IV, sect. A., p. 28

97. The new Director of CSD, who assumed his functions on 1 June 2006, informed the Inspectors that he had the same concerns. Thus, he officially requested OIOS to perform a comprehensive audit of CSD in 2007.

## **B. Translation Service**

### **Workload/productivity standards**

98. During interviews and through replies to the staff survey, many translators conveyed their concerns with respect to inappropriate workload standard-setting for translation. They expressed their disagreement with the current tendency to focus to the extreme on the quantity of translation to the detriment of quality. The current workload standard for translation is set in words - 1,650 words per day per translator (equivalent to approximately five manuscript pages per day per translator), which in the opinion of professional translators, is very rigid. This standard does not take into account the fact that United Nations documents cover a variety of subjects and topics, and have different degrees of complexity/difficulty. The standard does not take into account the fact that the translation of the same text from English into French and Spanish takes a different time than into Arabic, Chinese and Russian, as the language structures differ from each other, some being similar, others being fundamentally different.

99. With respect to self-revision, the Inspectors noted that when a text is translated and then revised by the same translator, the calculation of the performance is multiplied by a factor of 0.9. This is peculiar, as it appears that a translator doing self-revision receives less credit for his/her work than a translator who only does the initial translation work and whose work is then revised by a reviser. Finally, the Inspectors noted that editing work, and more easily quantifiable tasks such as text processing activities, are not subject to productivity standards. The Inspectors are pleased to note that the CSD convened a Town Hall meeting in early 2007 to explore these issues directly with the staff concerned.

100. In a recent report<sup>19</sup>, the Secretary-General stated that the existing workload standards for specific categories of conference-servicing staff are “a rather crude, one-dimensional measure of performance, focusing on quantity of output alone at the level of individual staff members”, and that there was clearly “a need to supplement these standards with more meaningful and multidimensional measures of performance, such as timeliness of delivery and quality of services”.

101. Following the request from the General Assembly that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) develop a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement, DGACM made a proposal to report to the General Assembly on a regular basis, beginning in 2007, on timeliness, quality, financial performance and client satisfaction. The Inspectors are of the view that such an exercise should be undertaken with the participation of all duty stations and, more importantly, based on consultation with the staff concerned. CSD should make sure that the views of its staff, especially those in the Languages Service, are sought and taken into account, and its proposals/contributions to DGACM reflect their views.

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<sup>19</sup> A/61/129.

### **Productivity and use of information technology**

102. Improved productivity for its conference services must remain a goal for UNOG, as it is for DGACM, especially through the increased use of information technology. The Secretary-General has stated that the full benefits of an electronic workflow will materialize only with the electronic processing of documents in all official languages. He noted that this would require “a much higher level of technological readiness on the part of the staff”<sup>20</sup>. To this end, DGACM issued operational guidelines that make computer skills a necessary requirement for all newly recruited staff involved in the documents chain, and developed a detailed training plan for permanent staff members<sup>21</sup>. The Secretary-General had previously stated that translators would work on-screen or through voice recognition software (or translations submitted in the form of digital sound files); that the use of computer-assisted translation (CAT) would be intensified and extended; and that text processors would return texts to translators and revisers electronically and would complete, format and submit texts for printing electronically.<sup>22</sup>

103. However, ACABQ has specifically referred to CSD at UNOG when noting with concern that “there has been a series of statements about improvement and expansion of information technology applications from one biennium to another without an overall picture of the progress made, the benefits achieved and the next steps to be taken”<sup>23</sup>. Translators and revisers have the choice of using the most appropriate method for delivering high quality translations in a timely manner, subject to compliance over the long term with the productivity standards approved by the General Assembly. They can opt, therefore, to input the translated text directly (with formatting still the responsibility of the text processing services), use a dictating machine (a text processing assistant then transcribes the translation from the recording) or use voice recognition software (in this case, an electronic file is sent to text processing).

104. According to the Languages Service, 35 per cent of the permanent staff members (translators and revisers) in the Arabic Translation Section always dictate their translations, with printed copies of documents hand-carried to them and their translated texts processed by typists in the text processing section. The Inspectors did not receive information on the overall percentage of translators who always dictate their translations, it would be interesting to know the percentage of translators who always dictate their translations in other Translation Sections.

105. The Languages Service also mentioned concerns expressed by staff that inputting text and referencing by translators could actually result in a lower output in a first phase. The Secretariat has acknowledged that “from a full-system perspective, a drop in individual productivity might be acceptable if sufficient savings or efficiencies are generated downstream.” (A/59/32, paragraph 48) These savings could be particularly significant in Geneva, where the ratio of standard salary costs for General Service compared to Professional staff is higher than in any other large United Nations duty station.

106. The Inspectors noted that while there was a transfer of workload from the text processing units to the Translation Sections, given that a number of translators and revisers input text themselves, no action has been taken to adjust resources to needs and redistribute

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<sup>20</sup> A/58/213, para. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> A/57/289, para. 43.

<sup>23</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth session, Supplement No. 7 (A/58/7), part I, paras. I.69 and I.70*

resources from text processing units to Translation Sections through attrition and retraining. Currently, there are 122 General Service category posts allotted (116 encumbered) to the Text Processing Section (15 posts for the Arabic Unit, 13 (12 encumbered) for the Chinese Unit, 21 for the English Unit, 26 (24 encumbered) for the French Unit, 27 for the Russian Unit and 20 (17 encumbered) for the Spanish Unit). It should be noted that ACABQ has recommended that the Secretariat formulate a strategy for conference services that would redirect some resources now used for staff costs to investment in technology for conference operations.

107. In addition, the Inspectors noted that the Chiefs of the Translation Sections dedicate very little of their time, or indeed no time, to translation/revision. Also, it appears that the translation sections allocate one senior translator (in some cases at the P-5 level) to the function of programming officer, in charge of the distribution of work and other administrative tasks, and thus not performing translation on a full-time basis. The same inefficient use of senior staff for programming purposes is applicable to the interpretation service.

108. The Languages Service informed the Inspectors that a pilot project is underway to adopt a type of CAT software (MULTITRANS), which should allow the recycling of documents that have already been translated and could potentially lead to an increase in translation productivity. However, there are some elements, which impact on productivity, that have to be taken into account, such as the learning curve, the low quality of previous translations, the format of electronic documents (for example, the portable document format (PDF) is not usable with MULTITRANS). According to various translators, the assumption that using this system one can recycle 60 to 70 per cent from other translated documents has proved to be wrong. In fact, the implementation of the new system led to an increased workload for translators.

109. The Inspectors noted with concern that prior to the proposal to use MULTITRANS, no in-depth cost-benefit analysis was undertaken, taking into account the investment required (hardware and software), the learning period and initial lost productivity of staff, the savings generated in terms of salary costs, and hidden costs such as software upgrades deriving from software vendor lock-in. The new Director of CSD decided to undertake a four-month trial of MULTITRANS and, based on the feedback received, to take a decision on whether or not to implement the system. As a result, the working group's recommendations resulted in the decision not to proceed with large-scale acquisition of CAT technology, but to purchase only a limited number of licences. Thus, the use of the MULTITRANS software as a CAT tool has not reached the implementation stage.

### **C. Interpretation Service**

110. The Inspectors wish to point out the asymmetries with regard to the number of staff interpreters, and particularly senior interpreters, among the different sections of the Service. They would also like to emphasize that all the interpreters in the Russian Section are male, which goes against the official policy of gender balance. HRMS should clarify whether official gender policies can be applied selectively to some language sections, or if the totality of linguistic services, including interpretation, must be considered as falling outside the scope of the policy. Furthermore, as already pointed out in paragraph 107 above, assigning senior interpreters to perform programming tasks (even on a rotation basis) seems to the Inspectors an underutilization of valuable linguistic expertise. The acquisition of professional competencies in as many official languages as possible by all staff interpreters should be encouraged and duly recognized in the PAS evaluation, in order to foster greater recognition and versatility, and facilitate the programming of interpreter assignments. Likewise, the acquisition of substantive knowledge, in particular with regard to the main recurrent areas and

issues dealt with by conferences at UNOG (such as Human Rights, Disarmament and Trade and Development issues), should be officially promoted and facilitated. As in the case of translators, the advantages and disadvantages of employing former staff interpreters (retirees) on a recurrent basis, as opposed to ensuring a predictable and efficient employment relationship with young and aspiring freelance interpreters, should be thoroughly analyzed from a mid- and long-term perspective. Finally, the reliability and quality of the supporting services provided by sound operators must be guaranteed to ensure the existence of conducive conditions for the provision of interpretation services (subcontracting should, from that point of view alone, be discouraged).

#### **D. Other issues**

111. The Inspectors are concerned that a private book was printed by the UNOG Publishing Service for a foreign university. It appears that the book, containing references to and photographs of senior UNOG officials, was printed using United Nations funds. Following the Inspectors' observations, an investigation is underway by OIOS to look into the matter.



## **X. UNOG AS A SERVICE PROVIDER**

112. Since the main role of UNOG is to provide a variety of services to a wide range of clients, it is essential to clearly identify the roles, responsibilities and prerequisites of each party, including delegation of authority, and the modalities to measure performance, and to avoid duplication and waste of resources. While recognising the specific needs of its clients, UNOG should seek for harmonization of practices among its clients and transparent cost-recovery methods to ensure rational allocation of resources and fairness of treatment.

### **A. Formalized agreements with clients**

113. Based on feedback from UNOG clients on the lack of transparent, mutually agreed-upon policies for cost recovery, OIOS undertook in 1999 an inspection of common services considering, inter alia, the issue of determining reimbursement rates and policies for services provided by UNOG. It concluded that the methodology of charging needed to be standardized, with workload indicators disaggregated according to source of funding (regular budget or extrabudgetary).

114. Currently relationships with several extrabudgetary clients are governed by memorandums of understanding (MOUs), spelling out the type of services to be provided; the cost-recovery methods based on workload indicators; performance measurement tools, including prerequisites and performance indicators; and payment modalities. There are currently 15 MOUs concluded with entities which are recipients of services.<sup>24</sup> While significant progress has been achieved since 1999 with the conclusion and implementation of MOUs, an audit performed in September 2004 by OIOS revealed, inter alia, that several MOUs were either not formalized by the signature of both parties, or did not reflect major changes in the level of services provided. OIOS also concluded that the performance indicators were not always measurable and failed to provide a solid tool for performance monitoring. Moreover, in view of the complexity of the pricing methodology, OIOS recommended the adoption of a simple and streamlined pricing methodology, as well as of measures to expedite the billing process.

115. While UNOG have made efforts to tailor services and MOUs to the specific needs of each client, the Inspectors consider that there is a need for increased harmonization to ensure greater consistency with respect to the terms of MOUs, and the modification and termination clauses included therein. This, together with setting deadlines for payments and penalty clauses for late/non-payment, could facilitate the overall implementation and management of MOUs.

116. The non-inclusion in the MOUs of services provided for conferences and meetings remains a major cause of concern. Currently, there is no document formalizing the provision of conference services to client organizations. Services provided to entities financed from extrabudgetary resources are invoiced using reimbursement rates established by the Division of Administration. The Inspectors consider that the provision of conference services should be integrated into the MOUs together with specific performance indicators for performance monitoring. Similarly, ICT services are not addressed in the MOUs themselves, but are included in service level agreements (SLAs), which are sometimes attached to the MOU of a

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<sup>24</sup> ITC; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); United Nations Compensation Commission; UNICEF; UNHCR; UNDP, United Nations Volunteers and UNFPA; United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC); United Nations Institute for Training and Research; (UNEP); OHCHR; OCHA; ECE; UNCTAD; and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

specific organization.<sup>25</sup> SLAs could become an integral part of MOUs, with a clearer and more consistent definition and categorization of services, allowing for fuller cost recovery.<sup>26</sup>

## **B. Recovery of costs of services provided to extrabudgetary entities**

117. While officials in UNOG stated that the policy of full recovery of costs related to extrabudgetary activities was consistently applied, the Inspectors found instances where the full recovery policy was not implemented. They would like to caution against the risk of cross-subsidizing certain extrabudgetary clients through transfers of costs to other clients, and/or charging the regular budget.<sup>27</sup> For example, the costs for rental and maintenance of premises, utilities, and communications are budgeted centrally and are not distributed to the various programmes, which is a disincentive to the programmes to monitor their costs closely. For example, in 2004-2005, UNOG only recovered 42 per cent of the total costs for rental and utilities of Palais Wilson (or an amount of US\$ 1,150,021 out of US\$ 2,756,425), although more than 65 per cent of the activities of OHCHR are financed through extrabudgetary resources. While there isn't necessarily a direct correlation between the percentage of activities financed under voluntary contributions and actual costs, it is clear that UNOG must ensure the recuperation of full costs generated by the management of extrabudgetary resources. UNOG should closely monitor this aspect. Also, in the case of rapidly expanding entities such as OCHA and OHCHR, increasing costs related to communications and information technology are likely to be absorbed by the regular budget (for example, for 2004-2005, UNOG recovered only 65 per cent and 19 per cent respectively of the communications costs incurred by OCHA and OHCHR).

118. Also, the regular budget absorbs the costs incurred by delivering services to specialized agencies and other entities within the United Nations system, as there are no agreements concluded which allow for the recovery of indirect costs. The Inspectors noted that, for example, processing requests for and issuing United Nations laissez-passer (UNLP), United Nations certificates, family certificates and visas for only four United Nations entities (WHO, WFP, FAO and UNESCO) represented approximately 34 per cent of the total workload of the Transports, Visas and Travel Unit for 2005, or approximately 28 work months. In the absence of formal agreements with the above entities, it is not clear how UNOG recovers their share in the costs of UNOG staff performing a certain category of services. In response to an observation made by the Inspectors, the Chief, Programme Planning and Budget Section (PPBS) clarified that those entities will be billed for the costs incurred in 2006 and charged during 2007.

## **C. Assessing performance**

119. The Inspectors are pleased to note that the UNOG Division of Administration is taking into consideration client satisfaction as an important performance indicator for services it

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<sup>25</sup> SLAs are attached to the MOUs with: ITC, UNEP, UNSSC, UNCCD, UNFCCC, OCHA, UNHCR; separate SLAs with: OIOS, UN-Habitat, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNCTAD, and ECE.

<sup>26</sup> It should be noted in this regard that the Board of Auditors has recommended that the United Nations Secretariat adopt and implement a uniform methodology for determining the total cost of information and communication technology with a view to improving the decision-making process on such issues as outsourcing and cost-recovery. See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth session, Supplement No. 5 (A/59/5)*, volume I, paragraphs 88 and 89.

<sup>27</sup> See JIU/REP/2002/3 entitled "Support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system".

provides, and has recently made progress in this direction by creating a client satisfaction questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed by UNOG within the framework of results-based management, and circulated to its clients to obtain feedback on the services it provided in 2004 and 2005. Aspects such as response time, quality, understanding of clients' needs, and guidance received were assessed through the questionnaires. The Inspectors reviewed the consolidated replies (as prepared by UNOG PPBS) to the 2004 and 2005 questionnaires. It was noted that the areas with the percentage of respondents reporting themselves satisfied and very satisfied lower than the target of 85 per cent<sup>28</sup> were recruitment and personnel administration (81.25 per cent), and electronic mail and helpdesk services (84.62 per cent). The Inspectors noted, however, an improvement for 2005 as compared with 2004 for those services. Very good performers, showing a percentage rate of very satisfied respondents higher than 20 per cent, and no dissatisfied respondents, were payroll services (55.56 per cent), treasury services (44.44 per cent), language training (26.67 per cent) and accounting services (23.53 per cent).

120. In 2006, CSD implemented new software and a new system of reporting the results of satisfaction surveys targeted at representatives of Member States. The consolidated results for 2006 demonstrate a good overall quality of services provided by CSD, with the highest marks for interpretation services and the lowest marks for the timeliness of issuance of documents. The Inspectors consider that while the satisfaction of Member States is a key performance indicator in conference services, the satisfaction of client departments is equally important, and therefore their opinion should be consistently sought in addition to that of delegations.

121. In addition, it is indispensable that those units providing services should be informed of the results of these surveys, in order to ensure the usefulness of this feedback as a performance assessment tool. Managers of units providing services should ensure that the staff concerned are made aware of how their performance is viewed by clients. The Inspectors noted that for the performance evaluations carried out by the Division of Administration for 2004 and 2005, not all service providers were systematically informed of the results of the survey, which is essential to improve the quality of services.

#### **D. Increased delegation of authority**

122. Currently, the organizational structures of OHCHR, OCHA, ECE and UNCTAD incorporate distinct units that replicate some major support functions assumed by UNOG.

123. In the light of their rapidly expanding activities, OHCHR and OCHA in particular have objected to the fact that an increasing workload is being transferred to their offices, while authority is retained within UNOG. Thus, they are currently requesting increased delegation of authority in order to cope with (frequently emergency-driven) operational needs. As a result of this increased workload, these entities are strengthening their administrative and support capacity. As an example, for the 2006-2007 biennium, OHCHR has more than doubled the staffing of its Administration and Management Service to 65 posts, as compared with 29 posts in 2004-2005.

124. While understandable from the perspective of speeding up administrative processes, the increased delegation of authority may result in duplication, inconsistencies and diseconomies of scale. Moreover, the implementation of effective internal controls and capacity building are prerequisites for increased delegated authority. UNOG should initiate consultations with its clients on the issue of increased delegation of authority to find solutions acceptable to all

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<sup>28</sup> See A/58/6 (Sect. 29E).

parties, which would result in operational efficiency and effectiveness with respect to United Nations regulations and rules.

### **E. Common services – progress made**

125. There is a growing concern system-wide to achieve economies of scale, increase efficiency and avoid duplication and overlapping of processes through making better use of common services. This is particularly relevant for Geneva, which accommodates a large number of United Nations system organizations. OIOS and JIU have considered the issue of the provision of common services in Geneva in several reports.<sup>29</sup> The Inspectors note the progress made during the last five years through the creation of the Geneva Management Ownership Committee (GMOC), the Task Force on Common Services and the technical working groups system.

126. The purpose behind GMOC, as a high-level users committee chaired by the Director-General of UNOG, is, *inter alia*, to bring together the executive heads of the Geneva-based United Nations organizations, in an effort to maintain a commitment to common services initiatives. Regrettably, GMOC, created in 2001, is somewhat inactive. The Inspectors acknowledge that the constitutional, budgetary and administrative autonomy of each organization has a bearing on their motivation to support and actively participate in the common services approach. However, as highlighted by OIOS, the expansion of common services appears to be impeded more by “the system’s culture of ‘turf protection’”<sup>30</sup> and the lack of interaction and communication at the highest levels among organizations, than by the diversity of their mandates. Consequently, there is a need for a concerted effort, under the leadership of the Director-General, to revive the Committee, with a view to expanding common services into other areas.

127. A positive aspect is the revision of the statutes and rules of procedures of the Joint Purchase Service, to reflect the objectives of procurement reform. The new statutes entered into force on 22 April 2005. In addition, the name was changed from Joint Purchase Service to Common Procurement Activities Group (CPAG). The Group has ten members and one associate member and aims to pool experience, share best practices and coordinate procurement operations to achieve, *inter alia*, economies of scale and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement operations.

128. As a result of establishing joint contracts for the benefit of participating organizations, the Group reported estimated cost avoidance for the period 11 August – 31 December 2005, the most significant being: SwF 588,820 for electricity, SwF 171,881 for heating oil and SwF 198,144 for toner and ink cartridges. Other joint contracts were concluded, *inter alia*, for paper supply, fixed line voice communications, diplomatic pouch services, travel agency services, airline fare negotiations, insurance, etc.

129. The Inspectors noted, however, that UNHCR is considering withdrawing from the contract for travel agency services, and that ILO very rarely uses the Diplomatic Pouch Service, choosing instead private international courier services which offer better quality at lower rates. In addition, clients such as UNRISD, ITC, and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) do not use UNOG meetings and printing services, based on quality and flexibility grounds. It should be noted that JMS was discontinued at the end of 2004. Currently, the Medical Services Section provides services to United Nations

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<sup>29</sup> A/54/157, A/54/635, A/55/856.

<sup>30</sup> A/54/157, summary, page 2.

staff and the staff of certain specialized agencies – ITC, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNICEF, and UNV (for staff in the field as well). WHO and UNHCR have their own medical services. The Inspectors consider that there is opportunity for increased use of common services, especially in areas such as security and safety services, printing services, financial services (payroll), information technology and telecommunications services, and diplomatic pouch services.

The following recommendation is intended to enhance coordination and cooperation.

**Recommendation 15**

**The Director-General, as chairperson of the Geneva Management Ownership Committee (GMOC), should seek further the commitment of the executive heads of the Geneva-based United Nations organizations to common services initiatives.**

The following recommendation is intended to improve management through enhanced effectiveness.

**Recommendation 16**

**The Director-General should carefully review those issues pointed out in this note that were not the subject of specific recommendations or management letters with a view to resolving/implementing them (see annex III).**

**Annex I****LIST OF ENTITIES SERVICED BY UNOG - 1 June 2007**

<b>ORGANIZATIONS, SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER CLIENTS</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS	<b>AFICS</b>
INTERNATIONAL OFFICIALS MOTORING ASSOCIATION	<b>CASBIA</b>
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM CHIEF EXECUTIVES BOARD FOR COORDINATION	<b>CEB</b>
Club International de tennis	<b>CI de Tennis</b>
CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN UNDANGERED SPECIES	<b>CITES</b>
CALSON WAGON LIT-TRAVEL AGENCY	<b>CWT</b>
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRES	<b>DESA</b>
DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE CENTRE	<b>DISARM/CTR</b>
DSR Restaurant	<b>DSR</b>
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA	<b>ECA - Geneva</b>
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE	<b>ECE</b>
International School of Geneva	<b>Ecolint</b>
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC	<b>ESCAP</b>
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA	<b>ESCWA</b>
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS	<b>FAO</b>
FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS ASSOCIATION	<b>FICSA</b>
GROUPEMENT ASSURANCE DES FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX	<b>GPAFI</b>
HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT	<b>HLCM/HLCP</b>
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY	<b>IAEA</b>
INTER-AGENCY PROCUREMENT SYSTEM ORGANIZATION	<b>IAPSO</b>
INTERNATIONAL COMPUTING CENTRE	<b>ICC</b>
INT.CENTRE FOR TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOP	<b>ICTSD</b>
INTERNATIONAL CRIME TRIBUNAL FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	<b>ICTY</b>
INTER-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION SECRETARIAT	<b>IGCS</b>
INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION	<b>ILC</b>
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION	<b>ILO</b>
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND	<b>IMF</b>
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION	<b>IOM</b>
INFORMATION SYSTEM COORDINATION COMMITTEE	<b>ISCC</b>
INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION	<b>ISDR</b>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE	<b>ITC</b>
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION	<b>ITU</b>
JOINT INSPECTION UNIT	<b>JIU</b>
UNOG LIBRARY	<b>LIBRARY</b>
Association Mutuelle	<b>MEC</b>
NAVILLE	<b>NAVILLE</b>
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS	<b>OCHA</b>
OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	<b>OHCHR</b>

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES - GENEVA OFFICE	<b>OIOS-GVA</b>
SERVICE D'ACHAT ET DE COMMANDE DES FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX	<b>SAFI</b>
STAFF COUNCIL	<b>STAFF COUNCIL</b>
UNION DE BANQUES SUISSES	<b>UBS</b>
JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS	<b>UNAIDS</b>
UNITED NATIONS COMPENSATION COMMISSION	<b>UNCC</b>
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION	<b>UNCCD</b>
UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT)	<b>UNCHS</b>
UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT	<b>UNCTAD</b>
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - GENEVA	<b>UNDP-GVA</b>
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - NEW YORK	<b>UNDP-NY</b>
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME - GENEVA	<b>UNEP- Geneva Office</b>
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION/ INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION	<b>UNESCO/BIE</b>
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	<b>UNESCO/PARIS</b>
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE	<b>UNFCCC</b>
UNITED NATIONS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION	<b>UNFCU</b>
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND - GENEVA	<b>UNFPA - Geneva</b>
OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES	<b>UNHCR</b>
UNITED NATIONS CHILDRENS FUND	<b>UNICEF</b>
UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR DISARMAMENT RESERCH	<b>UNIDIR</b>
UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION	<b>UNIDO</b>
UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRANING AND RESERCH	<b>UNITAR</b>
UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION FUND	<b>UNJSPF</b>
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT ANGOLA	<b>UNOA</b>
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR COORDINATION OF ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN	<b>UNOCHA</b>
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES	<b>UNOPS</b>
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT VIENNA	<b>UNOV</b>
UNITED NATIONS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION	<b>UNPA</b>
UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	<b>UNRISD</b>
UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST	<b>UNRWA-GVA</b>
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE	<b>UNSSC</b>
UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME	<b>UNV</b>
WORLD BANK	<b>WB</b>
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME - GENEVA	<b>WFP - Geneva</b>
WORLD FEDERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS	<b>WFUNA</b>
SECRETARIAT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE	<b>WGIG</b>
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION	<b>WHO</b>
WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION	<b>WIPO</b>
WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION	<b>WMO</b>
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION	<b>WTO</b>

## Annex II

**Distribution by level and overall distribution of staff in geographical posts as at 31 December 2006  
(per cent)**

Country*	France		United States of America		Germany		Russia		United Kingdom		Spain		Italy		Switzerland		Other developing countries		Other developed countries		Other Eastern-European countries (excl. Russia)	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
USG	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	50	-	-	-	-
D1	5	45.45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	18.18	1	9.09	3	27.27
P5	3	21.43	-	-	1	7.14	3	21.43	1	7.14	-	-	1	7.14	1	7.14	2	21.43	1	7.14	-	-
P4	2	8.7	4	17.39	1	4.35	2	8.7	2	8.7	-	-	1	4.35	1	4.35	3	21.74	1	4.35	4	17.39
P3	3	10.34	3	10.34	1	3.45	1	3.45	2	6.9	4	13.79	2	6.9	1	3.45	5	24.14	8	27.59	1	3.45
P2	4	17.39	3	13.04	5	21.74	-	-	-	-	1	4.35	-	-	-	-	3	21.74	5	21.74	1	4.35
<i>Overall distribution</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9.71</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.77</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.77</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.85</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.85</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17.48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15.53</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8.74</b>

\* These countries have been disclosed as, based on the analysis, they present significant concentrations of staff.



**Annex III**

**Indicative list of issues pointed out in this note that were not the subject of specific recommendations or will not be the subject of future management letters but require the attention of the Director-General:**

<b>Issues pointed out in this note</b>	<b>Note section</b>
Need to revise the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2000/4.	Paras. 10-13
Protracted vacancies and high turnover in managerial positions.	Paras. 14-15
Practice of appointing/promoting of people close to retirement age to high-level managerial positions.	Paras. 16-17
Necessity for managerial skills to be strengthened, especially with respect to providing vision and leadership.	Paras. 21-23
With regard to performance management, UNOG management should seriously consider studying further the reasons why staff members perceive their supervisors as poor managers.	Para. 24
Core competencies such as communication, teamwork and client orientation should be strengthened.	Paras. 25-28
The need and the rationale for the current practice of hiring UNOG retirees should be thoroughly reviewed and rectified.	Para. 29
HRMS should continue to put right its deficiencies in terms of its ability to provide services to staff and clients.	Paras. 31-32
HRMS needs to put in place a knowledge management mechanism to share knowledge and best practices.	Paras. 38-39
With regard to career management, HRMS needs to develop a proactive approach to preparing future managers/supervisors.	Paras. 43-45

<b>Issues pointed out in this note</b>	<b>Note section</b>
The Inspectors suggest that UNOG Administration look into the practice of subcontracting short-term staff by firms supplying temporary services, as it seems to have become a back door for recruiting relatives and friends of some UNOG officials.	Paras 46-47
The Inspectors support the initiative of the General Assembly, which requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals for strengthening the Office of the Ombudsman through improved access to it for staff serving in different locations, and they stress the need to accelerate implementation.	Para. 55
UNOG Publishing Service should undertake an analysis of its internal printing capacity, and analyse external benchmarks and outsourcing options, to establish, according to the estimated workload, the optimum staffing and equipment requirements for its printing/reproduction activities.	Paras 93-97
CSD should make sure that the views of its staff, especially those in the Languages Service, are sought and taken into account, and its proposals/contributions to DGACM reflect their views on the development of a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement.	Paras 98-101
UNOG should continue its efforts to establish formal agreements regarding cost recovery with the entities financed through extrabudgetary resources.	Paras 117-118
All UNOG units providing services should be informed about the results of client satisfaction questionnaires, and management should discuss the results with staff.	Para. 121