

**REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN
AIR SERVICE (UNHAS)**

Prepared by

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Joint Inspection Unit

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

The main objective of this review is to assist the executive heads and their governing bodies concerned in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and the World Food Programme's (WFP) ability to impartially and independently fulfil its new role to administer United Nations humanitarian and 'other' air operations. To this end, the Inspector examined the risks involved at the governance and operational levels.

The note requests in its recommendation 3 that the Secretary-General of the United Nations should consult with the Executive Heads of the International Civil Aviation Organization and the World Food Programme on the legal status and practicability of the United Nations Aviation Standards (AVSTADS) and, on that basis, present a report that would require action by the General Assembly. The Executive Board of WFP, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly will also have to act respectively on recommendations 1, 2 and 5 following the actions of the Executive Heads requested in these recommendations.

Main findings and conclusions

- UNHAS, as one of the common support services for humanitarian assistance, is a fundamental means of ensuring access by humanitarian actors to the disaster-affected population. Although WFP provides infrastructure for UNHAS, the process by which WFP is launching, financing, managing and terminating it is not always clear. In this respect, the Executive Director of WFP and the Secretary-General of the United Nations should jointly review the current arrangements for UNHAS with a view to proposing guidelines and/or procedures governing such a process and submit them to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration and action to its Substantive Session in 2009. In addition, the Secretary-General should direct the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to establish a framework of accountability and responsibilities of WFP to operate UNHAS with impartiality (see recommendations 1 and 2).
- UNHAS bases its rules and regulations, staff qualifications, aircraft chartering procedures policies and procedures on AVSTADS. AVSTADS are based on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). However, they are not an enforceable instrument. No intergovernmental governing body has ratified them. In this regard, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should report on the state of implementation of these standards as well as the adequacy of their contribution to ensuring aviation safety and security to protect the personnel of the United Nations system organizations; and, based on his report, invite the General Assembly to consider and decide on upgrading the status of AVSTADS with necessary modifications (see recommendation 3).
- The passenger and cargo priority system is essentially based on the "first come - first serve principle". The Standards Administrative and Operational Procedures (SAOP) in Chad is a good practice. But this principle has not always met the urgent need of particular agencies and users when confronted with different types of disasters including avian flu and pandemic disease. The Secretary-General should direct the

Emergency Relief Coordinator via IASC to establish a priority system for passengers and cargo transportation services by UNHAS so as to provide the users with equal and balanced opportunity to enjoy its services (**see recommendation 4**).

- In order to ensure stable and durable air services, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should propose a draft standard host-country agreement on the operation of UNHAS including flight and landing permissions to the General Assembly for consideration and approval. In the case where an UNHAS operation continues over an extended period and the local air transport conditions do not meet the prescribed security and safety standards of the air transport operations of the United Nations, the Humanitarian Coordinator (or the United Nations Resident Coordinator) should ensure that UNHAS be provided with long-term flight and landing permission (**see recommendations 5 and 6**).
- UNHAS faces financial shortfalls which abruptly bring its operations to an end to the detriment of the associated relief programmes. The diversity and complexity of earmarked funding sources, and their unpredictability have prevented WFP from establishing an accurate overall picture of the UNHAS operations and comprehensive resources information. To help WFP to raise increased general contributions from donors to secure stable funding for every operation, the Executive Director should make available on a real time basis a consolidated financial report of all aviation accounts through a standardized form of financial recording including the status of cost-recovery, and appeals and receipt of the contributions by source of funds (**see recommendation 7**).
- UNHAS faces a number of medium- and long-term problems to assist the humanitarian workers in the transition from relief to reconstruction. Solution to them consists in developing strategic planning and management of its operations e.g. through the improvement of infrastructure as well as the sharing of resources with other related organizations and entities within the United Nations system. It is thus recommended that the Secretary-General of ICAO at the request of the Executive Director of WFP should explore modalities in accordance with established procedures of ICAO for providing the expertise of ICAO to projects related to refurbishing local air infrastructures such as repairing airstrips and establishing national air traffic regulation capacity in the areas where UNHAS is deployed (**see recommendation 8**).
- Neither CEB nor WFP has established time limits concerning the duration of an UNHAS operation. In order to meet the medium- and long-term needs of developmental and humanitarian agencies, avoid the abrupt termination of the operation due to the shortage of funds and smooth out an orderly transition in aviation services from emergencies to reconstruction, UNHAS should have a strategic phase-out plan adapted to local air market conditions and the availability of viable and reliable air carriers. The Executive Director of WFP in consultation with ICAO and UNDP/IAPSO should direct the Country Directors to present to the host country such a plan designed to assist it in restoring and developing local secure airlines (**see recommendation 9**).
- In view of the need for recruiting highly qualified UNHAS staff, the Executive Director of WFP should establish human resources management policy in the aviation sector taking into account its specific needs and report on it to the Executive Board, drawing upon its roster of personnel based on inter-agency exchange of information on the availability of experts versed both in commercial airlines and United Nations air

operations (**see recommendation 10**).

- The Aviation Branch (OMLA) of WFP is yet to produce a complete set of data and statistics through the WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS) and ‘flight management application’ on different aviation activities on a comparable basis in order to properly monitor their operational, safety, managerial and financial aspects and present relevant and specific trends and issues regarding the management of UNHAS to the humanitarian community. The current situation is not conducive to the implementation of results-based management. At the field level, the different country offices use a variety of software programmes and their data collection and financial monitoring are uneven. The Executive Director of WFP should improve the performance information system and the collection of operational information in the field relevant to UNHAS operations by which to construct benchmarks and indicators for results-based management in the aviation sector and make the management of UNHAS more accountable to its user community (**see recommendation 11**).
- The Executive Board of WFP could not benefit from the current review on air safety and management of WFP carried out by ICAO consultants due to the considerable delay needed to finalize their report. The Secretariat of ICAO does not regard this review as a formal audit. In order to secure proper aviation audit, the Executive Director of WFP should convert the current review by the consultants of ICAO based on AVSTADS into a formal aviation safety audit (**see recommendation 12**).

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ABBREVIATIONS

AVSTADS	United Nations Aviation Standards
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CATO	Chief Air Transport Officer
CEB	United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ERC	United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator
HCS	Humanitarian Common Services
HIC	Humanitarian Information Centres
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management (CEB)
IAET	Inter-Agency Emergency Telecommunications
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migrations
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MSA	Management service agreement
MCDU	Military Civil Defence Unit (OCHA)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OIOS	United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs (United Nations Secretariat)
OML	Logistics Division (WFP)
OMLA	Aviation Branch (WFP)
PSA	Programme Support Account
QAC	Quality Assurance Cell (WFP)
RC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
SAOP	Standards Administrative and Operational Procedures
TCB	Technical Co-operation Bureau (ICAO)
UGC	User Group Committee
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur
UNCAS	United Nations Common Air Service
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistic Centres
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

1. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) is a generic name of a common support service that the United Nations system deploys in the field under the administrative lead of the World Food Programme (WFP) to cope with major natural and man-made disasters and humanitarian complex situations. It was established in 2003 by a decision of the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to respond to significantly growing demand for humanitarian air support services by the United Nations system organizations and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to secure their access to disaster affected population as an essential means of delivering humanitarian assistance.

2. Apart from a number of financial and technical audit reports in WFP and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) dealing with specific aspects of air operations - UNHAS, no complete system-wide oversight review has been so far undertaken on the management and administration of UNHAS despite its importance by the size of operations and the potential risks of its failure for the whole humanitarian community. Accordingly, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conducted a review of UNHAS as part of its programme of work for 2007.

Objective and scope of the review

3. The main objective of this review is to assist the executive heads and the governing bodies of the organizations concerned in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of UNHAS as a system-wide service and the ability of WFP to impartially and independently fulfil its role to administer all United Nations humanitarian and other air operations except for peacekeeping as called for in the decision of the HLCM (CEB).¹ To this end, the Inspector examined the issues involved at the governance and operational levels such as:

- (i) Governance structure, oversight, and applicable norms and rules of operations:
 - Legal status of and conformity with applicable air safety standards;
 - Authority of WFP relative to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in providing air services to support United Nations humanitarian assistance;
 - Ownership and accountability for implementing common air transport services; and
 - Strategic response to medium- and long- term humanitarian assistance needs in the transition from emergency to early recovery;
- (ii) Management and planning:
 - Integral funding arrangements and optimum use of resources among different UNHAS operations; and
 - Global and integrated planning of all UNHAS resources responding to emerging and changing users' needs together with resource sharing with PKOs and other entities.

Methodology

4. In preparing this review, the Inspector took into consideration the existing documents and literature relevant to air operations within the United Nations system organizations and in

¹ In 2002, at its fourth session, the CEB High-Level Committee on Management "agreed that United Nations chartered flight operations should be divided into two distinct categories: peacekeeping and humanitarian/other." CEB/2002/5, paragraph 23, 19 November 2002.

particular findings and analyses provided by: ICAO, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the Internal and External Auditors of WFP.

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, missions, interviews and in-depth analysis of materials obtained on the spots. Detailed questionnaires were sent to all the interlocutors whom the Inspector interviewed. He conducted interviews with officials of all stakeholders of UNHAS, including the non-United Nations organizations and NGOs such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Comments from concerned organizations on the draft note have been sought and taken into account in finalizing the review.

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.

7. To facilitate the handling of the note and the implementation of its recommendations and the monitoring thereof, annex IV contains a table indicating whether the note is submitted to the organizations concerned for action or for information. The table identifies those recommendations relevant for each organization, specifying whether they require a decision by the organization's legislative or governing body or can be acted upon by the organization's executive head.

8. The Inspector wish to express his appreciation to all who assisted him in undertaking this review, and particularly to those who participated in the interviews and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise. The Inspector was very impressed to see the level of commitment and dedication of the staff involved in UNHAS operations.

II. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, NORMS AND PRINCIPLES

9. The magnitude of the resources mobilized in UNHAS dictates a thorough review of its governance structure, norms and principles. In 2007, UNHAS was deployed in 11 operations in 15 countries. Some 100 UNHAS aircrafts were operated by registered commercial air carriers on behalf of WFP and/or dedicated service for United Nations system organizations, and transported over 321,000 passengers, about 11,100 tonnes of cargo and flew over 50,000 hours in 2007. It should be noted that, although the overall number of passengers decreased in 2007 (mainly due to a reduction in emergency operations which required aviation assistance), the number of passengers transported per hour in 2007 saw an increase by an estimated 7 per cent. In 2006, the cost of WFP-HAS/UNHAS operations amounted to US\$ 126 million. At the end of 2007, the total contributions received by WFP regarding WFP-HAS/UNHAS operations stood at US\$ 207 million, while the total operational budget was estimated at US\$ 248 million. In 2008, 350 established posts support the operation.

A. World Food Programme's mandate for UNHAS

10. Since the end of 1980s and the early 1990s, United Nations airlifts started to grow significantly, with the rise of unprecedented humanitarian crises in the world. As the number of war and natural disaster victims as well as refugees needing shelter, food and medicine surged, United Nations agencies began chartering planes from across Africa, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East or wherever they were available around the world.

11. The increase in demand for United Nations air support shed light on the lack of experience, proper training and coordination mechanisms, which created a number of fatal injuries during the second part of the 1990s. Hence, the United Nations became increasingly concerned about air safety.

12. The plane crash in 1999 in Pristina, Kosovo, occurred in the context of airlifting the staff of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which provoked the death of 24 passengers and triggered a more serious "remise en cause" of the way United Nations air operations were managed. In the same period, experts of ICAO were requested to undertake a review of safety and security issues of United Nations air operations, which resulted in the joint development by WFP and DPKO of the United Nations Aviation Standards (AVSTADS) applicable to both humanitarian and peacekeeping air service.

HLCM decision

13. Despite its significance to the international humanitarian community, there has been no formal inter-governmental decision recognizing the mandate of WFP for UNHAS. Contrary to the belief of operators in the field,² the mandate of WFP is based upon an inter-agency administrative agreement reached within the CEB/HLCM. On the other hand, it is the Inter-Agency standing Committee (IASC) which discusses and establishes any general policies and guidelines on humanitarian assistance including the role of the lead agency to provide the Humanitarian Common Services (HCS). In view of the need for preserving the impartial character of UNHAS operations as well as the duplication of roles between HLCM and IASC in the governance and overall management of the operations, there is a need for clarifying the respective competences of these two bodies.

² For example, UNJLC inadvertently believes that WFP was tasked by the United Nations General Assembly to provide all air support to all humanitarian agencies. See <http://www.logcluster.org/aviation/>, viewed on 28 April 2008.

14. In 2002, HLCM had agreed that “the United Nations chartered flight operations should be divided into two categories: peacekeeping and humanitarian/other”. In 2003, discussions among members of the CEB on improving safety and security of the United Nations air services resulted in a decision of HLCM to give to WFP “the role as the agency responsible for administering all United Nations humanitarian and other air operations (excluding peacekeeping) as of 1 January 2004” and “for establishing a suitable independent air safety unit” to ensure both the efficiency and safety of these operations.³

15. Until 2003, the United Nations system organizations, such as UNHCR, UNICEF and UNDP involved in humanitarian and related operations used to individually run air operations and had their own dedicated air transportation sections. The HLCM decision gave WFP the mandate of administering all the air operations. This was in light of the leading role played by WFP in constructing logistic capacities such as United Nations Joint Logistic Centres (UNJLC) and the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depots (UNHRD). The decision should also be weighed against the decision of the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 to entrust the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) with the general mandate to coordinate the United Nations humanitarian emergency response and to provide humanitarian common support services.

16. It should be noted that HLCM had undertaken no feasibility study of the proposed services before their establishment⁴ with respect to their operational process and in particular their financial and functional viability to support not only humanitarian assistance, but also “other activities” (except for peacekeeping).

Operational process

17. UNHAS is the generic name for a common support service for humanitarian assistance provided by WFP, a fundamental means of ensuring access by humanitarian actors to the disaster-affected population when no other safe means of transport is available. WFP staff call it the “brand name” of their air service. Nevertheless, confusion in administrative terminology including its logo,⁵ persists because a WFP Directive (No: OD2004/001 of 13 June 2004) states that the air transport operation arranged by WFP on behalf of another United Nations organization, but whose funding is provided by the latter, may be described as a “UNHAS” while those WFP-funded operations are “WFP Humanitarian Air Services or WFP-HAS”. In this note, the Inspector does not use such definition of UNHAS.

18. Although WFP provides infrastructure for UNHAS, it is not clear who establishes different parameters of the operation such as: when and on what scale and duration UNHAS is to be launched, and who ensures the most efficient use of the service and how it can be coordinated with other logistical services. Specific guidelines have not been established as yet.

19. The survey by the Inspector indicates that a variety of actors have taken the initiative for launching individual UNHAS operations. Depending on the type of the humanitarian operation concerned, it is either the WFP Management Team in the field (for WFP needs only) or the United Nations Country Team (UNCT)⁶ who requests the activation of air

³ CEB/2002/5, June 8 October 2002, paragraph 23 and CEB/2003/3, June 2003, paragraph 13.

⁴ In accepting its mandate, WFP replied by a proposal (See document HLCM/CEB/2004/R.12) on the covering of liabilities by UNHAS and announced it had received technical advice from ICAO and the assurances from UNHCR to assist it in the implementation of air safety issues.

⁵ This confusion is reiterated in some operations in the field, as WFP uses both ‘UNHAS’ and ‘WFP-HAS’ stickers on the aircrafts in order to avoid that UNHAS aircrafts being identified with military ones used by UNPKO.

⁶ It was the case for UNHAS in Sri Lanka, for instance.

service. That request is often accompanied by the active involvement of the WFP Country Director, the United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC)/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) as well as the executive heads and the senior officers of WFP or UNDP at headquarters. The Aviation Branch (OMLA) at WFP headquarters then makes assessment of the operating conditions on the ground with the assistance of the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) (if already present there) or through a mission to the intended area of operation. Although the majority of the existing operations were initiated by UNCT, there is no formal understanding on who should initiate the activation of an UNHAS operation.

20. In addition, the division of responsibilities among the United Nations humanitarian agencies for financing UNHAS operations is unsettled. In most cases, WFP launches an UNHAS operation with its own money in the framework of Special Operations (SO). WFP has not always resorted to Flash Appeals, consolidated humanitarian appeals launched by OCHA on behalf the Secretary-General. Sometimes WFP resorts to them, as was the case for Indonesia after the impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami. Later, however, the operation ran out of money and had to be closed down despite a consensus among the humanitarian agencies on the need to retain it.

21. The latest plight experienced by UNHAS was the imminent financial shortfall and lack of prospect of donor funding for its integrated operation in the Sudan, particularly in Darfur, in spring 2008. Despite precise assessments of the situation provided by WFP responsible on the ground, the entire United Nations humanitarian system failed to provide assurances of long-term funding and provoked a desperate appeal by the user community for the continuation of the air service.⁷

22. Moreover, the scope and the exit strategy for UNHAS have not been developed in accordance with actual needs of humanitarian operations and post-conflict reconstruction activities. There are various justifications for continuation of the service, such as insecure and bad road conditions and the absence of multiple destinations not served by commercial flights; protracted complex situations resulting in a permanent humanitarian crisis; and transport needs in early recovery and reconstruction in the post-disaster stage for which no adequate air services are available. The request of the users represented in the User Group Committee (UGC)⁸ and that of the host country's reconstruction authorities (case of Banda Aceh in Indonesia) provides the ground for its continuation. But it is not clear how these factors have been systematically taken into account in the determination of the scope and the exist strategy of an UNHAS operation. Without a clear exit strategy, the operation risks being abruptly terminated due to financial shortfall.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance accountability of the United Nations system for launching, managing and terminating UNHAS operations with improved transparency.

Recommendation 1

The Executive Director of the World Food Programme and the Secretary-General of the United Nations should jointly review the current arrangements for UNHAS with a view to proposing a set of principles and/or procedures governing the scope and process of launching, financing, managing and terminating UNHAS operations and submit them to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration and action at its substantive session in 2009.

⁷ Aid agencies warn over 2 million people risk being cut off from assistance without more funding for vital Sudan aid flights by 14 NGOs in Sudan, 28 March 2008, available at Oxfam (Sudan).

⁸ See paragraph 31.

WFP and Humanitarian Common (support) Services

23. “A Humanitarian Common Service is a support function to facilitate efforts of IASC organizations and the larger humanitarian community, administered by one or more organizations and authorized by an established inter-agency process, and in each specific situation requested by the HC/Country Team’ ”.⁹ As IASC establishes general policies and guidelines on humanitarian assistance including the role of the lead agency to provide the Humanitarian Common Services (HCS),¹⁰ it has developed a Working Group (WG) dedicated for HCS.

24. UNHAS is not an entity of WFP, but one of the HCS which should meet both the needs of the WFP’s own internal programme and those of the whole humanitarian community. In accordance with the HLCM decision, the air service unit of WFP should be an independent body providing impartial service to the humanitarian community. In reality, UNHAS is not an independent entity administered by WFP; it is an integral part of the WFP Logistics Division (OML) structure. The WFP secretariat, acting under the authority of the Executive Board, is administratively and financially responsible for managing UNHAS. In contrast, neither the Humanitarian Coordinator nor IASC has such authority (see more discussions in paragraphs 36 and 62 below), whereas each of them determines real needs for humanitarian air operations on behalf of UGC at the country level or provides the framework of coordination of humanitarian assistance.

25. In light of the split governance between WFP on one hand, and OCHA and HC on the other, managing its services impartially is a real challenge for WFP in the governance of UNHAS. IASC is yet to close this dichotomy. In this respect, the Inspector recalls that the Secretariat of the United Nations agreed to the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit¹¹ on the need for undertaking a comprehensive review of the HCS administered by OCHA and WFP, but that this review is yet to be implemented despite the declared readiness of IASC to do so as conveyed by the Secretary-General on behalf of CEB in its comments¹² on the recommendation.

26. It should also be recalled that IASC had tried to develop a Plan of Action containing concrete modalities to manage HSC, based on the recommendations stemming from a workshop on common services convened on 3-4 May 2004 by the ICSC Working Group.¹³ Although some concrete proposals were developed to guide the process of HSC such as: activation and demobilization; inter-action and inter-operability of the services; management structure; and measuring performance and value added by the services, regrettably, little progress has been made since then, because members of IASC did not reached a common understanding.

27. As an illustration of this stalemate, the Inspector merely notes from an IASC report circulated to the IASC WG meeting in November 2007 that “discussions have occurred bilaterally between OCHA and WFP on the activation and governance of UNJLC, UNHAS and the Inter-Agency Emergency Telecommunications (IAET) including their relationship

⁹ Final Summary Record and Action Points, IASC Working Group, December 2004.

¹⁰ There are conceptually eight common support services: Disaster assessments by the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC); Consolidated/flash appeals and financial tracking; Civil/military coordination; Communications; Humanitarian information by Humanitarian Information Centres (HIC); Logistics by UNJLCs; UNHRD; and UNHAS.

¹¹ Report of the Unit entitled, “*Towards a United Nations humanitarian assistance programme for disaster response and reduction: lessons learned from the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster*” (A/61/699-E/2007/8).

¹² A/61/699/Add.1–E/2007/8/Add.1, paragraph 27 on Recommendation 14.

¹³ “Background document on the agenda item of Common Services”, IASC WG, 57th meeting, 16-17 June 2004.

with the respective service providing clusters”.¹⁴ In view of the challenges faced by UNHAS, a ‘bilateral discussion’ is not satisfactory. The Inspector reiterates one of the findings of the Humanitarian Response Review that “IASC should accelerate the development of common services”.¹⁵

28. In addition, it should be noted that, parallel to the development of HCS, IASC Principals introduced, in September 2005, the concept of a cluster approach in 11 areas of activity. This new approach is aimed at strengthening “system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by ensuring that there is predictable leadership and accountability in all the main sectors or areas of humanitarian response”¹⁶ at the global level and strengthening humanitarian response at the country level. In this context, both UNJLC and UNHAS now fall into the umbrella of the Logistics Cluster, led by WFP. Although the implementation of the cluster approach should enhance the coherence and effectiveness of humanitarian response by the United Nations system organizations concerned, it strongly reiterates the need to clarify the respective accountability and responsibilities of IASC lead agencies in this regard.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance accountability and responsibility of UNHAS in the light of its inter-agency character.

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General of the United Nations should direct the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to resume its comprehensive review of the humanitarian common services and establish a clearly defined framework of respective accountability and responsibilities of WFP, OCHA and the Humanitarian Coordinator in the process to operate UNHAS with impartiality and report thereon to the Economic and Social Council for its Substantive Session in 2009.

B. Organizational structure of WFP-HAS/UNHAS

General setting

29. At the request of national and international humanitarian institutions, UNHAS aircraft assist them in emplacing their humanitarian cargo and passengers, not only from the supply sources of donors to disaster-stricken countries through its global and regional networks, but also among different locations inside each of the crisis theatres in the affected countries. Therefore, UNHAS consists of domestic air services offered in the countries as well those provided through trans-boundary networks. The trans-boundary networks are based on the operation centre at Rome/Brindisi and its regional hubs that are respectively collocated by the Network Support Office of UNHRD at Brindisi and four regional HRDs established at Accra, Dubai, Panama and Subang in Malaysia, within the international airport premises.

30. Another HCS, the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC), when mobilized in case of a major disaster, helps agencies in defining logistical priorities by centralizing transport requests and relaying them to WFP/UNHAS.

¹⁴ IASC 2007 Status Report (WO/0711/2468/7, 26 October 2007, paragraph 1.5.2.

¹⁵ *Humanitarian Response Review*, see related findings under para. xi.

¹⁶ See “Guidance note on using the cluster approach to strengthen humanitarian response, IASC; 24 November 2006.

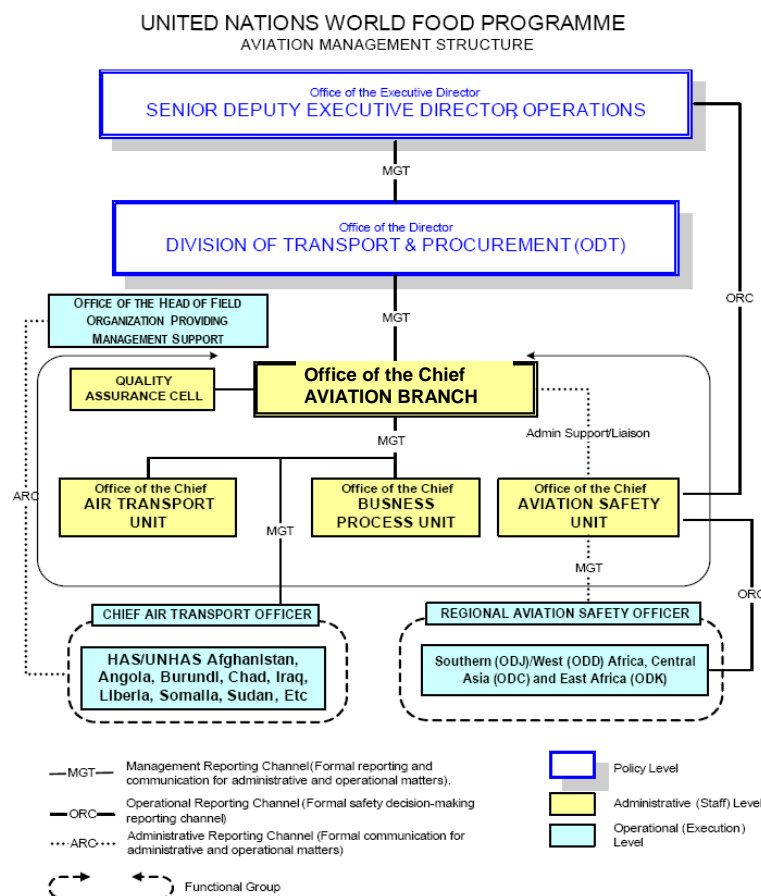
31. Once an individual UNHAS is established in the field, the RC/HC will set up a Users Group Committee (UGC) in the country, consisting of representatives of NGOs and United Nations system organizations to give guidance on the management of air services. Generally, the RC/HC is elected as its chairperson. When the RC/HC is not the chairperson, he/she is kept informed of the outcomes of the UGC by the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO).

32. WFP charters some 100 aircrafts in the form of common service and or dedicated service of passenger and cargo flights under the appellations of UNHAS, WFP-HAS, or the United Nations Common Air Service (UNCAS).

WFP Headquarters

33. At WFP Headquarters, under the Logistics Division (OML), WFP Aviation Branch (OMLA) is providing managerial and administrative supports, mainly in terms of human resources, air safety, and contract clearance to air operations on the ground. The Aviation Safety Unit (reporting directly to WFP Deputy Executive Director) was established in 2003 in response to an ICAO recommendation to manage safety risks involved in expanding air operations. All agreements and contracts with the operators are submitted to the Director of OML for signature and reported to the Contracts Committee on Transport and Insurance (CCTI) on a quarterly basis.

Figure 1:



Source: Annex "D" to *Aviation Management Manual*, Vol. I, Sect. 1.

UNHAS in the field

34. In each air operation on the ground, UNHAS is headed by a Chief Air Transport Officer and comprises a team, which includes administrative function (booking, budgeting), and operational function, such as an Air Movement Officer (with ramping and/or handling staff in airstrips), and generally a Safety Compliance Officer. Under the current structure, administrative reporting responsibilities of the various UNHAS operations are to individual Country Directors; with operational reporting lines to OML through a single Aviation Branch (OMLA). It means that each CATO has a dual reporting line: administratively to the Country Director, and operationally to the Head of OMLA.

35. This highly decentralized arrangement (approved by WFP Executive Director in 2003) could, however, expose the CATO to conflicting responsibilities in meeting the needs of the humanitarian community on the ground. As the operational needs are often linked with resource mobilizations and management, any accountable CATO needs to report both to the Country Director and OMLA at Headquarters on operational requirements identified by humanitarian users in the field together with their managerial and budgetary implications. OMLA is constantly informed of the discussions of UGC and liaise with the Country Director and CATO for all support in terms of funding and operational support. In reality, there is a need for integrating information on both operational and budgetary requirements in the field and for a mechanism for the recipients to act properly on such information to respond to the needs of users on the ground.

36. The WFP External Auditor pointed out that “the management of air operations is the responsibility of the respective Country Directors, whose prime responsibility and concern are carrying out their own humanitarian mandates”.¹⁷ Moreover, when the HC/RC on behalf of the User Group Committee identifies the emerging humanitarian operational needs requiring additional resources, it is natural that the Country Director should channel such needs to WFP headquarters together with the financial and budgetary requirements, since the priority setting by the UGC is not always matched by WFP financial actions (see **recommendation 2** in this regard).

37. Although clear lines of communication were set up between CATOs and OMLA in 2004 (Operational Directive 2004/001), both ICAO experts and the WFP staff recognized that the influence of Country Directors on the CATOs and their interference in the operational matters blurred the lines of responsibilities. But the Inspector has not been able to provide evidence that this interference was still continuing. The situation has changed and the Country Directors are more familiar with the users’ needs in matter of delivering humanitarian assistance. To the contrary, it is proven that Country Directors are instrumental in negotiating with national/local authorities to grant the humanitarian community with visa and work permits and ultimately facilitating UNHAS operations, especially when no HC/RC is present in the country. Nevertheless, this issue should be carefully monitored by UNHAS users (gathered on the ground in the UGC) and reported or addressed during meeting of IASC Working Groups.

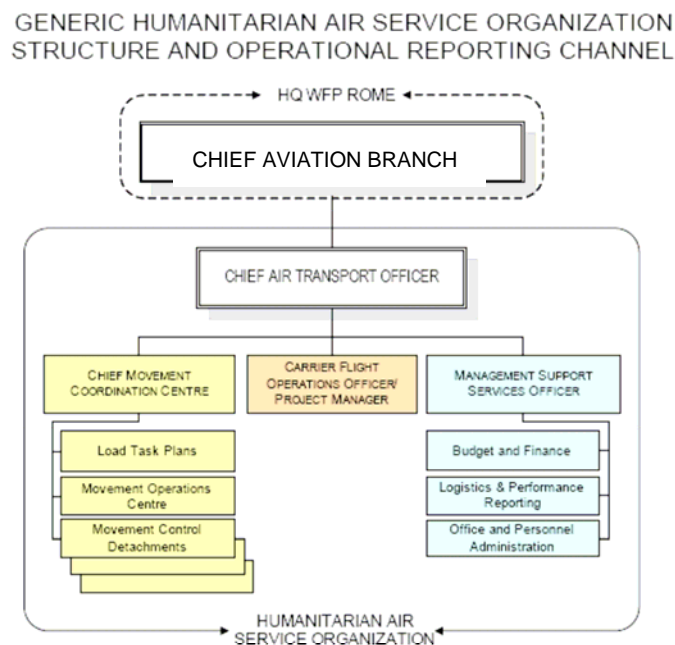
38. Furthermore, clear responsibilities of various sections involved in air transport activities have not been established. There is an overlap of the responsibilities with respect to performance assessment of the aircraft operators, verification of certification of aircraft operator’s certificates, and incident and accident reporting, among the entities in the field:

¹⁷ WFP/EB.A/2004/INF/8-A, paragraph 35.

CATO, the Air Safety Unit and the Quality Assurance¹⁸ (QA) Unit that was established on the recommendations of the ICAO experts¹⁹ to better comply with AVSTADS.

39. On the other hand, the purpose of the client satisfaction survey conducted by OMLA²⁰ can be better fulfilled by the QA component in order to get more objective assessment.

Figure 2:



Source: Annex "D" to *Aviation Management Manual*, Vol I, Sect 1.

C. Governance, applicable norms and rules of operations

Legal status of and conformity with applicable air safety standards

40. Within the United Nations system, IASC²¹ chaired by ERC is the forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian partners. IASC has developed policies, principles and guidelines on humanitarian assistance. Although they are not dedicated to UNHAS, they provide general guidance on the relevant aspects of management of humanitarian air services, such as civil-military coordination and the exit strategy from relief to development. The Inspector invites the reader to refer to one of the previous reports of JIU on disaster management²² to have a full picture of the existing policies of IASC.

¹⁸ WFP Quality Assurance Manual, paragraph 3.3.1. Since 2008, the QA Unit has been suspended due to lack of funds.

¹⁹ See UNHAS website: <http://www.unhas.it/EQA%20System.html>

²⁰ Its 2007 Survey highlighted that 67 per cent of respondents were satisfied by the UNHAS. Main areas for improvement were: ease of finding required information, timely booking confirmation and notification (flight delays/cancellations), and suitability of flight schedules & destinations. However, 56 per cent of respondents were WFP staff.

²¹ See the list of members and Standing Invitee: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/about/default.asp

²² See JIU/REP/2006/5; *Towards a United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Programme for disaster response and reduction: Lessons learned from the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster*.

41. As mentioned earlier, WFP and DPKO share the same aviation standards called “United Nations Aviation Standards” (AVSTADS). An ICAO review of WFP air transport operations in 2000 had highlighted weaknesses in the corporate governance structure of OMLA. In 2001, ICAO had produced a set of manuals and standards, which were not adopted by the Chief Air Transport Unit of WFP at the time. Pursuant to the recommendations of the experts of ICAO, WFP and DPKO jointly developed and agreed on AVSTADS.

42. AVSTADS were endorsed as WFP Operational Directive 2004/001 but were not implemented in their essence. In their 2005 review contained in a draft terminal report (ICAO Project RAF/05/801, October 2005), the ICAO experts recognized the urgent need for WFP to produce the following seven manuals: (1) Administration and Procedure Manual for the Air Transport Unit; (2) Safety manual for the Aviation Safety Unit, (3) Standards manual for the operators; (4) Aircraft equipment list; (5) UNHAS Passenger service manual; (6) Aviation security manual; and (7) A ground handling manual. With the exception of the WFP Aviation Manual and the Aviation Safety Manual respectively foreseen under (1) and (2), the other manuals are yet to be established and would be available before the end of 2008.

AVSTADS and its legal status

43. UNHAS bases its rules and regulations, staff qualifications and aircraft chartering policies and procedures on AVSTADS. The latter are based on ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), and are currently being reviewed and refined by WFP in consultation with ICAO and DPKO. While the senior officials of WFP and DPKO approved AVSTADS, they have not been ratified or endorsed by any governing body. As to the status of AVSTADS, the ICAO experts in their 2005 draft terminal report recognized that United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations contained in them were not a controlled document and hence have an uncertain status.²³

44. The original and immediate purpose of AVSTADS was to set inter-operability principles between military and humanitarian air operations organized by DPKO, and those ran by UNHAS.²⁴ With the increased transportation needs, AVSTADS started to become more and more a regulatory document setting the safety and security standards levels that commercial carriers and operators contracted by UNHAS have to comply with. The document also started serving as guidance for the procurement of commercial air operators.

45. Contractual agreements concluded between WFP and the commercial service providers/air operators include provisions, which obligate these operators to comply with AVSTADS. By this means, AVSTADS become legally binding with respect to the contracted service providers. In addition, commercial service providers/air operators have also to comply with the rules and regulations of their State regulatory authorities, and through this process, shall comply with ICAO SARPs. DPKO has practiced the same approach to ensure compliance with its Aviation Standards by the providers and operators through contractual agreement.²⁵

46. However, in the field, it has been proven very difficult to implement all AVSTADS provisions, especially in regions where commercial air transportation and infrastructures are very limited if not inexistent. In many cases, airstrips do not meet existing standards. This put both the CATO and the contractors in a difficult situation. In this respect, the ICAO experts recognized that WFP faced a significant variation in levels of services for safety and security offered by the air carriers. The main challenges were related to aircraft operational control,

²³ ICAO draft terminal report (ICAO Project RAF/05/801), page 11; 4.2.1.2. f.) iv.).

²⁴ Recommendation 1.4.4/1 of ICAO review of aviation safety in Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

²⁵ A/59/347, paragraphs 4 and 5.

crew training, maintenance, security clearance of passengers and cargo. Moreover, as the carriers were based and operating often from abroad, some States of Registry could exercise very limited control and oversight activities on these carriers.²⁶

47. As WFP is neither a regulatory institution nor a State, it should not be in a position to establish new international aviation standards. ICAO officials are of the view that WFP is running a risk of reinventing aviation standards but should better count on the existing international and national regulations. Although this assertion is theoretically reasonable, the Inspector is of the opinion that this approach would not help CATOs on the ground because they cannot stop running the service in the precarious situation simply because an air carrier is not compliant with a single provision of the standards.

48. The Inspector is of the view that WFP and DPKO, while satisfying themselves with the existing international and national aviation standards, should ensure that they are effectively applied by enhancing the legal status and improving the contents of the internal standards, i.e. AVSTADS in close cooperation and consultation with ICAO and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

49. First, the scope of application of AVSTADS should be limited to civil registered aircraft, not military and official aircraft provided by States, which are not regulated by the Chicago Convention.

50. Second, the potential risk of compromising legal accountability in case of non-compliance has to be mitigated. In this context, the Secretary-General should address in-depth the risk arising from non-compliance by commercial operators contracted by WFP, taking into account their difficulties in implementing AVSTADS on the ground and the state of implementation of the standards as well as their adequacy.

51. Third, the fact that AVSTADS have not been ratified/endorsed by any intergovernmental governing body may pose a serious problem of accountability of the Organization in case of non-compliance by the contracted State and private air operators resulting in material loss or injury/death of United Nations system staff and associated personnel. In addition, it is not clear whether the user organizations such as UNHCR and UNICEF, are formally bound by AVSTADS and can enforce these standards on their civilian personnel and associated staff. This is in contrast with the successful efforts as evidenced by the adoption in 1994 of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel to prevent attacks against United Nations and associated personnel working in support of the fulfilment of the mandate of a United Nations operation including peacekeeping operations.

The implementation of recommendation 3 below is expected to strengthen the control of and compliance of UNHAS operations with aviation standards based on a proper legislative principle.

Recommendation 3

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Executive Director of WFP and the International Civil Aviation Organization should:

(a) Report on the legal status of AVSTADS and the state of implementation of these standards including any difficulties identified in applying them both in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations within the United Nations system as well as in contractual agreements with national suppliers of air transports and services;

²⁶ Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference on Global Strategy for Aviation Safety of ICAO, Montreal, 20 to 22 March 2006, DGCA/06-IP/43, paragraph 2.1.

(b) Review the adequacy of the contribution of these standards to ensure aviation safety and security to protect the personnel of the United Nations system organizations and the associated personnel to their operations, and

(c) Invite the General Assembly, based on the report and the review requested above, to consider and decide on upgrading the status of AVSTADS with the necessary modifications at its sixty-fifth session.

Services for users community

52. When CEB requested WFP to administer all the humanitarian air operations, it did not specify which international organizations or NGOs should be the beneficiaries of the new arrangement. In this regard, WFP noted that “passengers on United Nations aircraft normally include United Nations staff, staff-cooperating NGOs and donor representatives”.²⁷ The representative of the International Organization for Migration wondered whether this formulation adequately covers its legitimate need.

Determining eligible users

53. The HC in his/her capacity as Chairman of UGC is responsible for deciding which humanitarian organizations are eligible users for UNHAS services and communicating to UNHAS the level of priority of each agency to use UNHAS aircraft.

54. Whereas this arrangement is working well in the majority of the operations, it was noted that in some cases a list of eligible NGOs was not prepared by OCHA (see for example the case of UNHAS Indonesia). To be eligible to fly on UNHAS aircraft, an NGO needs to provide a copy of the registration certificate issued by HC. But there is no requirement for the NGO to provide the evidence that their members actually work in the country. OCHA needs to monitor the need for this requirement within each UNHAS operation. Unless this task is properly undertaken, it may have major impact on the capacity of the United Nations system to represent the whole humanitarian community as well as ensure security and safety of humanitarian workers. (It would be indeed not justifiable for UNHAS to accept an NGO whose mandate is against the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, as was the unfortunate case in 2007 of the regrettable operations of an NGO called “l’Arche de Zoé”, which eventually impacted on the credibility of humanitarian work in Chad).²⁸

WFP Manual and SAOPs-priority system

55. As recommended by ICAO in November 2000 (recommendation 7), WFP has been engaged in the preparation of an Aviation Manual with the current object of completing it by the end of 2008. WFP has, to date, made a chapter relating to the organizational principles and areas of responsibility that it has to discharge vis-à-vis the users of the United Nations system agencies.

56. At each UNHAS operation, Standard Administrative and Operating Procedures (SAOP) is issued and approved by the Humanitarian Coordinator with the consent of the User Group. SAOP regulates the work of CATO and his staff as well as provides guidelines to the users. SAOP contains detailed information on procedures on safety and security issues, and evacuation as well as criteria for carriage of passengers and small/light cargo, agencies

²⁷ CEB/2004/HLCM/R.11.

²⁸ See “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad”, S/2007/739, 17 December 2007, paras. 11-15.

responsibility in using the service and the priority system based on the “first booked – first served” principle.

57. In general, the “first booked-first served” principle guides the accommodation of space in aircraft. WFP has developed in some locations a priority system broken down by cargo and passenger and by level of importance and urgency of the use (i.e. from ‘Immediate’ in the case of evacuations situations, to “priority two” in the case of other NGOs and ICRC/IFRC engaged in their own humanitarian-aid project in the region). (For an example of the priority system in Chad, see annex III). However, across-the-board applicability of such priority system in different humanitarian operation theatres remains to be clarified among the agencies concerned, including non-United Nations international organizations, such as IOM. The inter-agency status of the priority system is yet to be elaborated in light of the diverse needs for air transportation and evacuation services, particularly those of population at risk, in order to cope with a variety of hazards and disasters, including avian flu and pandemic diseases.

58. Although the principle “first booked – first served” may not satisfy fully emergency need of a few clients and need of small agencies or NGOs implementing their own humanitarian projects, the Inspector noted that majority of passengers were satisfied. However, as regards cargo movement during the first phase of emergency, the feedback received from users in the field indicated an uneven level of satisfaction. Some major users felt that in a number of instances priority was given to WFP food transportation and that WFP should ensure equal and balanced opportunity to them.

The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to promote good practices identified in the field to strengthen the accountability of WFP to UNHAS users.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General of the United Nations should direct the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Executive Director of WFP via the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to review the current practice in the prioritization of passengers and cargo transportation services by UNHAS to establish a priority system that provides the users with equal and balanced opportunity by the end of 2009.

Users Group Committee

59. The UGC, chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator, consists of heads or representatives from the larger NGOs and United Nations agencies. It usually meets on a monthly basis, depending on the operational needs.

60. The mandate of the UGC is to:

- Give WFP Aviation guidelines on operational areas of support;
- Decide on a prioritization system of passengers and cargo;
- Advise on upcoming transport peaks and aircraft needs to help with fleet management;
- Ensure formal feedback to WFP Aviation on common services performance; and
- Ensure that the common services provided by WFP are equally made available to all users.²⁹

²⁹ See *Standards Administrative and Operating Procedure* in Chad.

61. Although the heads of larger users/agencies meet in this forum to ensure high-level participation and decision-making, a variety of users (small NGOs, and non-United Nations international organizations) are not attending this event.³⁰ The Inspector notes that the current WFP standards³¹ restrict the maximum number of members of the UGC to six to ensure efficiency. He concurs with the principle of efficiency in decision-making. However, in his view, as UNHAS operations vary by volume and users, it is not advisable to keep this limit.

62. The UGC is tasked to provide clients views on the services. The Inspector noted that the UGC enabled OCHA and other user agencies to exercise good governance in the management of UNHAS. However, it is not mandated to monitor and ensure the implementation of measures of improvement in the service for which WFP is responsible. Therefore, IASC still needs to establish general guidelines for the mandate and the establishment of the UGC and its ultimate accountability for the management of UNHAS. (See **recommendation 2** in this regard).

Ownership and responsibilities, and accountability for common air transport services

Role of the Humanitarian Coordinator

63. On behalf of the ERC, the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator is responsible for obtaining the consent of all parties concerned on the access by the operational organizations to emergency areas.

64. Host-country agreements should include a variety of provisions which allow the establishment of air operations in a given country. The most salient ones relate to flying and landing permissions, air traffic control, visas issuance and security, and safety measures for the protection of humanitarian workers. However, neither OCHA nor WFP has ever developed a general framework of host-country agreements on these aspects. In this regard, the CATO is playing a very important role in the daily collaboration with national/local authorities to solve operational issues.

65. The Inspector is informed by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) that the pre-existence of a model status-of-forces agreement (SOFA) and its provisional application pending the conclusion of particular agreements with a host country did facilitate the peacekeeping operations concerned and even the conclusion of such an agreement.

66. The host country rarely agrees formally to the request of WFP or the RC/HC for the introduction of an UNHAS operation before it is deployed. The national civil aviation authorities usually give permission only a few days before the date of the operation for UNHAS/WFP HAS to operate aircraft for designated flights and air routes for the duration of a few weeks or a month. The CATO is often indirectly informed of the authorities' permission by a copy of a fax letter they addressed in reply to the ministry for foreign affairs of the host country that transmitted to them the UNHAS request. Each UNHAS operation is based on such *ad hoc* permission processes between the country and UNHAS that entail huge time consuming administrative burden on both sides. In this connection, the Inspector is of the opinion that, when UNHAS continues over an extended period, the HC/RC should play a proactive role in obtaining stable and lasting flight and landing permission at the latest within one year of the operation.

³⁰ It was the case for UNHAS Indonesia, where WFP Internal Auditor recognized that the User Group Committee "was not effective in determining their needs".

³¹ "Establishment and Mandate of the User Group in WFP-HAS or UNHAS operations providing Aviation Common Services"

The implementation of recommendations 5 and 6 below is expected to enhance the effectiveness of UNHAS operations with increased reliability of the air services for users.

Recommendation 5

The Secretary-General of the United Nations should propose a draft standard host country agreement on the operation of UNHAS, including flight and landing permissions, to the General Assembly for consideration and approval.

Recommendation 6

In a case where an UNHAS operation continues over an extended period and the local air transport conditions do not meet the prescribed security and safety standards of the air transport operations of the United Nations, the Humanitarian Coordinator (or the United Nations Resident Coordinator) should ensure that UNHAS be provided with long-term flight and landing permission.

III. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

A. Planning and programming

67. Upon the activation of UNHAS, OMLA at WFP headquarters carries out an assessment of the operating conditions on the ground in close liaison with CATO (if already there) or through a mission to the intended area of operation.

68. On that basis, a programme and budget are developed for each operation and submitted for consideration to the WFP Programme Review Committee. Once approved, an operational plan is developed in the framework of WFP/SO. Then CATO, in close collaboration with the HC and the UGC, prepares a SAOP, which provides the operational framework of UNHAS. As mentioned earlier, the UGC defines the requirements and priorities, monitors the activities and ensures discipline among users.

B. Sources of funds

69. There are three sources of funding: (a) WFP funds based on donors' voluntary contributions in project-based accounts for Special Operations (SO),³² Emergency Operations (EMOP) and Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) and other aviation special accounts; (b) external sources mobilized by OCHA for SO projects through CAP or Flash Appeals and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); and (c) income from cost recovery based on charges levied on passengers and funds provided by user organizations for dedicated air services or "ad-hoc services" arranged by WFP.

70. The bulk of WFP funds rely on contributions from donors for Special Operations Projects. SO projects are funded like all other WFP projects through appeals to donors relayed by the fund-raising division.

³² Special Operations Programme Category aims at: i) rehabilitating and enhance transport and logistics infrastructure to permit timely and efficient delivery of food assistance, especially to meet emergency and protracted relief needs; and ii) enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and with other partners through the provision of designated common services. See doc. "Definition of Special Operations", WFP/EB.1/2005/5-B.

71. The Inspector was informed in the field that some operations were financed by cost recovery mechanisms (UNHAS in South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Somalia). There are two methods by which UNHAS applies cost recovery:

- When the operation is not fully donor-funded, in the majority of the cases, a flat fee is levied on each passenger (about US\$ 100 that was originally introduced to reduce the number of no-shows to flights); or
- When an aircraft is provided for the sole use of a United Nations agency, a detailed Technical Service Agreement (TSA) is drafted between WFP and the client agency.

72. Finally the WFP Programme Support Account (PSA) supports part of the financial and management structure at headquarters, which consists of 10 positions in OMLA (6 Professional and 4 General Service positions). However, the PSA budget cannot finance all the positions and the capacity required for the running of the UNHAS service. Thus, the WFP Executive Director created the Aviation Special Account (ASA) with management fees charged on SO, EMOP and PRR projects as well as non-project operations. The ASA is used to finance, out of one of its administrative expenses lines, the air safety component at Headquarters and its support to field operations

73. ASA is also designed to pre-finance the dedicated air services for external aviation clients such as UNHCR, UNDP, and World Bank that WFP Aviation provides on a full cost-recovery basis while awaiting payment from the clients, thus ensuring its swift services to the clients.

C. Financial management

74. The major challenge for UNHAS is to cope with financial shortfalls which bring an abrupt end to air services and have detrimental impact on the fate of the associated relief programmes. But the financial management of UNHAS is pretty complex. The diversity of funding sources and their unpredictability have prevented WFP from establishing accurate resource information. It reduces the chance for WFP to develop systematic modalities to manage funding shortfalls in all operations across the board. Under the circumstances, the ability of WFP to ensure its air services on a sustainable and predictable basis is limited. The situation has been compounded with inaccurate spending plan accompanied with uncertainties due to unpredictable funding prospect and ever-emerging needs in the field.

Need for accurate resource information

75. The spending plan and the budget for UNHAS operations are organized along the lines decided by WFP Donors in the SO project documents. Budget revisions are done according to fluctuation of needs on the ground after discussion among users, and reflected in a publicly available document entitled the “Resources update”.

76. When UNHAS is established, funds coming from the United Nations are included at the level of the Resources Update, and not at the SO level. The Inspector is of the view that United Nations funds collected through CAP or Flash Appeals as well as the estimates of income from cost recovery should be integrated early enough in the programming sequence of SO, in order to provide WFP OMLA with more predictable funding.

77. In the context of the existing financial shortfalls of UNHAS operations, the WFP External Auditor recommended in 2005 “that WFP improve the budgetary control of air operations generally, to ensure the adequacy and availability of funding for individual operations; and to ensure the accuracy and reliability of financial information to support effective budget

management, through an appropriate standardized form of financial recording for all air operations".³³

78. A directive (ADF2005/003 and ODT2005/001 of 29 September 2005) was issued in this respect. From 2007, the Budget unit within WFP HQ Aviation started preparing a monthly financial overview of WFP mandated aviation activities including the status of ASA and SO. OMLA recently established a series of documents, such as the "Aviation SO Sustainability" and "Financial Overview of Aviations Activities", which reflect an improvement in reporting and detecting the level of shortfall by SO.

79. Although progress has been made in the accuracy of available financial information, the adequacy and availability of funding for individual operations is still to be addressed in a proactive way in order to find out methodology through projection of shortfalls. However, the Financial Overview of Aviations Activities document is yet to include financial information on individual operations for the "ad-hoc services" dedicated to the sole use of each individual United Nations agencies.

80. The WFP External Auditor raised concern over the inaccuracy of the spending plan included in SOs, which might result in inaccurate information to donors. The Inspector notes that the issue has not been resolved in view of the level of shortfall for the majority of WFP-HAS/UNHAS operations ranging from 2 to 51 per cent of the requirements, as of July 2008.³⁴

Figure 3: Budget of each UNHAS operation and related level of shortfall in 2008

	Operational requirements	Total Donors	Total Cost-recovery	Total UN and MULTI	TOTAL received	Shortfall	Shortfall (percentage)
WAC	21 409 590	9 591 247	179 664	5 548 965	15 319 876	6 089 714	28.4
Central African Republic	11 452 185	923 855	614 059	4 425 619	5 963 533	5 488 652	47.9
Ethiopia	1 443 720	300 000	0	607 398	907 398	536 322	37.1
Somalia	23 204 823	3 731 799	10 066 879	3 242 367	17 041 045	6 163 778	26.6
Chad	17 781 778	15 369 190	110 653	1 911 154	17 390 997	390 781	2.2
Afghanistan	51 897 187	534 826	35 731 278	1 642 166	37 908 270	13 988 917	27
Sudan	77 143 809	22 764 810	24 820 099	9 035 000	56 619 909	20 523 900	26.6
Sri Lanka	3 230 028	157 241	450 251	961 819	1 569 311	1 660 717	51.4
Indonesia*	50 906 104	35 336 955	2 498 724	1 398 601	39 234 280	11 671 824	22.9
Niger	3 375 764	69 638	0	1 750 850	1 820 488	1 555 276	46.1

Key: WAC: Western African Countries (Liberia, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Guinea);

Source: JIU compilation based on the series of WFP "resourcing updates", October 2008.

³³ WFP/EB.A/2004/INF/8-A.

³⁴ See WFP/EB.A/2004/INF/8-A, paras. 18-32.

Coping with shortfalls

81. Lack of modalities to manage financial shortfalls has been a cause for concern to the WFP External Auditor. To avoid disruptions in the planned level of budget and activities of air service, he suggested that, if the air services and the associated relief programmes are an integral part of the relief operation, WFP Country Directors should allocate available funds in such programmes to cope with the financial shortfall for the air services.³⁵ This may be an effective way to cope with the shortfall in the context of WFP relief programmes.

82. However, in a general context, it would depend on how humanitarian organizations can better raise funds for air services as part of the response to their humanitarian appeals. Moreover, even if it succeeds, the entailing cumbersome process of earmarking donors' contributions to particular air service in a particular relief operation would adversely affect the ability of UNHAS/WFP Aviation to integrally manage its financial shortfalls and operations.

83. The use of the cost recovery is effective for tackling the funding shortfalls. But its active and generalized use cast doubt in the non-profit nature of UNHAS based on the premise of full funding of its aviation projects which enables its users to enjoy its services free of charge. It should be used sparingly. There is no panacea for coping with the financial shortfalls but to raise more non-earmarked general-purpose contributions by informing the donor community of the financial needs with more transparency and strengthen the capacity of UNHAS to manage all funds integrally.

84. To this end, UNHAS should produce an on-line based consolidated report serving for identifying delays and drawbacks of the air operations against financial shortfalls across the board. In this regard, the Inspector finds that the lack of financing controls and the disparity of systems for recording financial information among different UNHAS accounts is a serious issue, which is analysed under chapter V.

The implementation of recommendation 7 below is expected to enhance financial transparency and accountability of UNHAS to the donor community and increase the level of general contribution to it.

Recommendation 7

The Executive Director of WFP should produce and keep updated, on a real time basis, consolidated financial report of all aviation accounts through a standardized form of financial recording including the status of cost recovery, and appeals and receipt of the contributions by source of funds in order to enhance the ability of the World Food Programme to better mobilize general and stable contributions from donors.

D. Prospects for strategic management

85. In his field missions, the Inspector identified a number of external problems surrounding UNHAS, the solution to which will open the prospects for strategic planning and management of its operations e.g. through the improvement of infrastructure as well as the sharing of resources with other related organizations and entities within the United Nations system.

³⁵ Review of the World Food Programme's air operations, Report of the External Auditor, WFP/EB.A/2004/INF/8-A, 18 May 2004, paragraph 23.

Sharing resources with other United Nations operations

Use of military assets

86. During the last 10 years, both IASC Working Groups and OCHA Military Civil Defence Unit (MCDU) have extensively considered the civil and military relations in humanitarian assistance, i.e. differentiated use of humanitarian workers and military personnel as well as issues of mutual use of the related assets, possible coordination mechanisms and the limitation of such relations.³⁶

87. Due to the changing nature of modern complex emergencies, the humanitarian community has been compelled to seek the protection by military forces on a case-by-case basis.³⁷ Nevertheless “military assets should be requested only where there is no comparable civilian alternative and only the use of military assets can meet a critical humanitarian need”.³⁸

88. While respecting these principles, a pragmatic approach has been followed in the field. UNHAS in Sudan has experienced the collocation with the military air services of the African Union Mission in Sudan (since November 2007) and now with the joint African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) established on 31 December 2007). However, logistically the physical collocation of air parking spaces in the very limited air infrastructure considerably strains pressure on the existing humanitarian air operations.

89. The Inspector considers that efforts should be strengthened to avoid competitive use of limited facilities between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations

90. There has been a significant increase in the aviation fleet of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in recent years. Currently, the Department deploys 208 air assets in 15 field missions, compared with 126 in 2001. These air assets service more than 450 airfields, helipads and landing sites. This increase has necessitated the strengthening of the Department’s aviation programme for commercially contracted and Government-provided air assets by establishing a Strategic Operations Centre to maximize the global use of United Nations air assets.³⁹

91. A Strategic Air Operations Centre which DPKO plans to establish in Brindisi aims at overall monitoring of the peacekeeping aircraft operating intra-mission flights as well as supporting special flights. The strategic Operation Centre at Brindisi, with its central location in terms of time zones, would greatly increase the fungibility of spare air assets among the mission aviation operations. The Centre would also analyse the aircraft usage reports to ensure efficient fleet management, contract performance and compliance with the United Nations charter agreements.

92. In Brindisi, the host country provides DPKO with building facilities to accommodate the base of the Strategic Air Operations Centre. Storage and runway facilities, and air landing and parking are free of charge. These conditions also apply to UNHRD and UNHAS. The

³⁶ See “Use of military and civil defence assets to support united nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies”, March 2003; and “Civil-Military relationship in complex emergencies”, IASC Reference Paper, 28 June 2004.

³⁷ See “Civil-Military relationship in complex emergencies”, IASC Reference Paper, 28 June 2004. .

³⁸ “ Use of military and civil defence assets to support united nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies”, March 2003, paragraph 7.

³⁹ A/60/715, para.6.

Inspector recognizes that the Logistics Base in Brindisi presents strong advantage for DPKO and the United Nations system at large, aside its convenient geographical situation and spare landing capacity. The establishment of the Humanitarian Response Depots and its regional hubs has complemented the logistical support centre for both air services and the supply of immediate needs (such as shelter, food, and medicines). It presently constitutes a solid basis for reinforcing the preparedness of all United Nations humanitarian assistance. In this respect, the Inspector considers that both PKOs and UNHAS would mutually benefit from strengthening their relationship.

93. During his visit to the United Nations Logistics Base and UNHRD in Brindisi, the Inspector was told that one of the aims of the United Nations air operations strategic approach is to better monitor aircraft utilization and to allow exchange of air assets in-between PKOs and ultimately allow the humanitarian community to make use of available seats. However, the Inspector wishes to stress that the Strategic Air Operations Centre cannot be a general platform of collaboration without qualifications. Given the difference of mandates between UNHAS and PKOs, as well as the need to keep distinct the civil and military assets in humanitarian operations, UNHAS and PKOs should develop a realistic and pragmatic way of sharing their capacities more systematically based on airlift arrangements made on a case-by-case basis and make impossible the economy of scale.

United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD)

94. UNHRD is actively engaged in involving some 20 humanitarian agencies to benefit from the storage facilities in the Depot. Currently, five United Nations entities (WFP, FAO, UNJLC, WHO and OCHA), four governmental organizations, and 11 NGOs/international organizations have signed a technical agreement with WFP on the provision of services of the UNHRD network. Four other international organizations would be signing the agreement in 2008. In this respect, it should be noted that, notwithstanding the efforts of UNHRD staff in Brindisi to attract more agencies, the number of agencies participating in the UNHRD network is rather low. Moreover, UNDP and UNICEF, using the service of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO)/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)⁴⁰ in Copenhagen, do not participate in UNHRD. They arrange their own transport to emplane their supplies and equipment to disaster-affected areas. This does not allow UNHRD to fully play a global role linked with the UNHAS network, as described in paragraph 29 above, to ensure disaster preparedness.

95. During the last three years, the volume of cargo items transported from UNHRD in Brindisi to the operations in the field has drastically decreased, whereas the global quantity of cargo carried by UNHAS has sometimes reached a significant level. This means that, except for the initial stage of emergencies, virtually no supply chain exists between the UNHRD network and UNHAS operations at the country level. Moreover, a global supply chain has hardly been established linking up the regional hubs of UNHRD and UNHAS operations, let alone IAPSO. In addition, UNHRD and UNHAS should have been proactive in arranging airlift for the participating organizations in IAPSO.

United Nations Joint Logistics Centres

96. The report of the WFP External Auditor highlighted in September 2005 that “there [was] considerable debate among UNJLC stakeholders as to whether UNJLC should take on

⁴⁰ See document DP/2008/2, Decision 2007/38, on the change on “Proposed partial merger of certain functions of IAPSO with UNOPS”.

operational tasks in addition to its coordination role”.⁴¹ Some cases in point included the UNJLC logistics support in Afghanistan during elections, and the currency conversion operation as well as the request of UNCT in Sudan for UNJLC to take over transporting and delivering non-food items. There was also a cause for the reinforcing of UNJLC ability in order to support other HCS in the areas of staffing, training and coordination required for developing sound logistic services. The Inspector hopes that with the recently established cluster approach, see paragraph 28 above, the implementation of the logistic cluster will trigger a systematic interaction between UNJLC and UNHAS to respond to these challenges, drawing upon the human resources and financial and administrative support of WFP.

Air infrastructure on the ground

97. In its operations, UNHAS is relying on airports/airstrips as well as national air traffic regulations authorities that conform to international safety and security standards. However, these important elements are not always present in the remote regions where UNHAS is operating. For example, national air authorities in most of sub-Saharan Africa lack the resources to map airspace and airfields in detail. So pilots for decades have flown around the continent using road maps, landmarks and their memory. It put UNHAS and the WFP Aviation Safety Unit in a precarious situation to ensure observance of air safety standards.

98. In some instances, mainly in Africa, there are airports/airstrips without UNHAS staff presence. The pilot in command has to perform the check-in duties on behalf of UNHAS. Although this arrangement could work effectively in small aircraft carrying few passengers, it is not recommendable in a bigger operation, as it distracts the pilot from his/her essential duty and it puts him/her in an arbitration situation that he/she should not be involved in.

99. As the disaster-affected country proceeds with the transition from the emergency to recovery and development phases, medium- and long-term needs for humanitarian air services will persist or even grow due to the imperative need for maintaining access to the disaster-affected population. The UNHAS operation in South Sudan is a case in point where the complex situation is relatively stabilized since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005. There is a growing need for WFP to help refurbish local air infrastructures. In some operations, such as UNHAS in Sudan, WFP directly financed reconstruction projects related to air infrastructure. However, WFP cannot act alone.

100. In view of the good record of ICAO cooperation with WFP in the restoration of national air infrastructure and safety emergency response procedures in Jordan, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan and Lebanon over the last few years, the Inspector is of the view that ICAO, via its Technical Co-operation Bureau (TCB), should cooperate in providing its expertise on an MOU-based arrangement with WFP for those projects related to repairing airstrips and establishing national air traffic regulation capacity. This would not only be beneficial to UNHAS but to all air operators in the region.

The implementation of recommendation 8 below is expected to enhance the coordination and cooperation among the organizations concerned on the strengthening of local air infrastructure to ensure safe air services.

Recommendation 8:

The Secretary-General of ICAO, at the request of the Executive Director of WFP, should explore modalities in accordance with established procedures of ICAO for providing the latter’s expertise to projects related to refurbishing local air

⁴¹ WFP/EB.2/2005/6-A, para. 17.

infrastructure, such as repairing airstrips and establishing national air traffic regulation capacity in the areas where an operation of UNHAS is deployed by the end of 2010.

Strategic response to medium- and long-term humanitarian assistance needs

101. Neither CEB nor WFP has established time limits concerning the duration of an UNHAS operation and the transition to locally available air service. Currently, the withdrawal plan generally intervenes when there is no more urgent need for air services. It generally happens when the situation on the ground has stabilized and that commercial airline services are again operational in the local market. For instance, in South Sudan where WFP has had a long presence since 1967, in 2005 UNHAS withdrew from certain routes that became secure and lucrative for commercial operators, thus attracting them on those routings (Nairobi- Juba, for example).

102. The availability of air services of NGOs such as the Mission Aviation Fellowship (U.S.-based association), with the world's largest fleet of 53 private aircraft for benevolent purposes, is significant to ensure that development and humanitarian workers are on the ground. The IFRC also independently hire aircraft for its purpose. UNHAS has so far made no attempt to ensure complementarities of air services with them except for *ad hoc* and on-the-spot sharing with IFRC of specific type of aircraft for medical evacuation under extreme emergency.

103. The transition policy should be clearly linked with the availability and safety of local/regional commercial airlines which can take over UNHAS operations. The Inspector noted with concern that both host authorities and commercial airlines tended to perceive UNHAS as an undue competitor vis-à-vis the existing airlines in some countries, as UNHAS came to be seen as lucrative activities based on subsidies by donors, thus offering free air services for the humanitarian community. As an illustration of an alleged conflict of interest with a host country where UNHAS is operating, one minister of transportation wanted to dismantle UNHAS on the grounds of perceived unfair competition, while being himself the Chief Executive Officer of an air cargo company in the same country. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, it is not rare that WFP or another United Nations organization is involved in air infrastructure refurbishment (UNHAS Indonesia, in Band Aceh, for instance), which benefits all air operators in the region.

104. Specifically, an acute problem can arise when UNHAS is operating in an area where local airlines are already structured in a safe and secure way and legitimately wish to participate in the air transportation market. In this case, the Inspector strongly encourages UNHAS stakeholders to collaborate with host authorities and to consider ending the UNHAS operations drawing upon regional airlines' capacity. In this respect, when the need arises, the UNHAS management, together with the User Group Committee, and with the help of technical advice of the Technical Co-operation Bureau (TCB) of ICAO or IATA may have to present a negotiation platform to this effect. This measure will allow UNHAS to have an orderly approach to the termination of its operations.

The implementation of recommendation 9 below is expected to enhance coordination and cooperation among the organizations concerned on the development of air operations capacity responding to medium- and long-term humanitarian needs.

Recommendation 9

The Executive Director of WFP, in consultation with ICAO and UNDP/UNOPS, should instruct the Country Directors to present to the host country a medium- and long-term air service plan designed both to assist it in restoring and developing local secure airlines.

IV. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

105. In 2007, a total of 264 staff members were involved in UNHAS operations (henceforth referred to as aviation staff). In 2008, 350 aviation staff are distributed between OMLA at WFP headquarters and the operations on the ground. At WFP headquarters, OMLA is composed of 21 staff (of whom 13 are international and 8 local staff). The Branch is headed by a Chief, assisted by a deputy and 321 staff members are working in the field, where staff size varies according to the amplitude of the operations, from two staff in Cameroon to 144 in Sudan, which is the largest operation.

106. Out of the 350 aviation staff employed by WFP, 40 are International staff (29 of them are working in the field). Their functions consist of CATOs, Air Movement Officers, and Safety and Security Officers. Nine of them have a Fixed-Term or Indefinite Appointment contract, 20 are holders of a consultancy contract. The Aviation Safety Unit is composed of six International Officers, all holders of either a fixed-term or an indefinite appointment contract. To respond to emergencies, WFP has established an emergency roster and relies on stand-by partners able to second qualified aviation staff.

107. The 2005 ICAO draft review acknowledged the achievements in terms of air safety but recommended improvements in the aviation management structure. Most of the recommendations have been followed by WFP action since early 2006. Two positions have been filled within the Quality Control and Emergency Response, three positions (one training officer, and two Operations Standards Officers) in the new Operations Standards and Training Unit.

108. The WFP PSA finances 10 positions out of the 56 International Officers within OMLA (six Professional and four General Services). As the PSA budget cannot finance all the positions required for the running of the UNHAS service at WFP headquarters, the WFP Executive Director established the Aviation Special Account.

A. Staff qualification

109. The terms of references for the international positions of Air Movement and Air Transport Officers indicate the required minimum qualifications in Aviation consisting in either a pilot's or a Flight Dispatcher's license plus professional experience. WFP intends to keep a mix of origins for the recruitment between military and civil aviation and among aviation specialities such as ramp handling, and flight tracking.

B. Recruitment and retention

110. Although OMLA maintains a roster of personnel with aviation experience, the Inspector was informed that it was difficult for OMLA to find qualified staff who have experience both in commercial airlines and United Nations air operations, mainly due to difficult working conditions in the field. In this respect, the Inspector encourages the strengthening of informal consultations to share information on qualified candidates available between WFP, ICAO (TCB), and DPKO as well as among relevant United Nations, IFRC/ICRC and other NGOs. This would identify persons with relevant qualifications and avoid bottlenecks in the recruitment and retention of staff.

111. There are some examples of exchange of staff between United Nations system organizations, notably between WFP, ICAO, DPKO and OCHA. Given the limited resources of UNHAS operations, the Inspector encourages the continuation and strengthening of such

arrangements, which would benefit UNHAS and contribute to better understanding by the staff of the various management and operational structures of the United Nations system organizations involved in humanitarian projects.

112. A large part of the personnel are consultants. WFP is converting posts of long-term consultants into Fixed-Term contract holders. Conversion of 12 (out of which only three are at headquarters and nine in the field) consultancy contracts to fixed-term appointments is under way to strengthen the management structure and increase accountability. Nevertheless, given the variety of activities and levels of competence required, the uncertainty of funding and the need for mobility to meet emergency, WFP needs to keep a large proportion of consultants. This does not facilitate retention of staff in the medium term.

113. In addition, the Inspector notes the absence of a deliberate mobility/retention policy in the aviation sector. The staff involved in the field operations obviously has less opportunity than the staff working at headquarters to acquire experience and knowledge on planning, management, and administration of entire UNHAS operations. This risks providing the latter with better chance to be retained at headquarters while reducing the chance of the staff in the field to come back in Rome.

C. Training

114. The Inspector was informed that until 2006 there was no centrally administered training programme to comprehensively address weak areas and ensure an ongoing training regime. Locally employed airport staff work in a demanding environment, coping daily with issues of security, dangerous goods, tarmac safety and ramp handling procedures. Yet there was no standardized training syllabus for such staff. In 2006, WFP appointed a person as focal point for consolidating training documents and providing field staff training in 2007. The Inspector recognized the efforts made in this area and sees further need for OMLA to strengthen its training material in integrating all the aspects of UNHAS, taking into account the users community's need.

The implementation of recommendation 10 below is expected to enhance the effectiveness of the human resources management in the aviation sector.

Recommendation 10

The Executive Director of the World Food Programme should establish human resources management policy in its aviation sector taking into account the specific needs of the sector and report on it to the Executive Board by the end of 2010.

V. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

A. Performance information system

115. OMLA with its Information Management Cell establishes general trends in the transport of both passengers and cargo, but not broken down by agency, type of use and purpose and utilization frequency both classified between WFP-HAS (WFP internal clients and UNHAS (external clients).

116. OMLA is also yet to produce a complete set of statistics on different aviation activities on a comparable basis in order to properly monitor their operational, safety, managerial and financial aspects and present relevant and specific trends and issues regarding the management of UNHAS to the humanitarian community. Apart from general transportation statistics, the Inspector notes that a set of usual performance data is not readily available to the users. These relate to operational data on cancellation, diversion, turn back, on-time departure rate and capacity utilization such as loading and seat-filling ratios as well as safety related occurrence and casualties. Furthermore, OMLA is yet to use these data to formulate benchmarks and indicators for results as well as for management improvement and risk reduction.

117. The Inspector notes that the collection of data in the field is uneven and its reporting unstructured. With the exception of monthly aircraft utilization reports consolidated for each country office, CATOs prepare and submit no other operational reports to OMLA on a regular basis.

118. During his mission, the Inspector found that a new system dedicated to track aviation performance information named “flight management application” was being introduced. It should become the corporate aviation tool and take over the several systems currently in use in the field. It is presently fully operational in the Sudan and Somalia. The software had been scheduled to be installed in all the main operations during the second quarter of 2008. The Inspector takes note of the improvements made by WFP in this respect and hopes that OMLA would comply with the deadline to fully implement this system.

B. Management of operational information

119. The lack of correct and timely information on operational issues (infrastructure, weather, security, political situation, fuel availability and cost) has the potential to increase the costs and decrease the effectiveness of the airlift. Until recently, the system of updating information requirements had not been standardized throughout the operation theatres. In addition, there is no systematic approach to gathering information about the requirements of national civil aviation authorities, change in legislation governing the operations of aircraft, security situations, and fuel availability and related costs.

120. CATO gets the day-to-day tactical information on the situation on the ground through e-mails and telephone calls against which he/she makes decisions on the spot. No contingency planning is established at headquarters level to design scenarios to identify and address the expected operational constraints.

C. Financial information tracking system

121. In 2001, WFP started implementing the Information Network and Global System (WINGS), which supports the main WFP operations including finance, procurement and human resource activity. In 2004, the WFP External Auditor noted that the WINGS system

was not being used to directly or comprehensively record the details of financial transactions including income and expenditure. At the field level, the different country offices use a variety of software programmes to monitor and control their respective air operations.

122. With respect to the financial tracking of UNHAS, the recording of income from cost sharing and ticket sales was poorly managed and documented in some offices. These transactions occurred within the field offices and sub-offices and were all cash based. This problem seems to still persist in view of the low rating of performance given in the customer satisfaction survey done by WFP in 2007 on the efficiency of billing process.

123. CATOs have made progress in uploading key financial information into WINGS. However, in view of the still persistent general weakness in using WINGS, the Inspector encourages the Executive Director of WFP to continue to closely monitor this aspect.

The implementation of recommendation 11 below is expected to contribute to the strengthening of the budget and financial management of UNHAS operations leading to systematic identification of shortfalls, thus enhancing significant financial savings.

Recommendation 11

On the basis of improved performance information system and the collection of operational information in the field relevant to UNHAS operations, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme should formulate benchmarks and indicators for results-based budgeting and management in the aviation sector and make the management of UNHAS more accountable to its user community.

VI. OVERSIGHT

124. There are three entities mandated to conduct oversight of UNHAS; ICAO experts, the WFP Internal Auditor and WFP External Auditor. OIOS audits the air services in peacekeeping operations; it carries out audit or reviews of air operations against AVSTADS. This gives a basis for ensuring not only security and safety but also efficient management of United Nations air operations.

125. The WFP audits have been conducted within the framework of its audit of the WFP financial statements. The WFP External Auditor issued a “Review of World Food Programme’s air operations”,⁴² which marginally included his views on the initial challenges brought by the establishment of UNHAS and the correlated expansion of WFP air services.

A. Audit of aviation safety and security operations of UNHAS

Audit by ICAO experts

126. At the request of WFP, the ICAO secretariat delivered the first technical review of WFP air operations in November 2000. Since then, it continued to provide the WFP Executive Board with an “audit” report prepared by its consultants. In April 2001, WFP and ICAO agreed on a management service agreement, (MSA) which gave tasks for experts hired by ICAO TCB to perform “management and other support services” related to safety of security issues of WFP air transportation operations. Consequently, ICAO submitted a report of its review in May 2001 with recommendations. The WFP External Auditor observed that in June 2003, WFP had not as yet an effective aviation management system or a safety culture in place, since the recommendations made by ICAO had not been implemented.⁴³

127. In December 2005, the MSA was renewed, and the TCB agreed to do a consultancy project with the WFP funds of US\$ 111,000 for the involvement of two experts chosen by the TCB, one on aviation safety and security standards and another on management of civil aviation. The purpose of the review was to make a “comprehensive report covering the management of the WFP aviation transport operations”. The consultancy started in March 2005 and submitted the draft report in October 2005. In December 2005, WFP gave its comments on it. At the time of writing (28 October 2008), the report had not been finalized and the consultant fees had not been fully paid. The latest exercise would have resulted in the submission to WFP Executive Board of a report, entitled “Review of WFP Aviation Transport Service Operations and Aviation Safety Management Practices”⁴⁴ in 2005. The Secretariat of ICAO is required to take immediate action to deliver the report. Any delay in providing feedback from the field review would be detrimental to the improvement in UNHAS management and the work of WFP and the related inter-agency consultations, e.g. the Aviation Technical Advisory Group (ATAG) on the revision of AVSTADS.

128. On the other hand, the Secretariat of ICAO does not regard this aviation review as a formal audit, as it is prepared outside ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit concept, whose role is to audit States (see paragraphs 43-48 above). In order for any applicable international and national aviation standards embodied in AVSTADS to be effectively implemented, the current aviation review should have a legal status analogous to that of ICAO Audit Process.

⁴² WFP/EB.A/2004/INF/8-A, 18 May 2004.

⁴³ WFP/EB.A/2004/INF/8-A, paragraph 44.

⁴⁴ Project RAF/05/801.

129. The Executive Board could not undertake the periodical and regular review of the aviation “audit” based on the ICAO report. In order to secure proper aviation audit, the Executive Director of WFP should convert the current review by ICAO consultants based on AVSTADS into a formal aviation safety audit.

The implementation of recommendation 12 below is expected to strengthen oversight and accountability of WFP in providing the Executive Board with a regular aviation safety audit.

Recommendation 12

The Executive Director of the World Food Programme should, in consultation with the competent authorities of ICAO, convert the current review by ICAO consultants of WFP air safety and transport operations based on AVSTADS into a formal aviation safety audit and ensure the regular and timely submission of such audit reports by the competent officials of ICAO to the Executive Board.

Audit cooperation

130. OIOS concentrated its efforts on specific aspects (such as air safety standards and fuel management) of air services within peacekeeping operations. As the ERC at the governance level and the Humanitarian Coordinator on the ground have the role of promoting on behalf of the United Nations system common humanitarian services, OIOS should be⁴⁵ in a position to carry out a performance audit of UNHAS with regard to its contribution to humanitarian assistance. Moreover, the implementation of the Strategic Aviation Operations Centre in Brindisi by DPKO will open the door for the integration of the air-service capacities of DPKO and UNHAS. OIOS will need to take into account the audit and the reviews by WFP and the ICAO experts of UNHAS operations in conducting audit of air services in peacekeeping operations. Undertaking a parallel audit of WFP/UNHAS and DPKO/DFS air operations in this context would be useful.

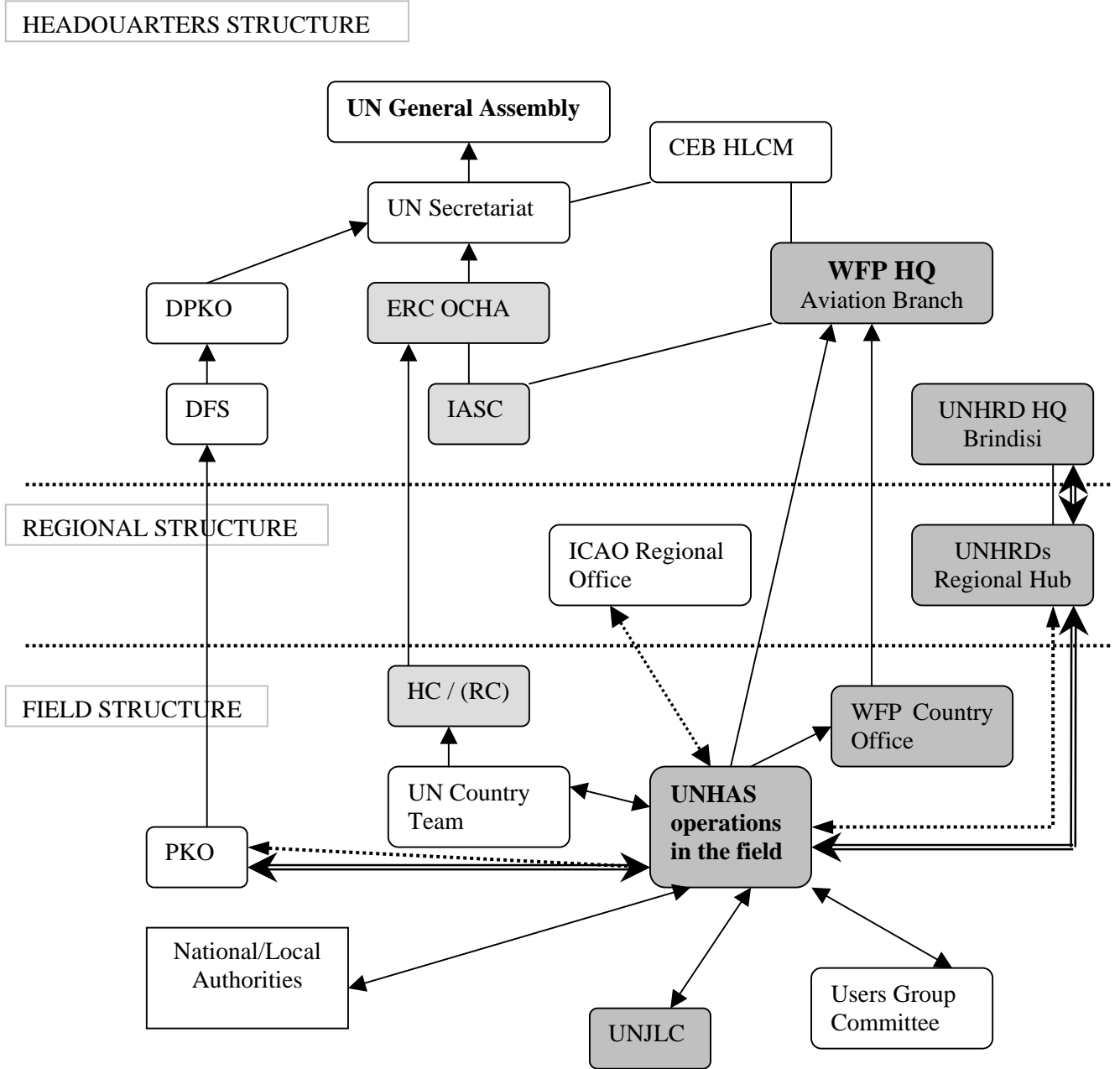
131. The audit on WFP air services should also be coordinated with the reviews undertaken by the ICAO experts. This is in line with the conclusions submitted by WFP to the Directors-General of Civil Aviation Conference on a Global Strategy for Aviation in 2006 arguing for linkages with national aviation authorities and industry partners in order to gain from each others' oversight activities, dissemination of safety information and evaluation of safety-related trends.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See JIU/REP/2006/2: Oversight Lacunae in the United Nations System, para. 16.

⁴⁶ DGCA/06-IP/43, paragraph 4.1, March 2006.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Current institutional scheme of UNHAS operations



Keys:

- > : Management and/or Operational reporting channel
-> : Ad hoc relations / consultations
- ↔ : Flow of passengers and/or cargos

Annex II: Contributions made by donors to UNHAS operations up to October 2008

Sources	WAC	CAR	Ethiopia	Somalia	Chad	Afghanistan	Sudan	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	Niger	Sub-total
Donors											
AUSTRALIA				1'991'150					1'150'987		3'142'137
BELGIUM							696'379				696'379
CANADA				400'272			2'543'235		483'871		3'427'378
DENMARK	113'575							38'565	912'408		1'064'548
EUR. COMMISSION	2'713'584	673'855			4'545'204		8'429'810		2'526'420		18'888'873
FINLAND					266'666						266'666
FRANCE	57'252						756'430				813'682
GERMANY											0
GREECE											0
ICELAND	21'473										21'473
IRELAND	254'453				2'799'983		739'645		2'683'112		6'477'193
ITALY											0
JAPAN									5'000'000		5'000'000
KOREA REP. OF									500'000		500'000
LUXEMBOURG									1'083'429	69'638	1'153'067
MALAYSIA									429'781		429'781
NETHERLANDS	104'000								3'256'445		3'360'445
NEW ZEALAND									2'535'283		2'535'283
NORWAY	74'290			193'162		34'826			8'000'000		8'302'278
SPAIN							466'563				466'563
SWEDEN				137'273					1'518'944		1'656'217
SWITZERLAND	2'330'609			905'143	677'693		183'486	118'676	884'955		5'100'562
U.K.	1'668'586				2'879'644						4'548'230
U.S.A.	2'250'000	250'000	300'000		4'200'000	500'000	7'250'000		2'000'000		16'750'000

Sources	WAC	CAR	Ethiopia	Somalia	Chad	Afghanistan	Sudan	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	Niger	Sub-total
PRIVATE DONORS	3'425			104'799			1'699'262		2'371'320		4'178'806
UN	2'576'329	3'419'532	607'398	3'242'367	1'710'497	1'444'500	9'035'000	961'819	1'300'000	1'000'850	25'298'292
OTHER MULTILATERAL organizations	1'115'536	1'006'087			200'657	197'666			98'601		2'618'547
COST RECOVERY	179'664	614'059		10'066'879	110'653	35'731'278	24'820'099	450'251	2'498'724		74'471'607
Immediate Response Account (WFP)	1'857'100									750'000	2'607'100
Sub-total Donors	9'591'247	923'855	300'000	3'731'799	15'369'190	534'826	22'764'810	157'241	35'336'955	69'638	88'779'561
Sub-total Cost-recovery	179'664	614'059	0	10'066'879	110'653	35'731'278	24'820'099	450'251	2'498'724	0	74'471'607
Sub-total UN and MULTI	5'548'965	4'425'619	607'398	3'242'367	1'911'154	1'642'166	9'035'000	961'819	1'398'601	1'750'850	30'523'939
TOTAL	15'319'876	5'963'533	907'398	17'041'045	17'390'997	37'908'270	56'619'909	1'569'311	39'234'280	1'820'488	193'775'107

Note: This table does not include USD 108 million spent for Sudan (SO 10181.3) between July 2004 and December 2007, as WFP launched a new SO for Sudan starting 1 January 2008 (for a duration of one year).

* UNHAS Operations in Indonesia (WFP Air Support of Humanitarian Relief Operations in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami) ceased in December 2007.

Source: JIU compilation based on the series of WFP "Resourcing Updates" documents, October 2008.

Annex III: UNHAS Priority system

PRIORITY	PASSENGERS	CARGO
Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. MEDEVAC/CASEVAC. b. Certified Aviation Safety Inspectors and Accident Investigators, when required. c. Designated Heads: of UN agencies, UN bodies, funds and programmes, donor governments, UN organizations and NGO and ICRC IFRC implementing partners with signed agreements for projects in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Medical life-support equipment and supplies. b. AOG (Aircraft on Ground) spares and parts. c. Equipment and supplies for aircraft ground handling and management of aircraft operations. d. VOR (Vehicle off Road) spares and parts.
Priority One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. UN staff and staff of NGO implementing partners on initial deployment. b. Personnel on repatriation with connecting flights. c. UN staff and staff of NGO and ICRC, IFRC implementing partners on R&R and official leave. d. Journalists covering the emergency to the benefit of the United Nations and Implemented Partners and accredited through a UN Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Perishable cargo and cargo for immediate distribution upon arrival at destination. b. Through cargo in transit connecting with other flights. c. Accompanied personal effects not exceeding 15 Kg.
Priority Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Government organizations directly working on humanitarian projects within the region and supported by United Nations (includes ambassadors and first secretaries of donor countries. b. Other NGOs, ICRC / IFRC engaged in humanitarian-aid projects with in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cargo required for immediate replenishment stock. b. Personal effects not exceeding 15kg. c. All other cargo

Source, SAOP, Chad, version 6

Annex IV

Overview of action to be taken by participating organizations on JIU recommendations
JIU/NOTE/2008/3

		Intended impact	United Nations, its funds and programmes											Specialized agencies and IAEA														
			United Nations*	UNCTAD	UNODC	UNEP	UN-HABITAT	UNHCR	UNRWA	UNDP	UNFPA	UNICEF	WFP	OTHER: OCHA	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	UPU	ITU	WMO	IMO	WIPO	UNIDO	UNWTO	IAEA	
Note	For action		X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	For information & review		<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Recommendation 1	a	E										E															
	Recommendation 2	b	E																									
	Recommendation 3	d	E																									
	Recommendation 4	b	E																									
	Recommendation 5	e											E															
	Recommendation 6	e												E														
	Recommendation 7	a											E															
	Recommendation 8	c											E				E											
	Recommendation 9	c											E															
	Recommendation 10	e											E															
	Recommendation 11	f											E															
	Recommendation 12	a											E				E											

Legend: **L:** Recommendation for decision by legislative organ
E: Recommendation for action by executive head
 : Recommendation does not require action by this organization

Intended impact: **a:** enhanced accountability **b:** dissemination of best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** enhanced controls and compliance
e: enhanced effectiveness **f:** significant financial savings **g:** enhanced efficiency **o:** other

* Covers all entities listed in ST/SGB/2002/11 other than UNCTAD, UNODC, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNRWA.