

**REPRESENTATION OF ORGANIZATIONS  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM  
AT CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS**

*Part B. The specialized agencies*

*Prepared by*

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Joint Inspection Unit



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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is the second report on representation, as Part B of the same study 1/, covering the participation in international conferences and meetings by the specialized agencies 2/. The term "international conferences and meetings" 3/ in this report refers to the conferences and meetings of an intergovernmental, inter-agency or non-governmental nature, which may include the meetings convened by the United Nations and specialized agencies. The term "representation" is meant to indicate participation in international conferences and meetings as representatives of the organizations of the United Nations system.

2. Representational activities of organizations of the United Nations system are very wide in scope and their interrelationships are complex in nature. In particular, since the inception of the United Nations system, the development of activities of the organizations has resulted in the multiplication of conferences and meetings at which representatives of the organizations attend for different purposes. In addition, most organizations face financial difficulties. There are all the more reasons why "representation" has become an important exercise.

3. The present report reviews the procedures and mechanisms related to the representation of the specialized agencies at conferences and meetings. The objectives are to examine the usefulness and effectiveness of the participation of staff members and to recommend ways and means to increase its efficiency and reduce the costs involved, particularly in the light of the financial crisis presently faced by many organizations and their efforts being made to deal with it. Therefore, the Inspector's intention is not simply to discourage participation as such in conferences and meetings. Rather, it is to decrease unnecessary participation without affecting the quality of attendance and the image of the specialized agencies.

4. The specialized agencies are characterized by their variety and diversity in different aspects, such as: organizational structure, size, nature of activity and specific mandate of each organization. The study has revealed that the distinctions among the organizations consequently result in the manner in which representation is dealt with. For example, smaller organizations have a centralized management system and larger ones have decentralized the responsibilities and functions of managing representation. Moreover, the specificity affects the types of meetings to which the organizations are invited, thereby differing in the manner of preparation for participation. This report takes into consideration both the distinctions and common aspects of the organizations.

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1/ JIU/REP/88/3, "Representation of organizations of the United Nations systems at conferences and meetings - Part A. The United Nations".

2/ This report covers 11 specialized agencies of those which have accepted the Statute of JIU. The IAEA is not included because of the lack of information.

3/ "Conferences and meetings" or "meetings" are meant to include those mentioned above, unless otherwise specified.

5. The Inspector intended to use a comparative method in reviewing the various aspects of representation of specialized agencies. However, as Part A, this did not turn out possible since the information, particularly on the statistics, was not presented in a comparable manner, and in some cases it was not provided at all.

6. In preparing Part B of this study, the Inspector designed a questionnaire, which was revised later on into a simpler version as a result of his preliminary consultations. Thus, it was sent to the specialized agencies. Most replies to the questionnaire were very useful providing him with precise and comprehensive information. Subsequently, the Inspector visited almost all organizations for consultations to clarify certain points and complete information. The Inspector extends his thanks to all the officials concerned of each organization for their kind co-operation which was of greatest value in the preparation of this report.

## II. LEGAL BASIS AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR REPRESENTATION

### A. Legal basis

#### 1. The Charter of the United Nations

7. The primary legal basis for representation of organizations of the United Nations system is, as mentioned in Part A, the Charter of the United Nations. In fact, the specialized agencies are by definition the agencies which were established by intergovernmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields, and are brought into relationships with the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 63. Thus, Article 63 of the Charter provides a basis for liaison agreements of the United Nations which are concluded by the ECOSOC with the specialized agencies or among the specialized agencies. Representation is established by virtue of Article 70 of the Charter on the basis of the reciprocity between the United Nations and the specialized agencies. This Article provides for: "arrangements for representatives of the specialized agencies to participate in its deliberations and in those of the commissions established by it, and for its representatives to participate in the deliberations of the specialized agencies." It is under these agreements that "representation" is provided on the basis of reciprocity ("reciprocal representation").

#### 2. Inter-agency agreements

8. Most of the provisions concerning reciprocal representation in these inter-agency liaison agreements are similar, in the same terms as prescribed in Article 70 of the Charter. As also explained in Part A, reciprocal representation of this type is characterized by the participation "without vote", enjoying a "consultative status". The representatives participate in the meetings to the extent that the organization has "an interest" in the agenda items or on "questions within the scope of its activities". Furthermore, legal provisions constitute only possibilities to participate but not "invitations" to the meetings. Therefore, the participation in conferences and meetings would require "invitations" from the agencies which hold the conferences and meetings concerned.

#### 3. Inter-secretariat arrangements for co-ordination

9. Beside liaison agreements, the Charter provides similar provisions for co-ordination of "the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies" (Article 63, paragraph 2). Based on these provisions, the ECOSOC established a body called the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). As the top co-ordination body at inter-secretariat level, ACC has developed different programmes and formulated recommendations. Many of the inter-agency meetings are within the framework of this body or its sub-bodies. The participation of the organization in the ACC meetings is on the basis of commitment made in the ECOSOC resolution of 1978, which is also contained in its Statute. Similarly, regarding other inter-agency organs, their statutes or terms of references provide the basis for participation.

#### 4. Working arrangements

10. The representation of organizations in the United Nations system goes beyond the terms defined in the Charter and not limited to "reciprocal representation". Beside the fore-mentioned formal agreements, "working agreements" exist in the United Nations system in order to cover, inter alia, representational activities of each agency. These arrangements have different forms, such as: working arrangements, working relations, agreements for co-operation, exchanges of letters, memoranda of understanding, etc. These have been concluded not only with other specialized agencies but also with intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations. All of these are the bases for representation for each organization.

#### B. Policy framework

##### 1. Constitutions

11. The Constitution, or any other type of basic legal document which has established each specialized agency, provides for representation within the framework of co-operation activities with other organizations and thus entails representational activities.

##### 2. Internal instructions

12. Most organizations have established internal rules and instructions on representation at conferences and meetings, the form of which varies from one organization to another. Several organizations have issued a central instruction (e.g., the Director-General's bulletin, circulars or manuals), which can be compared to the Secretary-General's bulletin of the United Nations. Given that the nature and type of activities differ from one organization to another, the scope and range of these instructions are varied. Some large organizations have well structured functions related to representation. Their internal rules and instructions have set forth procedures and mechanisms at several stages (e.g., handling of invitations, acceptance of invitations, designation of representatives, preparation, participation, reporting, etc.) in order to ensure efficient and effective participation in conferences and meetings as representatives of the organizations.

13. Usually, large organizations have established written procedures and rules for representation proper. For example, FAO has established a procedure in the Director-General's bulletin how to handle invitations to attend meetings of other organizations. ILO has a circular instruction defining the responsibilities dealing with relations with other intergovernmental organizations and establishing procedures for consultation within the Office. In the case of WHO, the policies and rules are established in a comprehensive manner covering wide aspects of representation, which may be the result of numerous studies carried out over the years. Moreover, UNESCO also developed in its manuals detailed procedures for representation dealing with its different stages. With regard to smaller organizations, a few of them (ICAO, UPU and WMO) did establish similar internal rules and instructions, although some do not have them at all. However, it has been found that almost all organizations have detailed internal rules and instructions designed to



control official travel. Moreover, in certain organizations, specific instructions and guidelines are provided in the individual instructions given directly to individual staff members designated for representation.

3. Staff rules and regulations

14. Legal provisions contained in staff rules and regulations of each organization treat some aspects of staff members attending meetings as representatives. Since they would be on official status, the organization has the responsibility to treat the matter in respect of staff rules and regulations if something happens during the travel or mission.

4. Budget documents

15. The forms and manner in which the budget documents (either programme budgets or object-of-expenditure budgets) are presented are varied. The budgets provide the programmes and activities of each organization for a given period, as well as expenditure forecasts resulting from the implementation of these programmes and activities. In some organizations (UNESCO and UPU), the budgets dictate to such an extent that all the missions to be executed in order to participate in meetings are listed in the budget documents, thereby providing a solid framework for representational activity.

### III. INVITATIONS

16. Like the United Nations, the attendance of representatives of the specialized agencies at conferences and meetings is mainly based upon invitations and formal agreements. However, the basis for the specialized agencies seems somewhat broader, including other types of agreements, such as: working agreements, agreements for co-operation, ordinary working arrangements, exchange of letters, etc.

17. The practice in this field varies from one organization to another. Some organizations send their representatives to meetings exclusively upon invitations, regardless of the existence of formal relationship agreements. Some others participate in meetings both on the basis of agreements and invitations.

18. As indicated in paragraph 9, the attendance at certain meetings is statutory and, naturally, no invitations are extended, although letters of notification may be sent for reminding the date, place and agenda items of the meeting.

19. Invitations are received in written form. As a general rule, they are addressed to the executive head of the organization, although they may be sent to individual staff members as well. In some organizations, the percentage of invitations received by staff members is relatively high (FAO, WHO and WMO), probably due to their specific nature of activities. In any case in these organizations, the copies of invitations addressed to individuals should be sent to focal (or co-ordinating) points so as to officialize the matter if the staff member intends to attend a meeting as representative of the organization.

20. Some organizations distinguish the procedure for the invitations received by the Director-General (as "formal invitations") and those addressed to an individual staff member in his personal capacity (so-called "personal invitations"). Under FAO's procedures, all of these invitations are channelled through the External Relations Unit.

21. WHO is more adapted to the participation in the meetings by individual staff members, without requiring the need of official reply. The WHO manual provides procedures applying to the invitations addressed either to the Director-General or to individual staff members. The invitations are sent to headquarters and/or regional offices. However, the situation is rather complex since several invitations may be received for the same meetings within headquarters and/or regional offices, but these invitations are carefully co-ordinated and controlled at headquarters to avoid duplication and conflicting letters and to ensure that the criteria laid down in the rules and regulations are adhered to.

22. With regard to inviting organizations, the figures provided in the replies to the questionnaire indicate that about 40 percent of all invitations come from the United Nations system and 60 percent from organizations outside the system of the United Nations. In the case of WHO, in view of its very technical nature, about 20 percent of invitations come from the United Nations system, 12 percent from the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the others from various international medical, health and health related institutions.

23. According to internal manuals, rules, guidelines and instructions of organizations, the invitations are handled differently and by different units. In the majority of organizations, an external relations unit acts as a central unit and as the focal point of the organization in the field of representation. In some other organizations, the invitations are processed both by the external relations units and the programme sectors. In a few organizations, invitations are handled in parallel with appropriate services of headquarters and by regional offices or by liaison offices.

24. ILO has a decentralized manner of managing overall activity of representation. While generally the Office for Inter-Organization Relations deals with the invitations emanating from the United Nations, other specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and inter-agency bodies, it is its regional offices that handle the invitations to the meetings of Regional Economic and Social Commissions of the United Nations and the regional intergovernmental organizations.

25. In the majority of organizations, the invitations are recorded by the central registry or by appropriate units, and relevant statistics are always available. In this respect, WMO has a very unique method called a "meeting file", which keeps information on invitations both sequentially and chronologically. These files are circulated to technical departments for recommendations, then costed and budgeted for eventual approval of the departments' proposals by the executive head. However, there are some organizations which do not record or file invitations in a regular and proper manner. Therefore, information on invitations is only partially or not at all available.

26. Similarly to the United Nations, many of the invitations to the specialized agencies are delayed (reaching even a few days before the commencement of the meeting). Moreover, virtually all the organizations contested the difficulties caused by the lack of background documents, which should normally be attached to each invitation. These would not permit them to properly evaluate invitations to each meeting, thus preventing them from properly planning the calendar for participation. They have also been obstacles to a successful preparation for an effective participation in the meetings.

27. The replies to the questionnaire also show the difference in the percentage of acceptance of the invitations received (see table 1, page 8), which reflects different policies and criteria applied to in the matter of representation, as well as the different needs of participation in meetings. Since the information is only indicative, as explained in paragraph 5, the rate of acceptance of each organization may be subject to change.

Table 1: Invitations received/approved

Organization	1985			1986		
	Received	Approved	Percent. of acceptance	Received	Approved	Percent. of acceptance
FAO	1350	592	44%	1260	661	52%
ICAO <u>a/</u>	186	76	41%	171	72	42%
ILO <u>b/</u>	516	261	47%	489	247	46%
IMO	190	80	42%	160	75	47%
ITU	n.a. <u>*/</u>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	277	n.a.
UNESCO <u>c/</u>	670	263	39%	606	192	32%
UNIDO	500	138	28%	243	79	32%
UPU	115	68	59%	115	71	62%
WHO	1908	844	44%	1782	750	42%
WIPO	n.a.	67	n.a.	n.a.	90	n.a.
WMO <u>d/</u>	201	128	63%	243	118	49%

a/ Not included are the invitations which are immediately deemed to be of no interest to ICAO.

b/ The figures do not include invitations to meetings of Workers' and Employers' organizations, regional intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations Regional Economic and Social Commissions.

c/ The figures represent the invitations processed by the External Relations Sector. Thus, the invitations received by the programme sectors and immediately declined do not appear in this table.

d/ The figures represent the invitations processed by the Office of the Secretary-General. Those immediately declined do not appear in the table. Also a number of invitations to inter-agency administrative meetings which took place in Geneva do not appear in the figures.

\*/ n.a. = Not available.

#### IV. PROCEDURES AND MECHANISMS FOR DETERMINATION OF REPRESENTATION

##### A. Relevant provisions

28. With regard to determination of representation, internal consultation and co-ordination procedures and mechanisms are set forth in internal manuals, rules and instructions of most organizations, as already stated in chapter II. The variety in the manuals was also mentioned in respect of the form, preciseness, length, etc.

##### B. Structural procedures

29. Part A 4/ pointed out the two-level structure for determination of representation which were established in accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin. These are: (i) within departments as a first screening step; and (ii) in the Representation Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General as a final decision-making authority. Conversely in specialized agencies, the decision-making process is differently structured from the United Nations.

30. In most organizations, the responsibility for co-ordinating the representational activity rests with the particular unit as a focal point, which is usually denominated as External Relations Office, Office of Inter-Agency Affairs, etc. The functions of such a unit are to receive invitations, keep records thereof, undertake consultations with substantive departments, and reply officially to invitations. In some organizations, the unit plays a more important role being authorized to influence the decisions when general policy matters are involved. Usually such units decide only on acceptance of invitations and designation of representatives. They do not usually intervene the length of missions, the content of statements, preparation for participation and reporting, all of which are left to the substantive departments to take a responsibility. With respect to practical functions and power of influence of such a unit for co-ordination, the Inspector has noted a great variety. When examining the acceptance of invitation and designation of representatives, substantive departments could give technical consideration. With regard to policy matters, however, these departments are not always very well informed thereon. Only such a unit for co-ordination has a checking and overseeing role, thereby intervening the decision-making process.

31. Small organizations (IMO, UPU, WIPO and WMO) which have centralized a management system do not have such a unit, and the related procedures are under a direct control of the executive heads or of their offices.

32. The ITU has specific procedures in its decision-making process in accordance with its organizational structure. In general, all decisions on participation in meetings are taken by the Co-ordination Committee. However, in cases where meetings are of interest only to a particular permanent organ of the Union, the examination of invitations and determination of participation may be undertaken by that organ.

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4/ JIU, Ibid., chap. IV, pp. 10-13.

### C. Decision-making process

33. The decision-making process varies in specialized agencies. This variety consists of several elements, such as: (i) whether the system is centralized or not; (ii) the role of co-ordination unit; (iii) specific mandate and organizational mandate of each organization, etc.

34. In FAO, the unit for co-ordinating representation is the External Relations Unit of the Office of the Inter-Agency Affairs and the authority for decision is the Director or Assistant Director-General (when appropriate). There is another unit acting this way: the Office of the Director-General which appears as a final supervisory unit. However, under austerity measures taken recently in order to cope with the financial crisis, the procedures were revised in such a way that all the decisions on representation which would incur expenditures should be taken by the Office of the Director-General. Only the cases which have no financial implications are now dealt with by the External Relations Unit.

35. WHO has a central unit for co-ordination dealing with the management of the invitations. All invitations (including invitations sent to individuals) are sent to this unit for indexing, routing to the programme(s) concerned and/or regional office(s) and follow-up purposes. Substantive consultations are undertaken within the programme concerned, which will serve as a basis for the final decision for attendance. The decision is taken by the directors of the programme with due regard to its priority and the availability of funds. The invitation is then referred to Budget for financial checking and the central unit for co-ordination to verify whether the decision corresponds to the overall policy of WHO and whether there is any conflict from the point of view of co-ordination. When more than three representatives attend a meeting, the Assistant Director(s)-General concerned is/are consulted.

36. At ILO, relations with other intergovernmental organizations are managed in a decentralized manner. Responsibilities concerning representation are shared by a focal point and interested departments, under the general supervision of the Deputy Director-General for the Relations Sector. The procedures vary according to the nature of the inviting organizations. The Office for Inter-Organization Relations is the focal point for invitations emanating from the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other universal intergovernmental organizations. After consulting the relevant technical units, this Office prepares replies to invitations on behalf of the Director-General. Invitations to meetings organized by Workers' and Employers' organizations and by non-governmental organizations are handled respectively by the departments concerned after consultation with interested technical units. In addition, the Technical Co-operation Department represents, inter alia, the ILO at meetings dealing with operational questions as a focal point for relations with various funding agencies.

37. Attention should be paid to invitations addressed directly to individual staff members, on which the Director-General's bulletin of FAO has a specific provision. The staff member "should make no commitments regarding his attendance" and should forward the invitation to the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs. At the same time, he/she "should inform the correspondent that the invitations should be addressed to the Director-General". This provision is very useful to maintain the strict control on staff members' attempts to

attend official meetings in an individual capacity without authorization of the Organization. In this regard, some other organizations apply tighter procedures. In UNESCO, for example, the decision whether to send one or several representatives invited personally is taken by the Director-General himself on the recommendation of the Assistant Director-General or the Director concerned.

38. With regard to the reasons for acceptance, prior consideration is given to the relevance of the subject matter to the mandate of the Organization, then to the possibility of the representative's substantive contribution to the meeting and also to financial resources. The reciprocity plays a secondary role in accepting an invitation.

39. In designating representatives, prior consideration is given to: the experience and technical knowledge required to deal with the subject; and then to the grade (particularly for high-level meetings) and also the venue of the meeting so as to ask, whenever possible, their staff members of field or regional offices.

#### D. Approving authority

40. As partly explained above, the final approving authority is the executive head of each organization, which is regularly the case with small organizations. Otherwise, it can be delegated to his deputy or any other responsible officials. Either with or without centralized system of management, some organizations reserve an approval function to the executive head of organizations with respect to policy implication, general interest of the organizations and institutional consideration.

41. In some organizations, proposals and approvals are made at the same level, and there are no distinctions between proposal and approval functions. The Inspector has concluded that this procedure is characteristic to the organizations whose departments enjoy high degree of independence, regardless of the size of organizations.

42. In some organizations, finance and budget sections have a checking function to intervene the decision-making of the executive heads, which could even reverse their decisions.

#### E. Use of liaison and field offices

43. Unlike the practice of some departments of the United Nations, the specialized agencies make good use of their liaison and field offices for attending meetings. Liaison offices have been created specifically to follow the meetings and liaise with the headquarters of the organizations, thus being located in New York, Geneva or other places where meetings are held very often.

44. With regard to field or regional offices, it has been found that financial crises of most organizations result in more recourse to their use in attending meetings which take place in their respective regions.

45. On the other hand, internal rules and guidelines of some organizations provide more independence to these offices, by limiting the headquarters decision-making on acceptance of invitations to the meetings of technical and regional nature.

46. The WHO's decentralization of representation is explained by the wide choice of persons to represent the Organization at international meetings. Apart from the headquarters' officers, the representation may be assured by the staff of regional offices and, whenever feasible, by members of the expert advisory panels, or by technical offices from WHO collaborating centres, or consultants, temporary advisers, national members of a scientific group, etc. From a financial and professional point of view, this is a rational and an efficient way of dealing with representation in an organization with a specific mandate.

47. At ILO, invitations to the meetings of regional intergovernmental organizations and of the Regional Economic and Social Commissions of the United Nations are handled by the regional departments in the field.

48. Other organizations (FAO, UNIDO and UNESCO) have a similar practice. FAO has explained that, under the austerity measures, field offices are used more than before for representational purposes since the budget is very restricted. However, in asking these offices to participate in a meeting, its central unit for co-ordination should clear the matter with the department dealing with regional affairs. In the case of ICAO, although experts from the regional offices frequently represent ICAO at meetings in their region, the decision in that regard is always taken at headquarters.

49. WMO, which has only two small regional offices outside its headquarters, very often requests that the directors of national meteorological services arrange to designate a technically competent official to participate in the meetings which take place in their countries or nearby region, as representatives of the Organization. This is with little or no cost to the Organization. This procedure is particularly useful when only scientific and technical subjects are discussed.



## V. PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

### A. Preparation for participation

50. The majority of organizations have introduced in their manuals a section on preparation in order to ensure a successful and proper presentation of their position at conferences and meetings.

51. The provisions of one part of organizations are comprehensive and well developed, which can usefully serve as a basis for a thorough preparatory work, although some of them are short or present only a summary.

52. In the organizations where there are no rules at all on preparation, the preparation by their representatives is very spontaneous and sometimes superficial. Surprisingly, some organizations even with a significant representational activity also fall under this category.

53. The preparation varies depending on: the status of attendance, the type and the agenda of the meeting, and the concrete needs and interest of an organization in presenting its position at meetings.

54. The minimum preparation consists of consultations of files, background documents, briefings from technical units and the preparation of oral or, more frequently, written statements. Almost the half of attendance is thus prepared. As mentioned in paragraph 26, the late receipt of invitations and lack of background documents have been obstacles to an appropriate preparation for participation.

55. The preparation in organizations which pay more attention to this aspect of representation is more precisely organized. At WHO, the designated representative consults the reports on previous meetings, collects documentation, makes research, corresponds with the inviting organization (whenever necessary) and prepares papers on his own contribution which are regularly clarified at a higher level. WMO follows a similar procedure.

56. At FAO, apart from this usual procedure, the preparatory work sometimes includes the convening of interdivisional meetings or seeking of written comments by units concerned regarding the Organization's position on the subject to be discussed. Representatives of UNESCO are very well briefed before departure both orally and in writing, if required. In the case of FAO and IMO, written papers prepared are regularly cleared with the directors of the departments concerned, although there are even cases that require special clearance from the Director-General or approval by the Secretary-General. UPU's rules provide for regular discussion with the Director-General about the agenda of the meeting and statements, if any.

57. In ICAO's practice, the representatives receive an appropriate briefing by their supervisor which may be approved by the Secretary-General or even the President of the Council of ICAO, depending on the importance of the meeting.

58. When the participation is assured by staff members of the regional or liaison offices of FAO and WHO, the unit concerned of headquarters should provide them with adequate briefing and necessary information in order to properly represent the Organization.

#### B. Participation

59. In the manuals of the specialized agencies, there are no provisions related to the attendance at conferences and meetings, contrary to the United Nations in which the Secretary-General's bulletin provides for precise provisions which determine the substantive activity of representatives during the meeting's deliberations.

60. However, given that the replies to the questionnaire concerning this section have covered almost all aspects of attendance, the organizations must have established in practice rules on this issue and gained an experience from day-to-day work.

61. Depending on the nature of the invitations and also on the type of the meetings, as well as the particular requirements of the inviting organization, participation of specialized agencies can be either active or passive.

62. Active participation is meant to embrace an engaged activity of participants in the meetings, for example, by pronouncing statements, submitting reports or working papers, participating in drafting resolutions or at working groups or other committees, and particularly having specific functions as chairmanship, rapporteurs, etc. As explained in chapter II, many cases of representation of organizations of the United Nations system can be as "observer" or "consultative" status without vote. However, the status of participation in the meetings has nothing to do with the nature of participation. Whatever the status of the representatives is (either as members of a given meeting or as "observers"), participants could play an active role in meeting.

63. On the other hand, passive participation consists of simple presence without taking any part in the meeting. This does not entail any contribution, either to the conference deliberations during a meeting, or to the departments concerned after the meeting. Thus, this type of participation is merely for reasons of protocol or institutional courtesy and is passive by nature.

64. Generally, the representatives of specialized agencies participate actively in conferences and meetings, many of which concern technical subjects within their mandate.

65. As far as the total number of meetings attended is concerned, the comparison of figures for 1985 and 1986 shows that there were no major changes.

66. Regarding the number of representatives per meeting, the situation was almost the same in 1986 in comparison with 1985. In addition, the concrete data indicate that, on average, more than one representative per meeting (from 1.03 to 1.65 percent) attended the meetings (see table 2, page 15).

Table 2: Number of representatives per meeting

Organization	1985			1986		
	Number of meetings attended	Number of representatives sent	Average per meeting	Number of meetings attended	Number of representatives sent	Average per meeting
FAO	592	783	1,32	661	807	1,22
ICAO	76	95	1,25	72	83	1,15
ILO	223	367	1,65	209	303	1,45
IMO	80	85	1,06	75	82	1,09
ITU	n.a.*	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
UNESCO	263	n.a.	n.a.	192	n.a.	n.a.
UNIDO	138	n.a.	n.a.	79	n.a.	n.a.
UPU	68	77	1,13	71	77	1,08
WHO	844	n.a.	n.a.	750	873	1,16
WIPO	67	71	1,05	90	93	1,03
WMO <u>a/</u>	128	138	1,08	118	141	1,19

a/ Inter-agency meetings which took place in Geneva are not included.

\*/ n.a. = Not available.

67. According to the replies to the questionnaire, the representatives of specialized agencies attend meetings mostly for the whole period. However, in some cases, officials stay as long as the agenda item of interest to the organization is discussed. There is also a principle to attend short meetings for the whole period, although the attendance at meetings of longer duration is limited to discussion of the issues of particular relevance to the organization. At IMO, the question arises when the duration of the meeting exceeds a week and measures are taken to limit the length of attendance within a week. In any case, the length of attendance is usually determined before the meeting, although the representatives may decide by themselves to change it on-the-spot depending on the development of the meetings.

68. The Inspector has found that specialized agencies use field and regional offices (whenever exist) for representational purposes more than the United Nations. This is the practice and policy of FAO, ICAO (covering 60 percent of the meetings), UNESCO and WHO, and to some extent ILO, IMO and WMO. The manuals of WHO, FAO and ICAO contain detailed provisions on representation by officials of regional offices and the figures show a very developed practice in this field.

69. The representational function of some organizations is well undertaken by their respective liaison offices in New York and Geneva. That is the practice of FAO, UNIDO, WHO and WIPO. In the last years and due to the financial constraints, a policy-decision called for an increased attendance at meetings by staff of liaison offices in order to restrict travels from headquarters.

### C. Reporting

70. In the majority of organizations, the reporting procedures are subject to standing instructions. The arrangements are different from one organization to another. The related provisions contained in administrative manuals are either short and explicit or well developed and precise. Some organizations (FAO) have established strict provisions requiring the traveller to submit a satisfactory travel report prior to the submission for processing of the travel expense claim. Regarding time limit, some manuals provide for one week; and others tolerate 30 days of the end of the meeting.

71. In the other part of organizations, there exist no rules or instructions governing the reporting, which implies the absence of well defined policy of organizations and reflects the superficial manner in approaching this important stage of representation.

72. As the departments of the United Nations, the specialized agencies have usual forms of reports, such as: oral or written reports, summary or combined forms of reports. The forms depend on the status of attendance and, consequently, the role of the representative to be played at the meeting.

73. The Inspector considers that written reports are more frequent in the practice of specialized agencies than in the United Nations. On the other hand, some of the specialized agencies, particularly those with a significant activity of representation, request their representatives to submit a comprehensive document containing: (a) the evaluation of the main developments during the meeting's deliberations; (b) the assessment of the significant aspects and results of attendance; (c) the summary of recommendations indicating the follow-up action to be taken; and (d) an explanatory consideration when the meeting has important policy implication.

74. Similarly to the United Nations, the Inspector has also concluded that the provisions requiring the submission of reports at the end of each meeting are not well observed in a number of cases. This represents the weakness in supervisory mechanisms of the organizations concerned as well. The lack of reports may be detrimental to the overall monitoring procedure.

## VI. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

### A. Costs of representation

75. It is estimated that the organizations concerned spend on average roughly 2-3 percent of their regular budget for the purposes of representation. This is only an estimate since most of the organizations do not have a specific budgetary provision on representation, which is usually under a general provision on "official business travel" or "duty travel". Thus, most of the organizations indicate in their replies to the questionnaire that the information on costs of representation is not available. Technically speaking, it should be feasible to determine expenditures spent on representation by collecting the account code number related to this item.

76. This would be a time-consuming exercise, although some organizations (FAO, IMO and UPU) made efforts to provide these figures. Even in cases where such a sub-code exists (UNESCO), it was explained that this does not necessarily correspond to the scope of this study. It was also the case in the United Nations. The fact that many organizations have a practice of combining different missions, which is rational and cost-saving, also makes it difficult to establish actual costs for representation.

77. In addition, all the organizations have the authority to make allocation transfers between objects of expenditure. In conclusion, given that expenditure data would be partial, the Inspector decided not to present actual costs of representation within the framework of this study.

### B. Financial and budgetary control

78. In Part A, the Inspector pointed out the major deficiencies in the financial control related to representation, as follows: (i) work procedures for the authorization of official travel of staff to attend meetings, which have permitted the sending of staff on mission without appropriate authorization; (ii) frequency in incorrect coding of accounts; and (iii) loose control on the use of other funds by means of internal and temporary borrowings.

79. First, with regard to the weak procedures, the Secretary-General's bulletin was already revised, in the meantime, with a view to tightening the procedure. Under the new procedure, the approval of the Representation Unit is the pre-condition to issue the travel authorization (form PT.8), which would effectuate the purchase of tickets, payment of per diem, etc. In specialized agencies, it has been found impossible to send staff members on mission without authorization in almost all organizations. In some organizations, particularly smaller centralized organizations, the execution of official travels is directly controlled by the executive heads. In larger organizations, although these procedures are not under direct control by the executive heads, mission and travel authorization procedures are established in such a way that the purchasing of tickets would not be possible unless

appropriate authorization is given. In the case of FAO, under its austerity measures, all representation travels which have financial implications require the authorization of the Office of the Director-General.

80. Secondly, the question of frequent incorrect coding was not very much raised in specialized agencies. Almost all organizations do not have a budgetary provision or sub-account on "representation" proper. Apart from the United Nations, the only exception is UNESCO sub-account on "representation". However, it does not necessarily correspond to "representation" of this study. In the case of IMO, its provision on "official travel" is totally spent for representational purposes. This leads to difficulties in obtaining comparable financial information on the organizations.

81. Thirdly, internal and temporary transfers among the object of expenditures are the authority of each organization. The deficiency has not been found in this respect; however, this practice has given the Inspector difficulties to evaluate the actual situation regarding representation.

82. As a result of discussions with the officials concerned of the organizations, it has become clear that this is also a matter of budgetary control. In cases where the budgeting is done very precisely, to the extent that all the missions are provided in the budget, a good budgetary control would lead to efficient execution of missions for the purpose of attending meetings as representatives of the organizations. It should be mentioned, in this respect, that the governing bodies of some organizations examine these missions (ICAO, UNESCO and UPU).

## VII. MONITORING PROCEDURE

83. It goes without saying that regular ongoing review, as well as periodical summaries and analyses of participation in conferences and meetings, are very important for an assessment of the overall representational activity of the organizations. It is by means of monitoring that the organizations are able to continuously check whether the criteria and principles laid down in their regulations and rules on representation are adhered to. And, it is on the basis of these evaluations that they can draw conclusions on their future participation.

84. In a majority of organizations, the administrative manuals on representation do not contain any provisions related to monitoring. This makes it difficult to determine the policies of these organizations regarding monitoring.

85. However, according to the replies to the questionnaire, more than a half of organizations have established in practice formal monitoring procedures.

86. The method of monitoring varies considerably from one organization to another. Some organizations (WHO, FAO and UNESCO) developed a comprehensive monitoring embracing all stages of representation. Reports on representation are made in conjunction with the original justification for participation in the meeting and the assessment of the effectiveness of overall representation. They also include the evaluation of the representative's conclusions on meeting's deliberations, as well as his/her recommendations related to future follow-up actions.

87. Periodic reviews are undertaken only at a small number of organizations (ICAO, UNESCO and UPU) in which the governing bodies examine their representational activity. Otherwise, the reviews are undertaken quarterly or annually either at the organization-wide or at the departmental level.

88. Some other organizations monitor their representation on a case-by-case basis without making any periodical summaries or analyses. This monitoring is done by external relations sectors, sometimes in collaboration with departments or other units concerned.

89. According to the findings of the Inspector, small centralized organizations well manage a monitoring process, and the larger ones have rather difficulty in monitoring.

90. It has become clear that real problems exist in those organizations which do not monitor their representation at all. In these organizations, even the reports of representatives on attendance at meetings which could be served as a basis for monitoring are not regularly submitted. In the Inspector's opinion, this reflects the spontaneous approach of the organizations to representation, underestimating such an important sphere of activity.

### VIII. NEW TECHNOLOGY

91. The research of ways and means to rationalize the representational activity, particularly to make it less expensive, has led the Inspector to examine the possibility of introducing advanced technology in the field of representation. The question is whether face-to-face conferencing can be replaced by more economical means with the same efficiency. Among various systems, teleconferencing seems the most appropriate as an alternative.

92. A teleconferencing is a meeting conducted through electronic means between participants being in two or more remote locations. The progress of new technologies greatly contributed to the development of techniques for teleconferencing.

93. Depending on the capabilities offered, the technique for teleconferencing could be generally classified into three types: (a) electronic mail based system, (b) audio conferencing, and (c) audiovisual conferencing.

94. The electronic mail based system (a) is also called "computer conferencing". All participants, wherever they are, have access to the same computer, either directly or through a network, as well as to the same file on that computer by using a terminal. A participant, who wishes to contribute something to the teleconference, writes his notes using word processing. This information is stored in that particular file from which all participants can read on the screen by retrieving this information. In the same manner, they can write their comments or other notes into the same file. This type of teleconference is not tied with time factor and could continue over years.

95. The audio conference (b) allows conference participants remote from one another to communicate among themselves through voice using audio equipment. This could also offer participants between sites the capability to share graphics, texts or diagrams by facsimile or an electronic blackboard.

96. The most sophisticated way is to use telecommunications for visual and auditory communication as (c). This system is also called videoconferencing and visioconferencing <sup>5/</sup>. This technique functions by means of televisions or videos assisted by computer to which the images are transmitted through satellite or other communication lines, thereby allowing participants to "view" the images of participants of the conference. With the most advanced technique of this system, they could view, interact and talk with participants in a remote location simultaneously (in an "on-line" manner). In addition, this provides the possibility to transmit and view slides and documents. Technically speaking, the manner of showing images is either "one-way" or "two-way interactive". The former enables the participants to see and hear the conference leader but not vice versa. It is the latter that allows both the leader and participants to see, hear and discuss interactively in a remote location. There are already conference centres which provide this service.

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<sup>5/</sup> Cf. JIU report on "Management of interpretation services in the United Nations system" (A/41/648).



Depending on the memory storage, the type of equipment used and transmission data rates available, the frequency of updating images varies from several times a minute to less than a second.

97. Until the early 1980's, the costs for sending a video (television) signal between remote sites required wider bandwidth capability which was extremely expensive. The introduction of the motion processor or codec, which digitizes the video signal, eliminates redundancies in each picture frame (such as stationary background information) and compresses the signal to require less bandwidth, made teleconferencing an economical communications option.

98. As a result of the installation of digital networks between the most important cities in Europe, United States and Canada, the teleconferencing service has become an economical device. In the case of Geneva, the Geneva International Conference Centre is equipped with the teleconferencing service, which could be very well utilized by the offices located therein, given that the electronic link between the United States, Canada and Switzerland is assured by satellite INTELSAT.

99. Thus, a teleconferencing system offers different possibilities to conference participants located in different places, such as: to communicate, exchange information, share and interact through graphics, figures and printed texts, etc. Both as a substitute for and a supplement to face-to-face meetings, a teleconferencing system, particularly the audiovisual or video conferencing, would enable to considerably reduce expenses, save time as well as to increase efficiency. Moreover, applications of this system could be developed according to the needs of each conference and the advancement of new technologies.

100. The questionnaire included a particular section concerning the possible introduction of new technology in representation. All the organizations which have replied to this section do admit the usefulness of the technological innovation. However, all replies are negative regarding the introduction of new telecommunication technologies as a means to conduct conferences and meetings. They feel it unlikely that representation could be replaced by teleconferencing. One of the reasons is that the role of representation is not simply limited to the submission of reports or announcement of statements. It entails also on-the-spot personal contacts which provide opportunities for negotiations, exchange of views and initiatives concerning various very important issues.

## IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Conclusions

101. The main conclusion drawn from the overall review and comparison of representational activities of the specialized agencies and the United Nations is that there is a great diversity in administrative instructions, rules, guidelines, etc. governing representation, as well as a variety in the procedures and mechanisms dealing with these activities. Given the structure of the United Nations system, this is quite normal. However, this situation makes it very difficult to ensure an efficient co-ordination of the procedures related to representation. The Inspector does not believe that uniformity would be desirable as a bureaucratic measure. He, nonetheless, considers that some additional efforts should be required to establish and follow similar practice regarding some important issues (e.g., invitations). This would contribute to the system-wide co-ordination in the field of representation, improve the efficiency of participation in meetings and reduce the costs involved.

102. The manner in which the invitations are issued and processed reveals deficiencies. The practice of sending invitations directly to individual staff members continues, which renders it difficult to ensure the efficient co-ordination and timely decision on participation unless specific procedures are followed. This is a problem both at the United Nations and some specialized agencies. In the Inspector's opinion, the invitations should be addressed, as a general rule, to the executive heads of organizations. This does not preclude that these invitations indicate the name of individual staff members whose participation would be desired. To this effect it would be necessary to take appropriate measures to bring the conformity of practice throughout the United Nations system.

103. Another problem is the increase in the number of late receipt of invitations and the lack of preparatory documents. Under these circumstances, it is indeed difficult for the organizations to properly evaluate invitations and assess correctly the interest of the organization in participating in the meeting. In case of accepting such invitations the adequate, unobstructive preparation for efficient participation would be quite impossible.

104. In several organizations, there are no internal rules on representation. In the Inspector's opinion, these organizations should establish minimum regulations in order to strengthen the bases for representation.

105. One of the specific aspects of the procedure in handling representation of the specialized agencies is that the proposal for acceptance (or refusal) of an invitation and the approval of this proposal are handled more or less at the same level in some organizations. In the Inspector's opinion it would be necessary to separate these two levels in decision-making for representation as to reach the higher degree of objectivity and control.

106. The Inspector also concludes that some organizations do not pay sufficient attention to their representatives' preparation with a view to ensuring a correct and successful participation in the meetings.

Some of them have no rules on this important issue. It is clear that the lack of adequate substantive preparation will lead to superficial participation, thereby resulting in inappropriate follow-up action.

107. While some organizations have, to some extent, participation decreased in 1986 in comparison with 1985, others have maintained it more or less the same. This implies that the organizations may have reached a "holding level" and have increasingly relied on external financing for participation.

108. The participation in international meetings is assured on average by more than one official. On the other hand, the attendance is mostly for the entire period of the meeting. The Inspector strongly believes that the number of officials designated for representation and the duration of their stay can be reduced without prejudice to the efficiency of the participation. In this regard, it may be recalled that the report of Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations <sup>6/</sup> included, *inter alia*, that "the number and duration of missions should be reduced, as should the number of staff members attending conferences." (Recommendation 38).

109. It is necessary to streamline and discipline reporting duties of representatives upon their return from the meeting. The Inspector considers that, when a report is not submitted, it can be presumed that the participation itself has not been successful. The lack of such reports will seriously hamper the appropriate follow-up activity of the organization.

110. To improve efficiency in the participation in conferences and meetings would require the establishment of monitoring procedures in those organizations which usually do not make analysis or assessment of their representational activity.

111. Regarding the use of technological innovation in representation (as teleconferencing), the Inspector limited the consideration to only marking a position. For the time being, it does not seem possible to introduce existing teleconferencing system in the area of representation. It would certainly require further experiments to see whether teleconferencing can replace personal contacts and direct discussions which are useful to solve critical problems. The Inspector, however, feels it possible to use advanced systems for representational purposes in the near future, for which the further investigation should continue.

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<sup>6/</sup> Supplement No. 49, A/41/49.

B. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

With a view to improving the efficiency of representation and to facilitating proper and efficient system-wide co-ordination, the ACC should take an initiative to ensure the development of generally acceptable procedures, in particular, on the issuance and processing of invitations and on the regular and timely provision of background documents on the meetings concerned.

Recommendation 2

The executive heads should request sectors, units and officials responsible for the representational activity to strictly apply the rules and guidelines governing representation. These should be related to more coherent evaluation of invitations, adequate substantive preparation for, and efficient, rational and cost effective participation in meetings, as well as a proper observance of reporting and monitoring duties in their respective organizations.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of organizations which do not have any internal rules on representation should make arrangements to set forth appropriate provisions in the correspondent manuals so as to ensure more orderly co-ordination procedures related to this activity.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads should assure periodical reviews on overall representational activity, particularly from the point of view of effectiveness of the representatives' participation in international meetings and the costs involved.

Recommendation 5

The decision-making process should be instituted at two levels with a view to separating the approval function from that of co-ordination and proposal. This would ensure the objectivity and control of decisions on the acceptance of invitations and designation of representatives to attend meetings.

Recommendation 6

With a view to achieving substantial savings and better utilization of human resources, the attendance at international meetings should be limited, as a general policy rule, to one representative and only during the period of discussions of the agenda item of direct interest to the organization. This should explicitly be stated in the decision on designation of representatives.

Recommendation 7

The appropriate services of each organization should further follow the developments in the use of new technologies with a view to determining the introduction of advanced techniques (e.g., teleconferencing) in representation.

