



United Nations

**Review of management and administration
in the World Meteorological Organization
(WMO)**

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

Prepared by Keiko Kamioka

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Executive summary

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Introduction and review objectives

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) originated from the International Meteorological Organization, which was founded in 1873 to facilitate the exchange of weather information across national borders. Established by the ratification of the Convention of the World Meteorological Organization on 23 March 1950, WMO became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1951. It currently has 187 Member States and 6 Territories. WMO provides the framework for international cooperation at the global level on weather, climate and the water cycle, for the development of meteorology and operational hydrology.

Its supreme governing body is the World Meteorological Congress, the decisions of which are implemented by the Executive Council. Six Regional Associations are responsible for the coordination of meteorological, hydrological and related activities within their respective regions. Congress may establish technical commissions that consist of technical experts in order to study and make recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council on any subject within the mandate of WMO. The secretariat of WMO, comprising 292 personnel, is headquartered in Geneva and has four regional offices and two liaison offices.

The overall objective of the present review by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) is to assess the progress of the constituent bodies reform and the secretariat restructuring; and to provide an independent assessment of management and administration, highlighting areas of concern and those in need of improvement, as well as good practices adopted by WMO.

Main findings

Constituent bodies reform

Established in 1950 as a successor of the International Meteorological Organization, WMO recognizes the need to continuously adapt to a rapidly changing world. The need for regular reform is driven by, among other forces, environmental degradation, resource constraints, increased competition and scientific and technical advances. WMO also sees the need to enhance wider engagement of all Members, private and academic sectors, the science community and partner organizations.

An historic reform of the constituent bodies has been carried out in accordance with the directions given at the seventeenth session of Congress in 2015 and the following sessions of the Executive Council in 2016 and 2017. Its aim was to ensure continuous improvement of processes and practices to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the constituent bodies and the overall efficiency of WMO. At its eighteenth session in 2019, Congress approved a consolidated proposal for the reform of the constituent bodies, aligned with the WMO Strategic Plan 2020–2023.

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a road map for the implementation of reform. It identifies five long-term goals: (a) better serve societal needs; (b) enhance Earth system observations and predictions; (c) advance targeted research; (d) close the capacity gap on weather, climate, hydrological and related environmental services; and (e) strategically realign WMO structures and programmes for effective policymaking and decision-making and implementation.

As a result of the reform, two new technical commissions were created in 2019 to replace the previous eight commissions. In the new structure, weather, climate, water and ocean infrastructure and services favour a holistic Earth system approach. The two technical commissions support the implementation of the first and second long-term goals mentioned above. The Research Board on Weather, Climate, Water and the Environment and the Scientific Advisory Panel of independent experts were also created in 2019 to support the implementation of the third goal. Reform of the six Regional Associations is under way to enhance their respective roles in supporting implementation of the fourth goal. To support the implementation of the fifth goal, the Technical Coordination Committee created in 2018 acts as a two-way interface between the Executive Council and the newly established technical commissions, the Research Board and other relevant bodies.

According to the results of a survey carried out by JIU seeking the views of WMO Members on the reform, there is general appreciation for the changes and the expected results thereof. The reform process, including communication thereon, requires further modification to achieve optimal results. A significant number of Members believe that it is too early to assess the overall results of the reform and the processes put in place to implement it because many aspects of the reform process are still under way and some may have been delayed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The reform is a significant investment in more streamlined governance. It should be continuously adjusted to ensure that it meets its stated objectives and assessed for lessons learned and good practices.

Secretariat restructuring

As a consequence of the ongoing constituent bodies reform, the secretariat has undergone major reorganization and restructuring of its workforce in order to align itself with the new constituent body structure and to achieve annual savings of approximately 1,325,000 Swiss francs in the regular budget, which is equivalent to 2 per cent of the annual budget of WMO.

In order to align the secretariat with the new constituent body structure, seven technical departments were reorganized into five new departments with the appointment of new directors. Senior managers' compacts were introduced with the aim of strengthening accountability and enhancing the performance measurement system. Administrative support services have been significantly reorganized within the secretariat by merging non-technical departments into the new Governance Services Department and bringing together most staff in the General Service category previously dispersed across departments.

The restructuring has resulted in a reduction in director posts at D-2 level from 8 to 6, an increase in D-1 positions from 10 to 13, a reduction of 23 posts in the General Service category through 11 voluntary departures and 12 separations, and the departure of 9 staff in the Professional category. The separation exercise cost the organization more than 3 million Swiss francs. In addition, there are various other intrinsic costs associated with the restructuring, such as the loss of institutional knowledge, the negative effect of uncertainty on staff morale, retraining costs for those with new duties and training and induction costs for new recruits.

The secretariat restructuring could have achieved better results if the change management process used for the constituent bodies reform had been followed, together with a comprehensive master plan, verifiable results with a proper baseline, a risk assessment and cost estimates. Various changes were made at the same time, increasing the risk of the breakdown of internal controls and creating inefficiencies. Several communication channels were set up for staff to provide comments and feedback on the restructuring, but some were not utilized effectively. A further adjustment of the secretariat structure should be made that includes wider consultation with staff and line managers, without compromising internal control, in order to achieve the objectives of the restructuring.

Oversight and accountability

WMO needs more comprehensive internal control and accountability frameworks to provide an enabling environment for staff at all levels to act responsibly with a full understanding and knowledge of their delegated authorities and corresponding responsibilities, as well as of the rules, regulations and procedures that govern the activities associated with their respective duties and responsibilities. The Secretary-General of WMO should prepare a comprehensive accountability and internal control framework as soon as possible and submit it to the Executive Council for approval.

Systematic training and induction, together with operational manuals of business processes, should be conducted so that staff members can properly discharge their duties and responsibilities in a consistent and coherent manner and manage risks with a comprehensive knowledge of the regulatory frameworks, rules and procedures governing their areas of operations.

The location and/or the reporting lines of the Legal Counsel, the Risk Officer (namely the current Risk and Quality Management Officer), the Evaluation Officer (namely the current Head of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk and Performance Unit) and the Controller are not in line with their respective duties and responsibilities, which should be properly addressed.

Senior managers' compacts, a statement of internal control, job descriptions, designation of certifying and approving officers and service notes provide fragmented information on delegated authorities and corresponding responsibilities to selected staff members. Many of these instruments are not consistent and coherent and, in some instances, directly contradict the Standing Instructions and Staff and Financial Regulations. All these instruments should be reviewed and revised to ensure consistency and coherence both internally and with the Standing Instructions, Rules and Regulations.

The five reviews conducted by JIU (one in 2004, two in 2007 and two in 2008) issued numerous observations and recommendations, many of which have not been properly addressed and are repeated in the present review. The Inspector strongly recommends that those critical recommendations made by JIU, once accepted by the organization, should be institutionalized into its policies and procedures, as appropriate, in order to avoid the recurrence of the same issues after changes in leadership and the transfers of key staff to other roles.

Management

The secretariat needs strategies for key management areas, such as human and financial resources management, change management and business continuity management. Comprehensive strategies in those areas should be developed and progress on them should be regularly reported to the Executive Council. The policies and procedures related to information technology were issued in 2007 and should be updated as soon as possible.

The restructured secretariat needs further improvements as some of the arrangements lack logical business sense and compromise internal control. Before proceeding further with the restructuring, the secretariat should conduct an organizational review to ensure logical grouping of work units and a streamlined workflow in order to maximize the use of limited resources without compromising control and risk mitigation.

Certain critical positions, such as Director of Finance and Administration, Chief Information Officer and Chief Security Officer, are missing. An organization without qualified senior officials with relevant experience to fulfil those key roles exposes itself to the risk of mismanagement and loss of institutional credibility and integrity.

Re-establishing trust and partnership between management and staff is crucial going forward. A staff survey has not been conducted since the secretariat restructuring started in 2019. It is recommended that a staff survey, jointly designed by management and the Staff Committee, be conducted to gather data on the experiences and suggestions of staff.

Conclusions and recommendations

The present review contains four recommendations, of which one is addressed to the Executive Council and three to the Secretary-General of WMO for action. There are also 27 informal recommendations aimed at complementing the 4 recommendations.

Recommendation 1

By the end of 2022, the Executive Council should commission an independent evaluation of the constituent bodies reform to review the process used to implement the reform and its substantive results, including the alignment of the restructured secretariat, as well as good practices and lessons learned.

Recommendation 2

By no later than the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should commission a joint review team, comprised of management and staff who are familiar with each area of work, to conduct a structural and process review, facilitated by an independent expert, to further refine and adjust the overall secretariat restructuring in order to achieve the objectives of such restructuring.

Recommendation 3

By the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive accountability and internal control framework and submit it to the Executive Council for approval.

Recommendation 4

By no later than the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive human resources strategy and submit it to the Executive Council for approval. Progress on the strategy should be reported at least annually thereafter as a regular item on the Executive Council's agenda.

Informal recommendations

Chapter II: constituent bodies reform

- Communication is key to the success of the reform and more and better communication is needed. The Inspector recommends that the reporting format and issues associated with the reform be discussed further so that Members receive sufficient updates on the reform process, the achievement of goals, the timeline and the cost of the reform (see para. 34).

- Opportunities for wider participation of Members should be more clearly stated, and such participation should be solicited in order to share the burden of the reform efforts and gain buy-in. Members of the Executive Council should consider adjusting some of the processes associated with the reform to broaden and diversify participation in order to ensure more equitable engagement, strengthen the reform ownership by Members and increase the confidence of Members in meeting the goals of the reform (see para. 39).
- The constituent bodies reform is a significant investment in more streamlined governance. It should be continuously adjusted to ensure that it meets its stated objectives and assessed for lessons learned and good practices (see para. 55).

Chapter III: secretariat restructuring

- The Executive Council should consider adding an agenda item to its sessions specifically on the secretariat restructuring effort to provide greater visibility on the progress made towards reaching its goals and milestones, as well as to ensure alignment with the constituent bodies reform (see para. 89).
- In accordance with Staff Regulation 8.1 and as requested by Congress and the Executive Council, the Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General ensure further transparent communication and sufficient consultations with staff during the ongoing secretariat restructuring to address staff concerns and ensure a productive outcome (see para. 90).
- It is important for the record and transparency to prepare a comparison of the costs and benefits for WMO between the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal and the United Nations internal justice system (see para. 97).
- The secretariat could benefit from a real-time audit by the Internal Oversight Office, rather than a post-fact audit, in order to receive timely observations and recommendations on process, control and risk management, subject to the independent decision to do so by the Director of the Internal Oversight Office (see para. 101).

Chapter IV: oversight and accountability

- Operational manuals, guidance and flow charts should be further developed by each department and/or business owner and coordinated by the Human Resources Section, and training and induction should be conducted accordingly, so that staff members can properly discharge their duties and responsibilities and manage risks with a full knowledge of regulatory frameworks, rules and procedures governing their areas of operations (see para. 108).
- The Legal Office should be decoupled from the Governance Services Department and become an independent office as it used to be. The Legal Counsel should not engage in operational activities other than managing his or her staff in order to avoid any conflict of interest (see para. 110).
- The reporting line of the Risk Officer [namely the current Risk and Quality Management Officer] should be moved to the Assistant Secretary-General (see para. 111).
- The Controller's Office should be separated from the Cabinet Office and the Controller should report directly to the Assistant Secretary-General (see para. 114).
- The Inspector, therefore, recommends that the task of keeping a central repository of all management overrides be added to the terms of reference of the Controller (see para. 116).
- The Inspector recommends that the Internal Oversight Office should recuse itself from engagement in the administrative reviews of staff appeals in the future (see para. 119).

- It is therefore recommended that the position of Evaluation Officer [namely the current Head of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk and Performance Unit] be transferred back to the Internal Oversight Office to re-establish its independence, impartiality and organizational credibility (see para. 120).
- The Inspector recommends that the format of the Audit and Oversight Committee meetings be reviewed and revised, as appropriate, in order to ensure the independence, impartiality and integrity of the Committee (see para. 124).
- The Inspector would like to recommend that the Audit and Oversight Committee's performance be assessed by an independent external expert once every three to five years, which was also recommended in JIU/REP/2019/6 (see para. 126).
- The Inspector strongly recommends that those critical recommendations made by JIU, once accepted by the organization, should be institutionalized into its policies and procedures, as appropriate, in order to avoid the recurrence of the same issues after changes in leadership and the transfers of key staff to other roles (see para. 134).
- Accountability should start at the top and the Executive Management should demonstrate an appropriate tone. It is strongly recommended that senior managers' compacts be signed by the Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General, starting in 2021 (see para. 138).
- The Secretary-General should review all instruments such as senior managers' compacts, the statement of internal control, delegations of authority, job descriptions and the performance appraisal system to ensure consistency and coherence among such instruments and with the Standing Instructions, Rules and Regulations (see para. 141).

Chapter V: management

- As recommended in chapter III, before proceeding further with the restructuring, the secretariat should conduct an organizational review to ensure logical grouping of work units and a streamlined workflow in order to maximize the use of limited resources without compromising control and risk mitigation (see para. 154).
- The policies and procedures related to information technology were last issued in 2007 and are now outdated. The secretariat should update them as soon as possible. The Chief Information Officer should be able to assess the quality of services that WMO acquires from the United Nations International Computing Centre. The secretariat should establish a position of Chief Information Officer or designate someone qualified for such a function, with the key roles and responsibilities being included in his or her compact and performance plan (see para. 158).
- The Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General recruit, as soon as possible, a qualified senior-level official who can direct, organize and coordinate financial, accounting, human resources, corporate information technology, procurement and other administrative activities, as well as design, maintain and enhance the Enterprise Resource Planning system with a full knowledge of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) (see para. 163).
- The Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General prepare, as soon as possible, a financial resource management strategy and submit it to the Executive Council for approval and continuous monitoring (see para. 169).
- The Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General create, as soon as possible, a knowledge management and staff training strategy and plan, including comprehensive training programmes and mechanisms to retain institutional knowledge (see para. 173).
- A comprehensive review of the Enterprise Resource Planning system, together with all the issues discussed in the preceding paragraphs and a cost-benefit analysis, should be conducted in the next upgrade of the system (see para. 176).

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- It is imperative that the Secretary-General appoint an appropriate staff member to develop a business continuity strategy and/or policy, or include such a function in an existing position, and to draft a guideline on developing business continuity plans for each office/entity (see para. 180).
 - It is recommended that a staff survey, designed jointly by management and the Staff Committee, be conducted to gather data on the experiences and suggestions of staff (see para. 186).

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Acronyms

ICT	Information and communications technology
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

I. Introduction

1. The review of management and administration in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is part of a series of management and administration reviews conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for its participating organizations, which is in line with the JIU long-term strategic framework 2020–2029.¹ Originally planned for 2019, the present review was deferred until 2020 to avoid placing any extra burden on WMO during the ongoing reform of its constituent bodies and the subsequent restructuring of its secretariat, which began in 2019.

A. Background

2. WMO originated from the International Meteorological Organization, which was founded in 1873 to facilitate the exchange of weather information across national borders. Established by the ratification of the Convention of the World Meteorological Organization on 23 March 1950, WMO became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1951. It currently has 187 Member States and 6 Member Territories. WMO provides the framework for international cooperation at the global level on weather, climate and the water cycle, for the development of meteorology and operational hydrology.

3. Its supreme governing body is the World Meteorological Congress, which meets every four years, with the possibility of convening an extraordinary session within that period. The Executive Council implements the decisions of Congress and normally meets annually, while six Regional Associations² are responsible for the coordination of meteorological, hydrological and related activities within their respective regions. Congress may establish technical commissions that consist of technical experts in order to study and make recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council on any subject within the mandate of WMO.

4. The WMO secretariat is headquartered in Geneva, with four regional offices in Addis Ababa, for Africa; Asunción, for the Americas; Singapore, for Asia and the South-West Pacific; and Geneva, for Europe. There are also two liaison offices in New York and Brussels. The secretariat is led by the Secretary-General who is appointed by Congress for a four-year term with a maximum tenure of eight years. The Secretary-General is responsible for the overall technical and administrative work of the secretariat, which comprises 292 personnel worldwide.³ The current Secretary-General took office on 1 January 2016. He is now serving his second four-year term (January 2020–December 2023).

B. Objectives

5. The overall objective of the review is to assess the progress of the constituent bodies reform and the secretariat restructuring; and to provide an independent assessment of management and administration, highlighting areas of concern and those in need of improvement, as well as good practices adopted by WMO.

6. The review focuses on the following areas:

- The status of the constituent bodies reform and the secretariat restructuring, including the regional offices, and the adequacy of current arrangements for the management of financial and human resources and information and communications technology (ICT);

¹ A/74/34, annex I.

² Regional Association I (Africa); Regional Association II (Asia); Regional Association III (South America); Regional Association IV (North America, Central America and the Caribbean); Regional Association V (South-West Pacific); and Regional Association VI (Europe).

³ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)* (Geneva, 2020), “WMO human resources report”, EC-72/INF. 6.3(2).

- Governance, oversight and accountability mechanisms and their contributions to the ongoing reform and restructuring of WMO;
- Good practices adopted by WMO.

C. Scope

7. The present review was conducted at a time when WMO was reforming its constituent bodies and restructuring its secretariat, as well as responding to the limitations and effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Consequently, the Inspector focused on the areas of most concern and those that would likely assist the Executive Council and the Executive Management in fulfilling their mandates.

8. The review covers the management structure, its functioning and how the Executive Council and the recently established bodies are serviced by the secretariat. It assesses whether the reform and restructuring process is progressing as planned, taking account of the milestones set by the Executive Council and Congress regarding the expected outcomes of those processes.

9. The review includes a follow-up of the relevant recommendations made in the previous JIU reviews of WMO⁴ and the pertinent recommendations in other JIU system-wide reviews.⁵

10. Reviewing performance on technical and programmatic work conducted by WMO is not included in the scope of this review. This topic is covered only to the extent necessary in order to review management and administration processes related to it. The scope of the review was established in order to avoid overlaps with the work of the WMO Internal Oversight Office, the External Auditor and the Audit and Oversight Committee.

D. Methodology

11. In accordance with JIU internal standards and working procedures,⁶ the Inspector used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods from different sources for consistency, validity and reliability. The review team followed a collaborative approach with its stakeholders, seeking comments and suggestions during the review process, which includes, inter alia:

- **Desk review:** a desk review was conducted of relevant WMO documentation, especially on the implementation of the constituent bodies reform and strategic plans, Congress reports, Executive Council reports, reports and recommendations of oversight bodies, as well as administrative instructions, including Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules, internal policies and procedures, and other relevant internal documents;
- **Corporate questionnaires:** a total of four questionnaires were issued. A comprehensive questionnaire was issued to the secretariat to cover topics on the constituent bodies reform and the secretariat restructuring, management, administration, oversight and accountability to collect consistent and comparable information and data concerning operations and functions within WMO. Supplementary questionnaires were issued to the Internal Oversight Office, the Ethics Officer and the Chair of the Audit and Oversight Committee;
- **Interviews and meetings:** a total of 46 online or face-to-face interviews and meetings were conducted between July 2020 and January 2021 with 48 stakeholders, including the President of WMO, the Executive Management, senior managers and other

⁴ JIU/CL/2004/1, JIU/REP/2007/3, JIU/REP/2007/11, JIU/CL/2008/1 and JIU/ML/2008/1.

⁵ Such as the review of results-based management (JIU/REP/2017/6), the review of change management (JIU/REP/2019/4), the review of audit and oversight committees (JIU/REP/2019/6) and the review of enterprise risk management (JIU/REP/2020/5).

⁶ A/51/34, annex I, and A/68/34, annex VII.

personnel in charge of the main administrative, management and oversight functions, support staff and staff representatives;

- **Survey on the constituent bodies reform:** a survey was conducted on the constituent bodies reform. The survey population included the members of the Executive Council and permanent representatives, their advisers and alternates representing 187 Member States and 6 Member Territories. Eighty-two responses were received, representing all six regions, with substantial representation from Europe, Africa and Asia;
- **Sessions of the Executive Council and Financial Advisory Committee:** the Inspector and the JIU review team observed the seventy-second session of the Executive Council and the thirty-ninth session of the Financial Advisory Committee in September and October 2020. JIU had access to session documents, presentations and subsequent decisions from each session.

12. The full range of information and views received have been dealt with in accordance with the usual respect for confidentiality shown by JIU. The report primarily reflects aggregated responses and, in cases in which quotations are given for illustrative purposes, the sources are intentionally never cited.

13. The present review contains four recommendations, of which one is addressed to the Executive Council and three to the Secretary-General. These formal recommendations are complemented by 27 informal recommendations, which appear in bold throughout the text. To facilitate the handling of the recommendations, annex I contains a table of the four formal recommendations, specifying whether they require action by the organization's legislative/governing body or by the executive head.

14. The Inspector and the review team would like to thank the secretariat and key stakeholders of WMO for their full cooperation, responsiveness and transparency during the review.

II. Constituent bodies reform

Summary of JIU findings and recommendations

The reform effort is a significant investment in more streamlined governance. It should be continuously adjusted to ensure that it meets its stated objectives and assessed for lessons learned and good practices. Based on a survey conducted by JIU among the Members, it is possible to conclude that the reform process, including communication thereon and the engagement of Members, needs to be further improved to achieve optimal results.

Findings on the reform process:

- ✓ WMO Members would like to receive more information on the achievement of goals, processes, timelines and the cost of the reform;
- ✓ There is a perception that a small number of Members are involved in several aspects of the reform.

Findings on the results of the reform:

- ✓ Reform is a significant undertaking, which was conceived to streamline governance. There is general appreciation for the changes and the expected results of the reform;
- ✓ A significant number of Members believe it is too early to assess the overall results of the reform and the processes put in place to implement it because many aspects of the reform process are still under way and some may have been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Communication is key to the success of the reform and more and better communication is needed. The reporting format and issues associated with the reform should be discussed further so that Members receive sufficient updates on the reform process, the achievement of goals, timelines and the cost of the reform;
- ✓ Opportunities for wider participation of Members should be more clearly stated, and such participation should be solicited in order to share the burden of the reform efforts and gain buy-in. Members of the Executive Council should consider adjusting some of the processes associated with the reform to broaden and diversify participation in order to ensure more equitable engagement, strengthen the reform ownership by Members and increase the confidence of Members in meeting the goals of the reform;
- ✓ By the end of 2022, the Executive Council should commission an independent evaluation of the constituent bodies reform to review the process used to implement the reform and its substantive results, including the alignment of the restructured secretariat, as well as good practices and lessons learned (recommendation 1).

A. Background of constituent bodies reform

15. Established in 1950 as a successor of the International Meteorological Organization, WMO recognizes the need to continuously adapt to a rapidly changing world. The need for regular reform is driven by, among other forces, environmental degradation, resource constraints, increased competition, and scientific and technical advances.⁷ WMO also sees

⁷ WMO, "The WMO constituent body reform", AC-34/Doc. 3 (2020).

the need to enhance wider engagement of its Members, private and academic sectors, the science community and partner organizations.

16. At its seventeenth session in 2015, the World Meteorological Congress requested that the Executive Council continue to introduce specific measures for the improvement of processes and practices within WMO and carry out a holistic review of the organization. Congress also requested the Executive Council to provide recommendations to the eighteenth session of Congress on constituent body constructs, as appropriate, including possible new structures for the technical commissions, Regional Associations and the Executive Council.⁸ Between 2016 and 2017, the Executive Council developed a reform proposal based on a phased approach to ensure the smooth and effective transformation of different kinds of WMO constituent bodies.⁹

17. At its seventieth session in June 2018, the Executive Council adopted a constituent bodies reform transition plan,¹⁰ which included transition and change management processes, as well as a related communication strategy.¹¹ A specific task force, called the Constituent Bodies Reform Task Force, was established by the Executive Council to coordinate, manage and oversee the transition process.¹² The Executive Council also approved the creation of two new bodies, namely the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee, to prepare and streamline the decisions of the Executive Council and Congress. The Executive Council made final recommendations for the adoption of a new constituent bodies structure at the eighteenth session of Congress.

18. At its eighteenth session in June 2019, Congress approved a consolidated proposal for reform of the constituent bodies, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2020–2023, which was also adopted by Congress at its eighteenth session. It also decided that an extraordinary session of Congress should be held in Geneva in 2021.¹³ Congress requested the Executive Council to closely monitor the financial, administrative and organizational impacts of the WMO reform process and to report to Congress at its extraordinary session in 2021.¹⁴ One of the objectives of the extraordinary session is to take stock of and provide direction to the reform process.

19. The Strategic Plan 2020–2023 anticipates an increased demand for meteorological, hydrological and climatological services. It sets directions and priorities to guide the activities of WMO during the corresponding period and a vision up to 2030 to enable all Members to improve their information, products and services. It is intended to be a road map for the implementation of the reform, which identifies five long-term goals: (a) better serve societal needs; (b) enhance Earth system observations and predictions; (c) advance targeted research; (d) close the capacity gap on weather, climate, hydrological and related environmental services; and (e) strategically realign WMO structures and programmes for effective policymaking and decision-making and implementation.¹⁵

⁸ WMO, *Seventeenth World Meteorological Congress, Geneva, 25 May–12 June 2015: Abridged Final Report with Resolutions* (Geneva, 2015), WMO-No. 1157, para. 7.7: continuous improvement of WMO processes and practices.

⁹ WMO, *Executive Council Sixty-Eighth Session, Geneva, 15–24 June 2016: Abridged Final Report with Resolutions and Decisions* (Geneva, 2016), WMO-No. 1168, decision 84 (EC-68); and WMO, *Executive Council Sixty-Ninth Session, Geneva, 10–17 May 2017: Abridged Final Report with Resolutions and Decisions* (Geneva, 2017), WMO-No. 1196, decision 68 (EC-69).

¹⁰ WMO, *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventieth Session, Geneva, 20–29 June 2018*, WMO-No. 1218 (Geneva, 2018), resolution 36 (EC-70), annex 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, annex 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, annex 3.

¹³ WMO, *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Eighteenth Session, Geneva, 3–14 June 2019* (Geneva, 2019), WMO-No. 1236, resolution 89 (Cg-18).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 2 (Cg-18).

¹⁵ WMO, *WMO Strategic Plan 2020–2023* (Geneva, 2019), WMO-No. 1225.

B. Early results of constituent bodies reform

20. Overall reform is supported through implementation of the transition plan with a phased approach to ensure smooth and effective transformation of the constituent bodies. The transition plan outlines milestones, phases and intermittent targets and related tasks up to the seventy-second session of the Executive Council in 2020. The transition plan includes change management processes as “the success of the reform depends to a large extent on a well-elaborated change management process and scheduled transition”. The transition plan also mentions risk management as “identification and mitigation of risks should be incorporated in the transition and change management processes”.¹⁶

21. The reform is complemented by a communication strategy, which acknowledges the importance of effective communication for successful execution of the reform and describes key messages for each target audience.¹⁷

22. The Constituent Bodies Reform Task Force performed, inter alia, an oversight function regarding implementation of the transition plan and communication strategy for the reform.

23. In accordance with the Strategic Plan 2020–2023 and its five long-term goals, the structure of the technical commissions and other bodies has changed significantly, including:

- The creation of two new intergovernmental technical commissions in 2019 to replace eight commissions,¹⁸ some of which were inherited from the International Meteorological Organization:
 - The Commission for Weather, Climate, Water and Related Services and Applications (Services Commission) to support implementation of the first long-term goal;
 - The Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (Infrastructure Commission) to support implementation of the second long-term goal;
- The creation of the Research Board on Weather, Climate, Water and the Environment and the Scientific Advisory Panel of independent experts in 2019 to support implementation of the third long-term goal;
- The reform of the six Regional Associations to enhance their respective roles to support implementation of the fourth long-term goal;
- The positioning of the Technical Coordination Committee, which was created in 2018, to act as a two-way interface between the Executive Council and the newly established technical commissions, the Research Board and other relevant bodies to support implementation of the fifth long-term goal and facilitate coordination across the different areas of expertise in delivering the common mandate and fostering synergies.

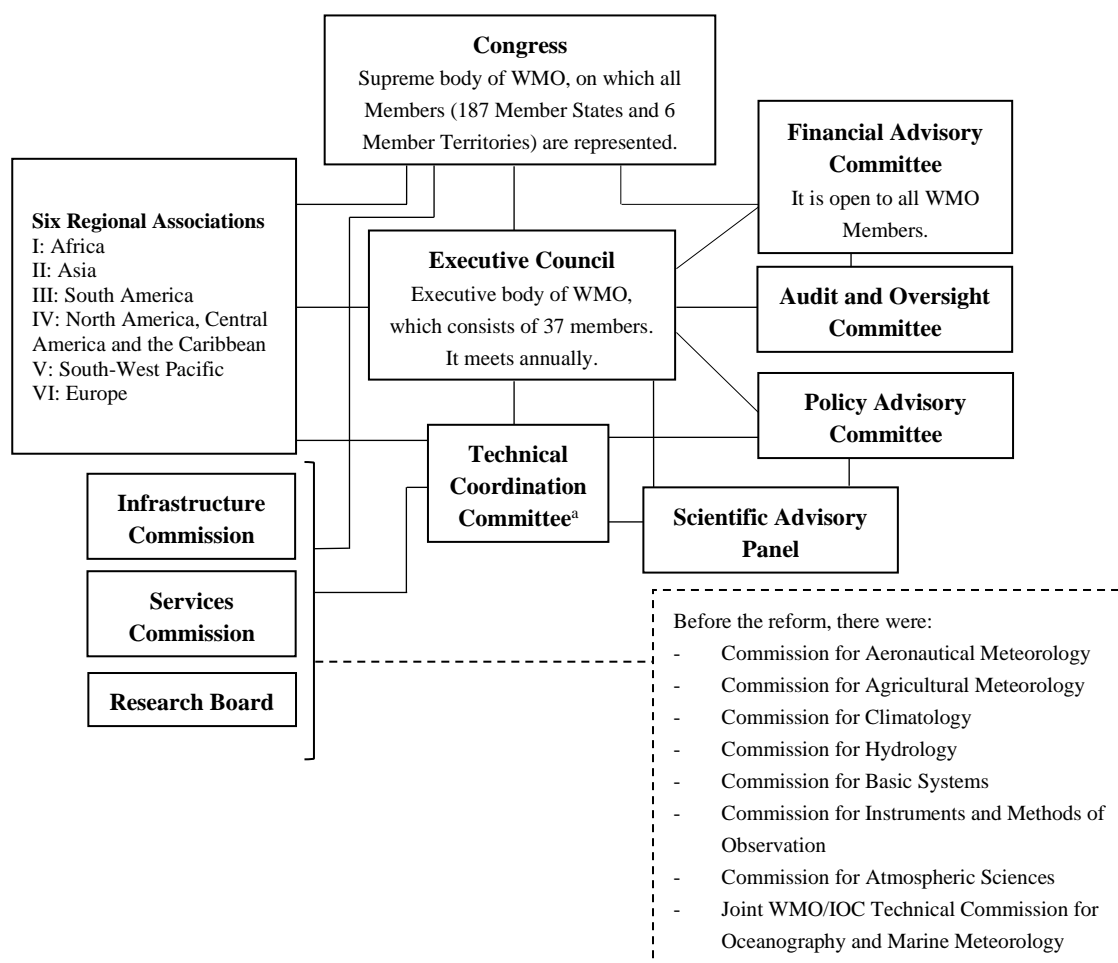
24. Figure I illustrates the main features of the new governance structure of WMO.

¹⁶ WMO, *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventieth Session, Geneva, 20–29 June 2018*, WMO-No. 1218, resolution 36 (EC-70), annex 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, annex 2.

¹⁸ The Commission for Aeronautical Meteorology, the Commission for Agricultural Meteorology, the Commission for Climatology, the Commission for Hydrology, the Commission for Basic Systems, the Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation, the Commission for Atmospheric Sciences and the Joint WMO/IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology.

Figure I
Main features of the new WMO governance structure



Source: WMO secretariat.

^a Under the Technical Coordination Committee, there are several bodies, such as the Climate Coordination Panel, the Hydrological Coordination Panel, the Executive Council Capacity Development Panel, and the Executive Council Panel of Experts on Polar and High-mountain Observations, Research and Services.

25. The Constituent Bodies Reform Task Force concluded its mandate by delivering a final report to the Executive Council at its seventy-second session in late 2020. In the report, the Task Force confirmed that the transition plan was progressing as planned. In terms of the communication strategy, the Task Force agreed that an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication strategy would be useful to guide follow-up actions. The Task Force also considered a series of identified risks associated with the reform and the mitigation measures in the risk registry prepared by the secretariat. The risk registry, as at 25 February 2020, identified COVID-19 as one of the risks of holding meetings in 2020. The Task Force made several recommendations to the Executive Council, including the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the transition plan and the communication strategy and to transfer the role of the Task force in overseeing the implementation of the reform to the Policy Advisory Committee.¹⁹

26. During the seventy-second session of the Executive Council, the Secretary-General reported the results of the constituent bodies reform, including the number of Members represented on the technical commissions through formal notification by the relevant ministry of foreign affairs, namely: 67 for the Services Commission and 65 for the Infrastructure Commission, as at 30 July 2020. Both numbers are just under 35 per cent of

¹⁹ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, "Report of the Chair of the Constituent Bodies Reform Task Force", EC-72/INF. 2.5(4).

the total number of Members.²⁰ The secretariat continues to advocate inclusive participation and balanced engagement of Members in the technical commissions.

27. During the same session, the Executive Council requested the Policy Advisory Committee to prepare a plan to evaluate the constituent bodies reform and its follow-up during the eighteenth financial period and submit it to the Executive Council at its seventy-third session.²¹

C. Results from the survey of Members' views on the constituent bodies reform

28. JIU conducted a survey to seek views from WMO Members on the constituent bodies reform. Eighty-two responses were received, representing all six regions, with substantive representation from Europe (27 per cent), Africa (25 per cent) and Asia (21 per cent). Most respondents (nearly 70 per cent) indicated that they had been a WMO Member for more than 8 years. One third of the responses came from women.

29. The questions and results of the JIU survey are presented in the appendix to this report.²² The results are analysed and categorized into two topics: (a) processes to implement the reform; and (b) results of the reform and various aspects thereof.

30. With the reform process still under way and 88 per cent of respondents indicating that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on the timeline for its implementation, it may be too early to assess the overall results of the reform and the process used to implement it. Nevertheless, the Inspector illustrates below the key findings of the survey and makes recommendations to achieve optimal results.

Reform process

31. **Communication on reform:** regarding the level of communication on the constituent bodies reform process, 80 per cent of respondents were either fully (37 per cent) or partially (43 per cent) satisfied with the information that they had received. When asked to rate the information that was provided on the proposed changes and the expected results of the constituent bodies reform, 70 per cent of respondents rated the information provided as either satisfactory (60 per cent) or better (11 per cent). More than 25 per cent of respondents claimed that they had not received enough information.

32. A more specific question about reporting on targets shows an equivalent division of opinions among respondents. See figure II below. Some 43 per cent of respondents stated that they had been informed either sufficiently (39 per cent) or very informed (4 per cent) about the progress made, with reporting on clear targets and milestones and the associated costs. Some 50 per cent of respondents said that either more information would have been helpful (34 per cent) or that they had not been sufficiently informed (16 per cent).

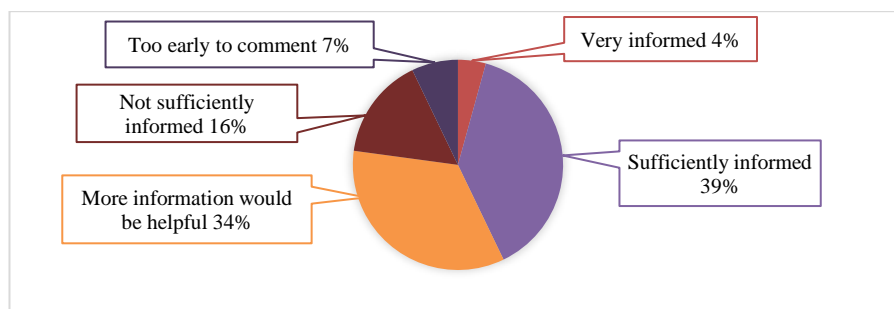
²⁰ Ibid., "Report by the Secretary-General", EC-72/INF. 2.2.

²¹ Ibid., EC-72/INF. 2.5(4), annex 2, draft decision 3.1/1.

²² Available as a supplementary paper to the present review, in English, on the JIU website.

Figure II

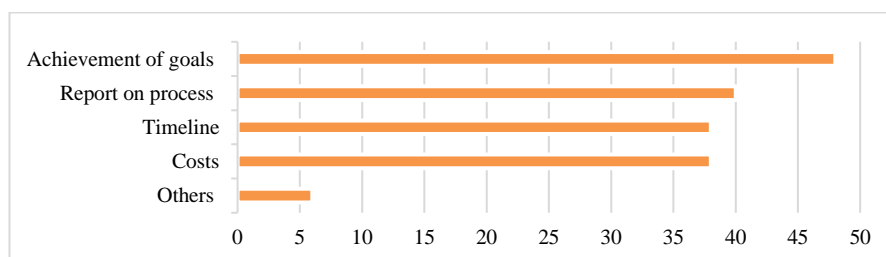
Respondents' views on the level of information that they receive concerning the progress made on the reform, with reporting on clear targets and milestones and its associated costs



33. Respondents were asked what additional information on the reform would they have liked to receive. Respondents were able to select more than one of the options provided and add additional suggestions in the comments. Some 48 respondents indicated that they would have liked to receive information on the achievement of goals. Three other options, regarding process (40), the timeline (38) and costs (38), were also mentioned. See figure III below.

Figure III

Additional information that respondents would have liked to receive (more than one option could be selected)



34. As stated in the transition plan and the communication strategy, **communication is key to the success of the reform and more and better communication is needed. The Inspector recommends that the reporting format and issues associated with the reform be discussed further so that Members receive sufficient updates on the reform process, the achievement of goals, the timeline and the cost of the reform.**

35. **Regional Associations:** about 16 per cent of the respondents stated that the views of the Regional Associations were fully considered in the design and the implementation of the reform. Another 40 per cent responded that that had only been done partially and 20 per cent thought that the views of the Regional Associations had not been sufficiently considered.

36. When asked to comment on the reform at the regional level, some respondents recommended:

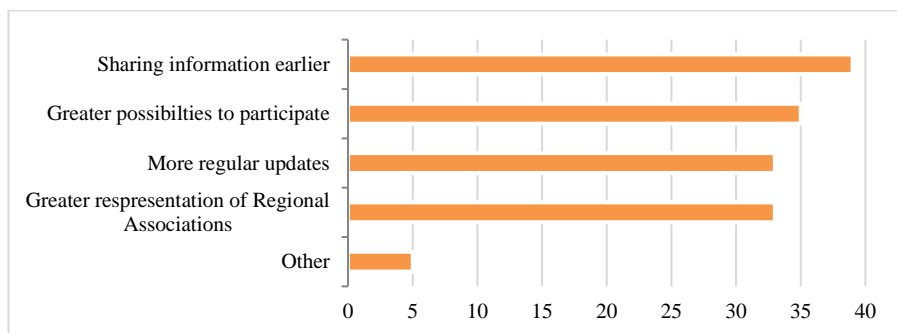
- Forming more consistent working group structures across the Regional Associations, in alignment with the structure of the technical commissions. Those working groups would work closely with the technical commissions in order to ensure that the needs of the Regional Associations were well addressed;
- Increasing participation and representation of experts from the Regional Associations in the technical commissions;
- Increasing the resources available to the regional offices so that they were better equipped (especially staffing) to serve the regions and support the management groups and Members;
- Stronger engagement between the relevant WMO departments and the management groups of the Regional Associations;

- Increasing support from all WMO departments for the Regional Associations to develop their inputs into the WMO Operating Plan.

37. When asked what the respondents would have liked to see more of in terms of consultation on the reform of the Regional Associations, the main answer was sharing information earlier (39 respondents). The three other options, greater possibilities to participate (35), more regular updates (33) and greater representation of Regional Associations (33), were also selected. See figure IV below.

Figure IV

What respondents would have liked to see more of in terms of consultation on the reform of the Regional Associations



38. One respondent commented that “the reform was driven by a rather small group” and another commented that “few countries really participated or had their voices heard during the process”.

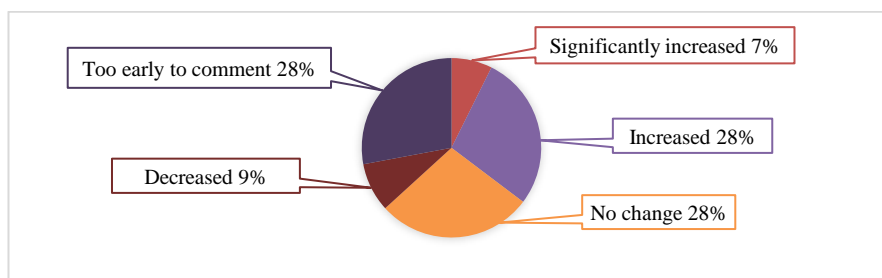
39. From the above results, it is possible to conclude that there is a perception that a small number of Members were involved in several aspects of the reform. **Opportunities for wider participation of Members should be more clearly stated, and such participation should be solicited in order to share the burden of the reform efforts and gain buy-in. Members of the Executive Council should consider adjusting some of the processes associated with the reform to broaden and diversify participation in order to ensure more equitable engagement, strengthen the reform ownership by Members and increase the confidence of Members in meeting the goals of the reform.**

Reform results

40. Some 35 per cent of respondents stated that the reformed structure had increased their participation and the representation of their needs in the decision-making process. Some 28 per cent of respondents reported no change, while 9 per cent reported a decrease in the representation of their needs. For 28 per cent of the respondents, it was too early to comment. See figure V below.

Figure V

Respondents’ views on whether the reformed governance structure has increased their participation and the representation of their needs in the decision-making process



41. Respondents were asked if they foresaw (or had experienced) any significant changes as a result of the reformed structure of the constituent bodies, compared with the previous

structure. Around 52 per cent reported changes as result of the reform; either significant changes (14 per cent) or some changes (38 per cent). For a relatively significant number of respondents, it was too early to comment (28 per cent).

42. One respondent commented that the involvement of Members had increased and national preparations for participation in the new technical commissions had a higher priority than previously. Another respondent commented that one positive aspect of the reform was the decision to hold an extraordinary session of Congress, which would enable more Members to participate in the decision-making process.

43. Respondents also commented on areas for further improvement:

- “More proactive efforts by the WMO secretariat to ensure geographical and gender balance in WMO constituent bodies and substructures”;
- “The work of the commissions is complicated by the excessive number of directions of activities and a huge number of subsidiary bodies”;
- “There should be fewer expert teams working concurrently on similar issues and there should be more time-bound activities.”

44. Approximately, 40 per cent of the respondents stated that the reform process was successfully reaching a better balance in terms of gender.

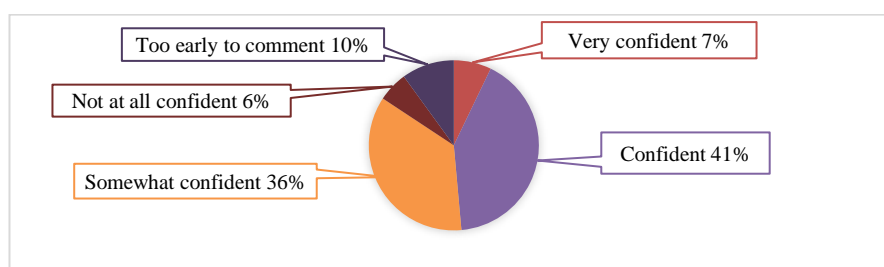
45. Just less than 10 per cent of respondents stated that the constituent bodies reform had led to improved decision-making process, which responded to the needs of WMO Members. Another 23 per cent of respondents agreed, but only to a certain extent. The majority, 56 per cent, thought it was too early to say.

46. In terms of the overall progress of the constituent bodies reform and its achievements, 26 per cent of the respondents stated that it was too early to judge. The other responses ranged from very satisfied (4 per cent) to satisfied (39 per cent) to somewhat satisfied (27 per cent).

47. **Strategic Plan 2020–2023:** when asked about how confident the respondents were that the goals of the Strategic Plan 2020–2023 and related Operational Plan would be achieved, 48 per cent of respondents stated that, based on their experience of the ongoing reform, they were confident that the goals would be achieved. Another 36 per cent were somewhat confident and 6 per cent were not confident. See figure VI below.

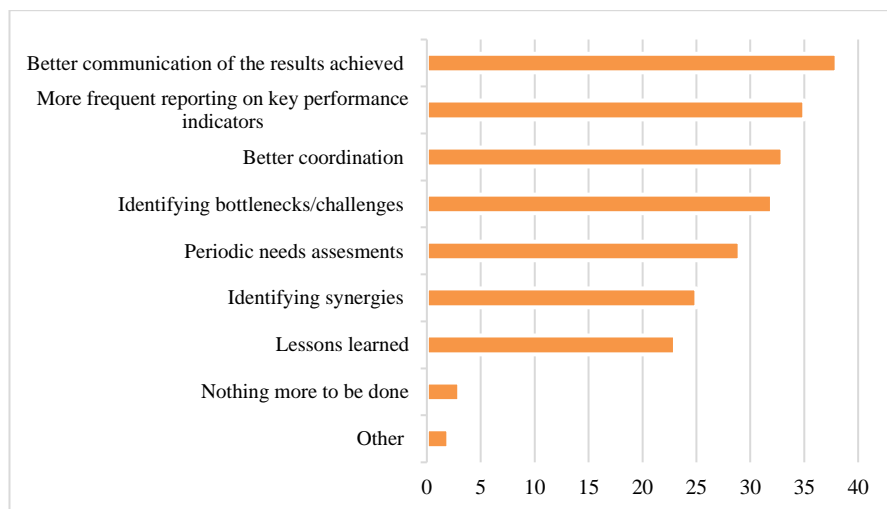
Figure VI

Respondents’ views on whether the goals of the Strategic Plan 2020–2023 and related Operational Plan will be achieved



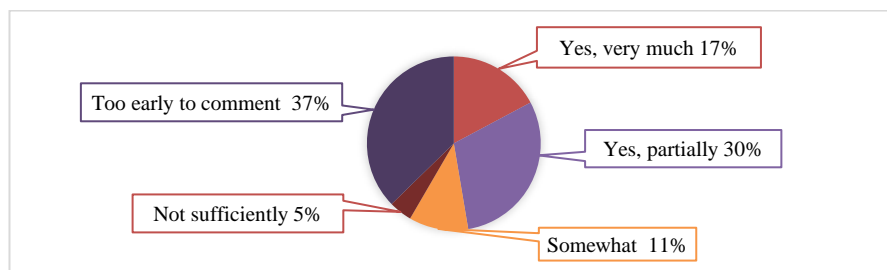
48. On the question of what more could be done to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Operational Plan 2020-23, most respondents referred to better communication of the results achieved (mentioned by 38 respondents) and more frequent reporting on key performance indicators (35 respondents). Also, better coordination (33 respondents), identifying challenges (32 respondents) and assessment of periodic needs (29 respondents) were selected. See figure VII below.

Figure VII
Respondents’ views on the question of what more could be done to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020–2023 and related Operational Plan



49. **Technical commissions:** the reform and streamlining of technical commissions resulted in a more integrated and effective way of working collaboratively, according to 17 per cent of the respondents. For 41 per cent of respondents, this was only partially (30 per cent) or somewhat (11 per cent) the case. Many respondents said that it was too early to comment (37 per cent). See figure VIII below.

Figure VIII
Respondents’ views on the question of whether the governance reform and the streamlining of technical commissions had resulted in a more integrated and effective way of working collaboratively



50. One respondent commented that “commissions seem to be better managed than the secretariat itself”. Another referred to the influence of COVID-19 on the process: “nationally, we have had more focus on the technical commissions’ work and experts because we had to go through the process of nominating new experts. COVID-19 meant that sessions had, initially, to be postponed and then held online instead of face to face. This was a difficult situation that I think was handled remarkably well under the circumstances.”

51. **Balance in geographical representation:** only 1.4 per cent of the respondents rated the reform process as very successful in ensuring that the new constituent body framework reached a better balance in terms of geographical representation. Another 34 per cent rated it as successful, while more than 50 per cent rated it as either partially or not at all successful.

52. More than one third of respondents agreed either partially (26 per cent) or very much (7 per cent) with the statement that the reform had resulted in greater collaboration of WMO Members with stakeholders in the regions and increased the impact of such collaboration. For 40 per cent of respondents, it was too early to comment.

53. Almost all respondents believed that COVID-19 had affected the timeline of the implementation of the reforms either significantly (37 per cent) or to some extent (51 per cent). In their comments, respondents explained that, not being able to have in-person

meetings, had delayed decision-making and reduced effectiveness due to the different time zones, connection problems and lack of time for interventions. Some respondents thought that virtual/hybrid meetings for selected events could be the norm post COVID-19 and that there should be efficiency gains through reduced travel costs and time.

54. From the above results, there are early indications that some aspects of the reform have yielded preliminary results and there is general appreciation for the changes and the expected results. Given that many aspects of the reform process are still under way and that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the timeline of its implementation, it may be too early to assess the overall results of the reform and the process used to implement it.

55. Nonetheless, **the constituent bodies reform is a significant investment in more streamlined governance. It should be continuously adjusted to ensure that it meets its stated objectives and assessed for lessons learned and good practices.**

56. As mentioned earlier, during its seventy-second session in October 2020, the Executive Council requested that the Policy Advisory Committee prepare an evaluation plan for the constituent bodies reform and its follow-up during the eighteenth financial period (i.e. 2020–2023). The Inspector strongly encourages the Executive Council to integrate the following recommendation in the evaluation plan, make the evaluation an independent one to enhance its credibility and implement it so that the Executive Council can continue to exercise its oversight functions.

Recommendation 1

By the end of 2022, the Executive Council should commission an independent evaluation of the constituent bodies reform to review the process used to implement the reform and its substantive results, including the alignment of the restructured secretariat, as well as good practices and lessons learned.

III. Secretariat restructuring

Summary of JIU findings and recommendations

After examining key aspects of the secretariat restructuring, JIU concludes that a better result would have been achieved if the change management process taken for the constituent bodies reform had been followed, together with a comprehensive master plan, verifiable results with a proper baseline, risk assessment and cost estimates. In the absence of such a strategic master plan, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the restructuring. A further adjustment of the secretariat structure should be made in order to achieve the objectives of the restructuring.

Findings:

- ✓ Various changes have been made in the secretariat at the same time, increasing the risk of the breakdown of internal controls and of inefficiency;
- ✓ Five new departments have been established by reorganizing seven pre-existing departments in order to align the secretariat with the new structure of the constituent bodies;
- ✓ Administrative support services have been significantly reorganized within the secretariat by merging non-technical departments into the new Governance Services Department and bringing together most staff in the General Service category who had previously been dispersed across departments;
- ✓ Several communication channels were set up for staff to provide comments and feedback on the restructuring, but some were not utilized effectively;
- ✓ Some Members expressed concerns about transparency regarding the secretariat restructuring, a disconnect in its alignment with the reform and staff morale;
- ✓ The restructuring has resulted in a reduction in director posts at D-2 level from 8 to 6, an increase in D-1 positions from 10 to 13, a reduction of 23 posts in the General Service category through 11 voluntary departures and 12 separations, and the departure of 9 staff in the Professional category;
- ✓ The separation exercise cost WMO more than 3 million Swiss francs. In addition, there are various other intrinsic costs associated with the restructuring, such as the loss of institutional knowledge, the negative effect of uncertainty on staff morale, retraining costs for those with new duties and training and induction costs for new recruits.

Recommendations:

- ✓ The Executive Council should consider adding an agenda item to its sessions specifically on the secretariat restructuring effort to provide greater visibility on progress made towards reaching its goals and milestones, as well as to ensure alignment with the constituent bodies reform;
- ✓ The Secretary-General should ensure further transparent communication and sufficient consultations with staff during the ongoing secretariat restructuring to address staff concerns and ensure a productive outcome;
- ✓ By no later than the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should commission a joint review team, comprised of management and staff who are familiar with each area of work, to conduct a structural and process review, facilitated by an independent expert, to further refine and adjust the overall secretariat restructuring in order to achieve the objectives of the restructuring (recommendation 2);
- ✓ The secretariat could benefit from a real-time audit by the Internal Oversight Office, rather than a post-fact audit, in order to receive timely observations and recommendations on process, control and risk management, subject to the independent decision to do so by the Director of the Internal Oversight Office.

A. Target set by Congress

57. In resolution 11 adopted at its eighteenth session, Congress agreed that the WMO reform efforts should continue during the eighteenth financial period (i.e. 2020–2023) and should focus on “continual enhancement and innovation in administrative processes, rules and practices” and “review and alignment of the structure, staffing and rules of the Secretariat to enhance its utility and effectiveness in serving Members for achieving the long-term goals and strategic objectives of the Organization, while ensuring a transparent communication process to minimize concerns in staff.” Congress requested the Secretary-General to report to Congress and the Executive Council on these two items.²³

58. In resolution 2 adopted at the same session, Congress also requested “the Secretary-General to identify both efficiency gains especially in administrative work and processes and savings in the regular budget corresponding to at least CHF 5.3 million in 2020–2023 [which is equivalent to annual savings of CHF 1.3 million], and to also identify other sources of funding during the eighteenth financial period in order to supplement the increased assessed contributions and to report accordingly.”²⁴

59. In response to these resolutions and following the implementation of the constituent bodies reform, the secretariat has undertaken a major reorganization and restructuring of its workforce in order to align itself with the new constituent body structure and to achieve annual savings of approximately CHF 1.3 million in the regular budget, which is equivalent to 2 per cent of the annual budget of WMO.

B. Restructuring departments

Alignment of top-level structure with the new constituent body structure

60. The Secretary-General regarded the restructuring of the secretariat as an opportunity to review existing processes, tasks and responsibilities, develop and introduce new generic job descriptions and recruit new talent for key positions.²⁵ Those efforts proceeded swiftly.

61. On 20 June 2019, immediately after the seventy-first session of the Executive Council (17–19 June 2019) and the eighteenth session of Congress (3–14 June 2019), the Secretary-General held a town hall meeting to explain to staff members his intention to reorganize and restructure the secretariat to align it with the new constituent body structure. He announced the establishment of five new departments by reorganizing the pre-existing seven departments into: the Infrastructure Department; the Services Department; the Science and Innovations Department; the Member Services and Development Department; and the Governance Services Department.

62. The subsequent service note²⁶ issued on 28 June 2019 confirmed the top-level structure of the secretariat, as well as the Executive Management, which consists of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General, supported by the Cabinet Office. The establishment of a new Board of Directors was also announced, comprised of the Executive Management and the directors of the five new departments, with a view to better coordinating the strategic direction of the secretariat. The alignment of the top-level structure with the new constituent bodies (see figure IX) and its key linkage with the five long-term goals of WMO brought about several changes, including:

²³ WMO, *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Eighteenth Session, Geneva, 3–14 June 2019*, WMO-No. 1236, resolution 11 (Cg-18).

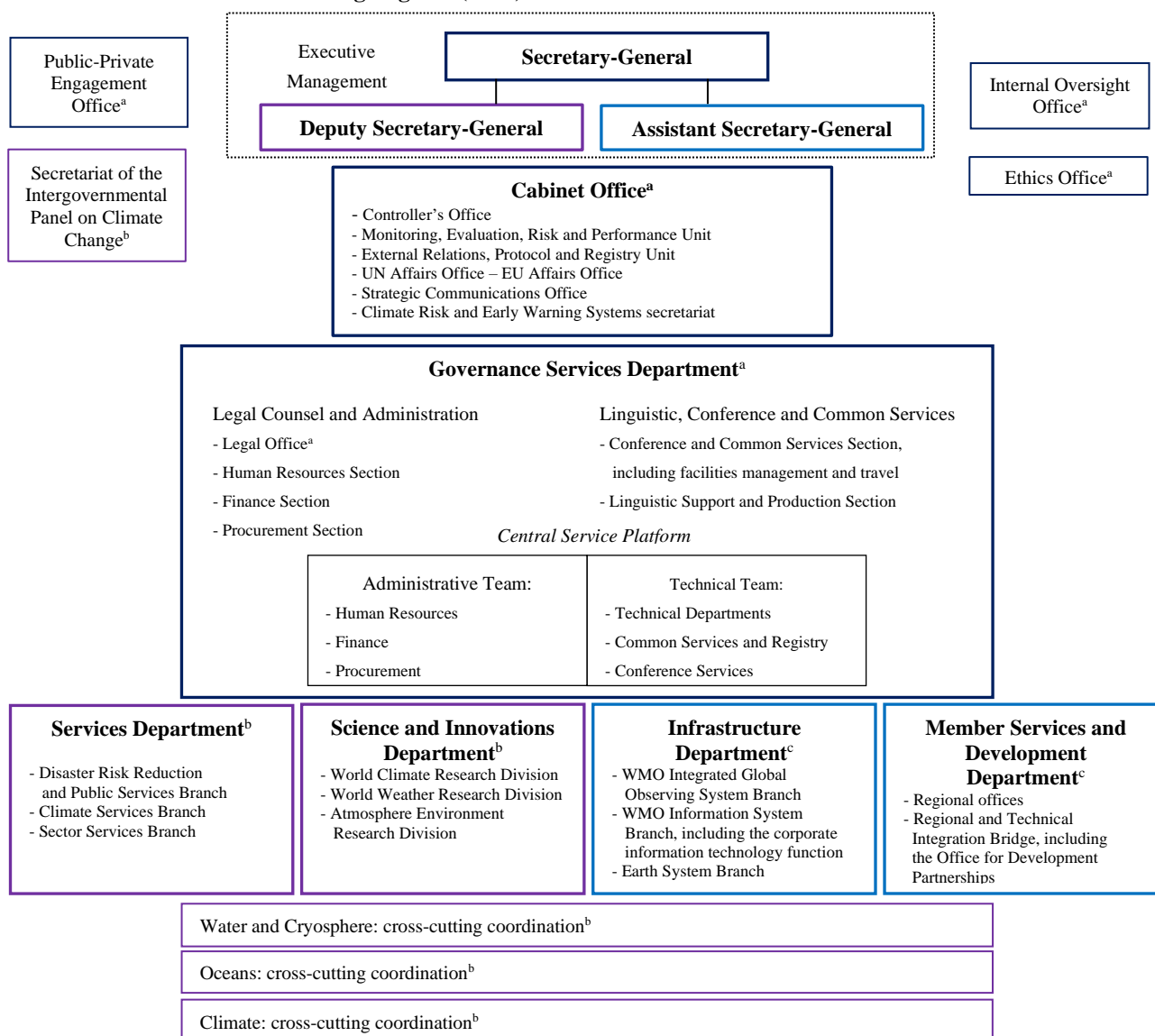
²⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 2 (Cg-18).

²⁵ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, “Report by the Secretary-General”, EC-72/INF. 2.2.

²⁶ Service Note No. 22/2019. Service notes document decisions taken by the Secretary-General that are of general relevance for secretariat staff members.

- The Services Department to support the Services Commission in the implementation of the first long-term goal;
- The Infrastructure Department to support the Infrastructure Commission in the implementation of the second long-term goal;
- The Science and Innovation Department to support the Research Board and the Scientific Advisory Panel in the implementation of the third long-term goal;
- The Member Services and Development Department to support the Regional Associations and to strengthen the cross-cutting nature of its work in the implementation of the fourth long-term goal;
- The Executive Management, Cabinet Office and Governance Services Department to support implementation of the fifth long-term goal.

Figure IX
WMO secretariat organigram (2021)



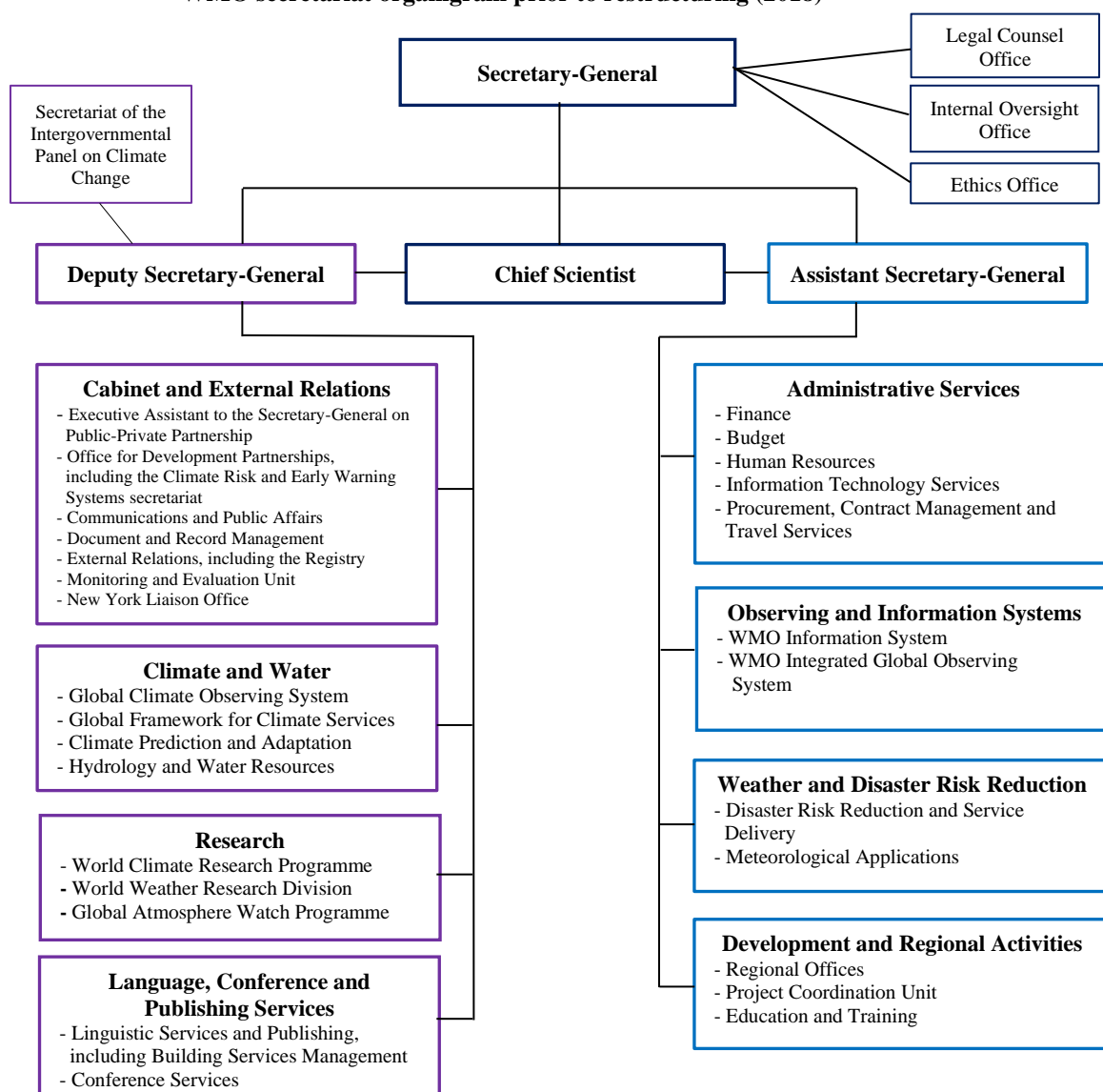
Source: WMO secretariat.

^a Entities directly reporting to the Secretary-General.

^b Entities and cross-cutting coordinators reporting to the Deputy Secretary-General.

^c Entities reporting to the Assistant Secretary-General.

Figure X
WMO secretariat organigram prior to restructuring (2018)



Source: WMO secretariat.

Appointments of senior directors

63. Prior to the restructuring, the secretariat had eight departments, four of which reported to the Deputy Secretary-General and four to the Assistant Secretary-General (see figure X above). In light of the new structure, it was announced that all director posts in the departments that existed at the time were to be abolished, effective on 31 December 2019, and a new structure would be implemented as of 1 January 2020. Five new posts at the D-2 level, which would head the new departments, were advertised, with selection and appointment to be completed between July and September 2019. In October 2019, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of the new five departmental directors at D-2 level. Three of the five directors had been external candidates.²⁷ The designation of deputy directors from among existing staff members was also announced.²⁸

64. In addition, the Secretary-General introduced a new management accountability and performance measurement system. Annual compacts, called “senior managers’ compacts”, were developed and agreed between the Secretary-General and the senior directors in early 2020. They covered topics such as accountability for objectives, expected accomplishments,

²⁷ The last new director joined the secretariat in August 2020.

²⁸ WMO, Service Note No. 26/2019.

performance measurement, risks and compliance, to ensure that the objectives of the organization would be met. This point will be discussed further in the next chapter.

65. The Board of Directors, comprised of the five senior directors and the Executive Management, was established in early 2020. The Director of the Cabinet Office serves as a secretary to the Board of Directors, which meets at least every two weeks to discuss overall progress made in achieving the departmental and organizational objectives.

Detailed structure of departments

66. In early 2020, the functions, responsibilities and structures of each department were established with the appointment of branch/section chiefs and the transfer of staff in the Professional category to new technical departments and the Cabinet Office. In order to ensure that departments became fully operational by the end of April 2020, the directors thereof were tasked with developing and implementing detailed work arrangements, including developing new job descriptions and functional responsibilities, specific duties and individual assignments.²⁹

67. The Cabinet Office was expanded to include the Controller's Office. The monitoring and evaluation unit in the Cabinet Office was transformed into a new unit called the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk and Performance Unit, strengthening the unit's mandate on performance assessment, opening up the reporting line to the Board of Directors and expanding its scope with the addition of a risk management function.

68. The roles of Controller and Evaluation Officer (namely the current Head of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk and Performance Unit) are closely related to the oversight of the organization and are detailed in the next chapter.

C. Reorganizing administrative support services

Governance Services Department

69. In 2019, two non-technical departments, the Language, Conference and Publishing Services Department and the Administrative Services Department, and the Legal Counsel Office were merged into a single department named the Governance Services Department. This new department was established to centralize all administrative matters, language and conference services, travel services, facilities management, human resources, finance, procurement and legal matters, with the goal of streamlining and consolidating the administrative work of the whole secretariat in order to reduce hierarchic layers and ensure more efficient and effective operation of the secretariat. One exception is the corporate information technology function, which remains within the Information System Branch in the Infrastructure Department.³⁰

70. Combining departments with different target client services is not an optimal way of streamlining business processes. The Language, Conference and Publishing Services Department provided services to Congress, the Executive Council and other constituent bodies, while the primary clients of the Administrative Services Department were the secretariat personnel.

71. In order to streamline services, the corporate information technology function and the facilities management and travel units should be moved back to the current Legal Counsel and Administration Division. Additionally, the Legal Office should be decoupled from the Governance Services Department and become an independent office as it was previously. These points should be reviewed in the light of the internal controls and efficiency gains that will be explained further in paragraphs 110 and 151–152.

²⁹ WMO, Service Notes Nos. 3/2020 and 09/2020.

³⁰ The corporate information technology function, originally located within the former Administrative Services Department, was moved to the Information System Branch in November 2018.

Appointment of coordination officers

72. Seven posts of coordination officers at the P-3 level were created in 2020, one for each of the four technical departments and the Cabinet Office, and two for the Governance Services Department. The main role of the five departmental coordination officers is to support the respective directors to ensure efficient interdepartmental coordination and the administration of their departments, as well as to liaise with the two coordination officers in the Governance Services Department regarding the fulfilment of relevant support from the respective department. Five coordination officers were appointed through an internal selection process in February 2020. The two coordination officers for the Governance Services Department were selected from external candidates in May 2020 and joined WMO in July 2020. Their role is to provide substantive supervision and guidance to the work of the central service platform described below and support the Director of the Governance Services Department to ensure efficient interdepartmental coordination and the administration of the department.

Creation of a central service platform

73. A central service platform with two teams, one for administrative services (i.e. human resources, finance and procurement) and the other for technical departmental support and conference and common services, was established within the Governance Services Department in 2020. The platform contains 25 new positions in the General Service category, which were open exclusively to internal candidates in order to mitigate the impact of the restructuring.

74. The secretariat introduced a new initiative to change most job descriptions of staff members to generic job profiles. For the new 25 positions in the platform, vacancy notices at G-6 and G-5 levels with generic job descriptions were announced in March 2020 and 47 applications were received. Candidates underwent a selection process of standard administrative tests and interviews in April 2020. The process concluded in early May 2020 and 25 candidates were selected from across different departments. Preparations for the platform were conducted between May and August 2020 and the platform became officially operational on 1 September 2020. It is managed by the two coordination officers of the Governance Services Department who distribute tasks from client departments to platform staff.

75. The platform is regarded as a central element for the provision of streamlined and improved support services to all departments, and one of the key deliverables in the structural and management changes carried out in the secretariat. Nevertheless, the establishment of the platform has led to the departure of many staff in the General Service category and consequently institutional knowledge has been lost. For example, all staff in the General Service category who used to work in the previous Human Resources Division and the majority of those in the previous Finance Division have left the organization, creating gaps in knowledge about processes and procedures in human and financial resources management. It has been a difficult time not only for those who left but also for those who succeeded in the selection process as they had to observe their colleagues leaving the organization due to the restructuring, as well as taking on the new tasks without sufficient handover and knowledge transfer from those who had left the organization.

76. Establishing this central service platform has been a major undertaking for the secretariat, however, there is no documentation of an analysis justifying its creation. It seems that there was a perception that the number of staff in the General Service category in the technical departments was too large, but there is no document or plan that provides an analysis of the appropriate number of staff in the General Service category in each department, branch, section or even the platform itself.

77. The business model of a central service platform is typically employed by large corporations in the private sector or United Nations organizations with thousands of employees and a large field presence, such as the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO Global Service Centre, which employs more than 250 staff, provides administrative services to all staff and all WHO offices worldwide in respect of human resources, payroll, procurement, accounts payable and support of specific corporate information technology

applications. The Inspector is of the opinion that the business model of a central platform is not well suited for a small headquarters-based organization, such as WMO.

78. Familiarity with the policies and procedures associated with human resources, finance and procurement requires expertise and experience in each area, which is a key element in the proper functioning of an internal control mechanism. These types of posts are not necessarily interchangeable. Therefore, those in the Administrative Team of the platform performing human resources, finance and procurement may be better placed under the direct supervision of their respective section chiefs and staff in the Professional category rather than in a central service platform. In addition, all job orders to the platform are channelled through the two coordination officers from dispatching and receiving ends, adding extra layers of bureaucratic processes rather than streamlining them.

79. The Technical Team of the platform appears to be working well by pooling secretarial services. However, due to the trend of budget cuts or zero-growth budgets many United Nations organizations have restructured secretarial and administrative posts without creating a central platform with associated coordination officers.

80. A critical review of the Governance Services Department, especially the central service platform and the roles of the seven coordination officers, should be conducted in the context of the overall organizational review discussed in para. 154 of chapter V.

D. Communication and consultation

81. At its eighteenth session, Congress emphasized the need to ensure a transparent communication process during the restructuring to minimize the concerns of staff.³¹ The Executive Council also urged the Secretary-General to further enhance the organization's consultation with the Staff Committee on issues relating to staff welfare and administration.³²

82. There were several communication and consultation channels set up during the secretariat restructuring, which included:

- Town hall meetings by the Secretary-General: three town hall meetings were held to brief staff on the restructuring;
- A management retreat organized among the Executive Management and senior managers in December 2019;
- Consultation between the Executive Management and the respective departments to hear the views of staff on the restructuring;
- The Joint Consultative Committee, a venue for consultations between staff and representatives of the administration;
- A dedicated website and an email address for staff to submit comments and express their concerns anonymously.

83. However, based on a report by the Staff Association, staff feel that there has been limited consultation on how the restructuring has resulted in a reduction in staff. The report of the Staff Association states, "the Staff Association has shared constantly with management the perception from staff that it would be important to communicate regularly and comprehensively with staff members regarding the restructuring exercise. This lack of timely information resulted in uncertainty. This also limited the ability of the Staff Association to have staff concerns taken into consideration during the restructuring process."³³

84. Staff were encouraged to submit their comments and concerns anonymously. A snapshot report of staff feedback on the secretariat restructuring process dated 4 December

³¹ WMO, *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Eighteenth Session*, WMO-No. 1236, resolution 11 (Cg-18).

³² WMO, *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-Second Session, Videoconference, 28 September–2 October 2020* (Geneva, 2020), WMO-No. 1255, resolution 16 (EC-72).

³³ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, "Report from the Staff Association", EC-72/INF. 6.3.

2019 was posted on the WMO intranet for nearly a year.³⁴ The report lists two significant results of how staff perceive the restructuring process:

- Staff perceive WMO senior management as negatively handling the restructuring process, resulting in lack of trust and credibility of WMO senior management;
- Staff perceive themselves as neither valued nor respected – either as employees delivering the work or as contributors to the restructuring process.

85. Even though this report is an unofficial report, which the management were not aware of, it further provides detailed and useful comments and insights from staff, including suggestions for more effective organizational management and more effective human resources management. Although the management have not considered the information in the report, it is not too late for them to do so and listen further to the voice of staff.

86. During the restructuring, the Staff Committee proposed to delay the process, however, the Secretary-General pointed out that the period of uncertainty should be minimized for the sake of staff welfare and productivity. Relatedly, the number of staff consulting the Ethics Office has increased since 2019,³⁵ which can be attributed to the increased anxiety of staff.

87. In addition, comments by six respondents on the alignment between the reformed structure of the constituent bodies and the secretariat restructuring, provided to JIU through its survey on the constituent bodies reform (see chap. II), are of concern:

- One respondent commented that “if there is any alignment, it is a mystery to me”;
- Five respondents referred to the secretariat and its staff:
 - “It is my impression that staff were in a state of uncertainty, which affected morale, especially from the turnover of staff and changes in positions. Some persons have left for positions elsewhere. It is not clear if the transition precipitated such moves, but it could have been a factor”;
 - “The alignment exists mostly on paper and did not come to life due to the choice of personnel at the management level where the Executive Council was left without any information and not even presented with the results of the changes. The costs of work force made redundant which seem to be very high and not justifiable. Additionally, it seems that many qualified people are leaving the secretariat. Communication between the Secretary-General and staff seems to be lacking, which causes rumours to spread. ... A staff survey would be urgently necessary.”;
 - “There has been very little transparency and information about the secretariat restructuring”;
 - “The reform of the senior staffing structure was completely opaque”;
 - “I am not clear that WMO staff are on board with or appreciate the change.”

88. It should be noted that the JIU survey did not contain specific questions asking for opinions or comments by Members on the secretariat staff, but nevertheless several respondents provided such comments. Their comments point to a perceived lack of transparency concerning the restructuring and a disconnect concerning its alignment with the reform. Hence, there is not enough information being provided to Members on the secretariat restructuring and they are therefore getting information from unofficial channels and sources. Some comments in the survey even expressed concern for staff and their morale.

89. The alignment between the constituent bodies reform and the secretariat restructuring should be more adequately conveyed to Members. **The Executive Council should consider adding an agenda item to its sessions specifically on the secretariat restructuring effort to provide greater visibility on the progress made towards reaching its goals and milestones, as well as to ensure alignment with the constituent bodies reform.**

³⁴ “Snapshot report – 4 December 2019: staff feedback on secretariat restructuring process”.

³⁵ 15 in 2017; 15 in 2018; 22 in 2019; and 28 in 2020.

90. Staff Regulation 8.1 states that “the Secretary-General shall make provision for staff participation in the discussion of policies relating to staff questions.” **In accordance with Staff Regulation 8.1 and as requested by Congress and the Executive Council, the Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General ensure further transparent communication and sufficient consultations with staff during the ongoing secretariat restructuring to address staff concerns and ensure a productive outcome.**

E. Cost of restructuring

91. The restructuring has resulted in a reduction in director posts at D-2 level from 8 to 6, but an increase in D-1 positions from 10 to 13. The restructuring has also resulted in a reduction of 23 posts in the General Service category at headquarters through 11 voluntary departures and 12 separations.³⁶ The target of 2 per cent annual savings has been achieved through the 11 voluntary departures. As a result of the restructuring, 9 staff members in the Professional category have also left the organization. Termination indemnities totalled more than 3 million Swiss francs.

92. In addition to these costs, there are various other intrinsic costs associated with the restructuring, such as the loss of institutional knowledge of those who left the organization, the negative effects of uncertainty on staff morale, the potential reputational damage, the retraining costs for those with new duties and the training and induction costs for new recruits. Three of the five departmental directors are new to the organization, and two of the four directors/heads of regional offices joined WMO in 2019 or 2020. In terms of key posts in the administration, the Chiefs of the Finance and Human Resources Sections are also new to WMO, having joined in 2019. The post of the Chief of the Procurement Section at the P-5 level was abolished in May 2020 and a new position at the P-4 level was filled in January 2021.

93. The realignment of the number of staff in the General Service category is expected to allow for the re-allocation of resources for new talent in the mid-level Professional category to provide substantive inputs to technical departments. However, this seems to have been offset to some extent by the creation of seven P-3 posts for coordination officers. In a small organization with approximately 300 staff members, every individual should perform substantive work rather than coordinating the work of others, without prejudice to the competency and integrity of the current coordination officers. Interviews with officials from the technical departments, as well as the directors/heads of the regional offices, all indicated the need for additional resources to deliver core results and serve their constituents more effectively. This issue was also raised by Members in their comments provided in the JIU survey (see para. 36 above). Some of the coordination officer posts could be re-profiled to allocate human resources where they are most needed.

94. Prior to this major restructuring, no human resources strategy had been established in the secretariat. Based on the documentation made available, the Inspector concludes that there are numerous documents on various aspects of the secretariat restructuring, but there is no comprehensive master plan that encompasses a baseline study, key objectives and performance indicators, a risk assessment and process review, a timeline and cost estimates made prior to the implementation of the secretariat restructuring. The management claims that this restructuring has been a success, however, there is no verifiable evidence to measure that success. In the absence of any strategic plan for human resources and the restructuring, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the restructuring, its real cost and its annual savings.

F. Changes in the internal justice system

95. WMO signed an agreement in June 2017 with the United Nations Appeals Tribunal to act as the appeal court in the WMO internal justice system. At the same time, WMO terminated its recognition of the jurisdiction of the International Labour Organization

³⁶ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, “WMO human resources report”, EC-72/INF. 6.3(2).

Administrative Tribunal. However, the Staff Association had recommended remaining within the jurisdiction of the Administrative Tribunal. Management decided to go ahead with the decision to join the Appeals Tribunal but did agree to improve the internal justice system for resolving internal conflicts.³⁷

96. WMO concluded agreements with the United Nations Secretariat that allows comprehensive access to the United Nations internal justice system, with effect from January 2020. This includes access to:

- The United Nations Dispute Tribunal as the first instance body replacing the Joint Appeals Board of the secretariat (signed in January 2020);
- The United Nations Appeals Tribunal (signed in June 2017);
- The Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, which is an informal conflict resolution mechanism (signed in January 2020);
- The Office of Staff Legal Assistance (signed in January 2020).

97. Given the size of the secretariat, the decision to move to comprehensive access to the United Nations internal justice system seems justifiable for WMO, rather than creating its own independent and neutral justice system. Nevertheless, **it is important for the record and transparency to prepare a comparison of the costs and benefits for WMO between the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal and the United Nations internal justice system.**

98. This historic and important change in jurisdiction of WMO was decided without prior consultation with the Executive Council. Subsequent changes in the Staff Regulations were approved by the President in accordance with General Regulation 8 (2) and (3). Given the significance of this change, more consultation with the Executive Council would have been advisable in order to gain buy-in and further transparency.

G. Reassessing restructuring

99. As described above, various changes have been made in the secretariat without appropriate planning, comprehensive risk assessment, process review or cost estimates. Communication and consultation with staff members, as pointed out throughout this chapter, could be further improved. The following recommendation is intended to support transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of the organization.

Recommendation 2

By no later than the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should commission a joint review team, comprised of management and staff who are familiar with each area of work, to conduct a structural and process review, facilitated by an independent expert, to further refine and adjust overall secretariat restructuring in order to achieve the objectives of such restructuring.

100. Particular attention should be given to the structure of the Governance Services Department with its two teams in the central service platform and varied functions (such as the corporate information technology function and the facilities management and travel units) to ensure optimal performance without compromising internal control and alignment with the new structure of the constituent bodies.

101. **The secretariat could benefit from a real-time audit by the Internal Oversight Office, rather than a post-fact audit, in order to receive timely observations and recommendations on process, control and risk management, subject to the independent decision to do so by the Director of the Internal Oversight Office.**

³⁷ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventieth Session of the Executive Council (EC-70)*, “Staff matters: view and activities of the WMO Staff Association”, EC-70/INF. 17.3(4).

IV. Oversight and accountability

Summary of JIU findings and recommendations

After examining key aspects of oversight and accountability in WMO, JIU concludes that WMO needs more comprehensive internal control and accountability frameworks to provide an enabling environment for staff at all levels to act responsibly with a full understanding and knowledge of their delegated authorities and corresponding responsibilities, as well as of the rules, regulations and procedures that govern the activities associated with their respective duties and responsibilities.

Findings:

- ✓ Currently, there are very limited operational manuals or flow charts of business processes to guide staff in a consistent and coherent manner;
- ✓ The location and/or reporting lines of the Legal Counsel, the Risk Officer, the Evaluation Officer and the Controller are not in line with their respective duties and responsibilities;
- ✓ Currently, WMO does not have a system to keep a central repository of management overrides to the established rules and procedures concerning finance, human resources, procurement, travel and other policies;
- ✓ The Secretary-General and his representatives regularly participate in meetings of the Audit and Oversight Committee except for those held in camera;
- ✓ The previous five reviews conducted by JIU issued numerous observations and recommendations, many of which have not been properly addressed and are repeated in the present review;
- ✓ As of February 2021, WMO has neither a comprehensive internal control framework nor an accountability framework;
- ✓ Senior managers' compacts introduced in 2020 were not signed between the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General, respectively;
- ✓ Several accountability instruments, such as senior managers' compacts and job descriptions, provide fragmented information on delegated authorities and corresponding responsibilities. Many of these instruments are neither consistent nor coherent.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Staff members should be given proper materials and job-specific training so that they can properly discharge their duties and responsibilities and manage risks;
- ✓ The location and/or reporting lines of the Legal Office, the Risk Officer, the Evaluation Officer and the Controller should be changed;
- ✓ The task of keeping a central repository of all management overrides should be added to the terms of reference of the Controller;
- ✓ The format of the meetings of the Audit and Oversight Committee should be reviewed and revised, as appropriate. In addition, the Committee's performance should be assessed by an independent external expert once every three to five years;
- ✓ Critical recommendations made by JIU, once accepted by the organization, should be institutionalized into its policies and procedures, as appropriate;
- ✓ The Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General should also sign senior managers' compacts, starting in 2021;
- ✓ Several accountability instruments should be reviewed and revised to ensure consistency and coherence;

- ✓ By the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive accountability and internal control framework and submit it to the Executive Council for approval (recommendation 3).

A. World Meteorology Organization through the lens of the “three lines of defence” model

102. In this chapter, the Inspector looks at what mechanisms are necessary for strengthening the accountability and oversight of WMO. The secretariat has briefly introduced its internal control framework and the “three lines of defence” model³⁸ through a service note in December 2018.³⁹

103. The “three lines of defence” model provides a structure to communicate the essential roles, duties and elements that make up an organization’s oversight, as well as a relational map, by referring these back to its senior management and governing bodies.⁴⁰ Figure XI illustrates an analysis of how WMO has adapted the model and of how it can further strengthen its accountability and oversight mechanisms within the context of the United Nations system.

First line of defence

104. The first line of defence represents line management and staff at all levels and in all locations. All managers and staff on the first or front line see risks and deal with them in their daily operations. They own many risks and execute corresponding controls to manage them. The first line operates with comprehensive delegation of authority and adequate managerial and supervisory controls in place, including policies and procedures to provide checks and balances at all levels.

105. Under the restructured secretariat, many directors, managers and line staff are new to the organization and/or new to their recently created functions/positions. Currently, there are limited operational manuals, guidance notes or flow charts on business processes to guide staff in a consistent and coherent manner. Regulations, rules, instructions and procedures are scattered among a myriad of standing instructions and service notes. The Enterprise Resource Planning system of WMO is not designed to offer help or guide users either.

106. Newly appointed staff and managers need comprehensive induction and training. Systematic training and induction for staff, together with operational manuals and flow charts on business processes, are needed to guide them in properly discharging their duties and responsibilities and managing risks with a full knowledge of regulatory frameworks, rules and procedures governing their areas of operations.

107. Furthermore, staff in the General Service category brought together in the central service platform need task-specific training, manuals, process flow charts, a control framework etc., in addition to the generic training mentioned above, in order to properly guide them and to perform “generic processes” in a “standardized” manner, which is one of the main objectives of the platform.

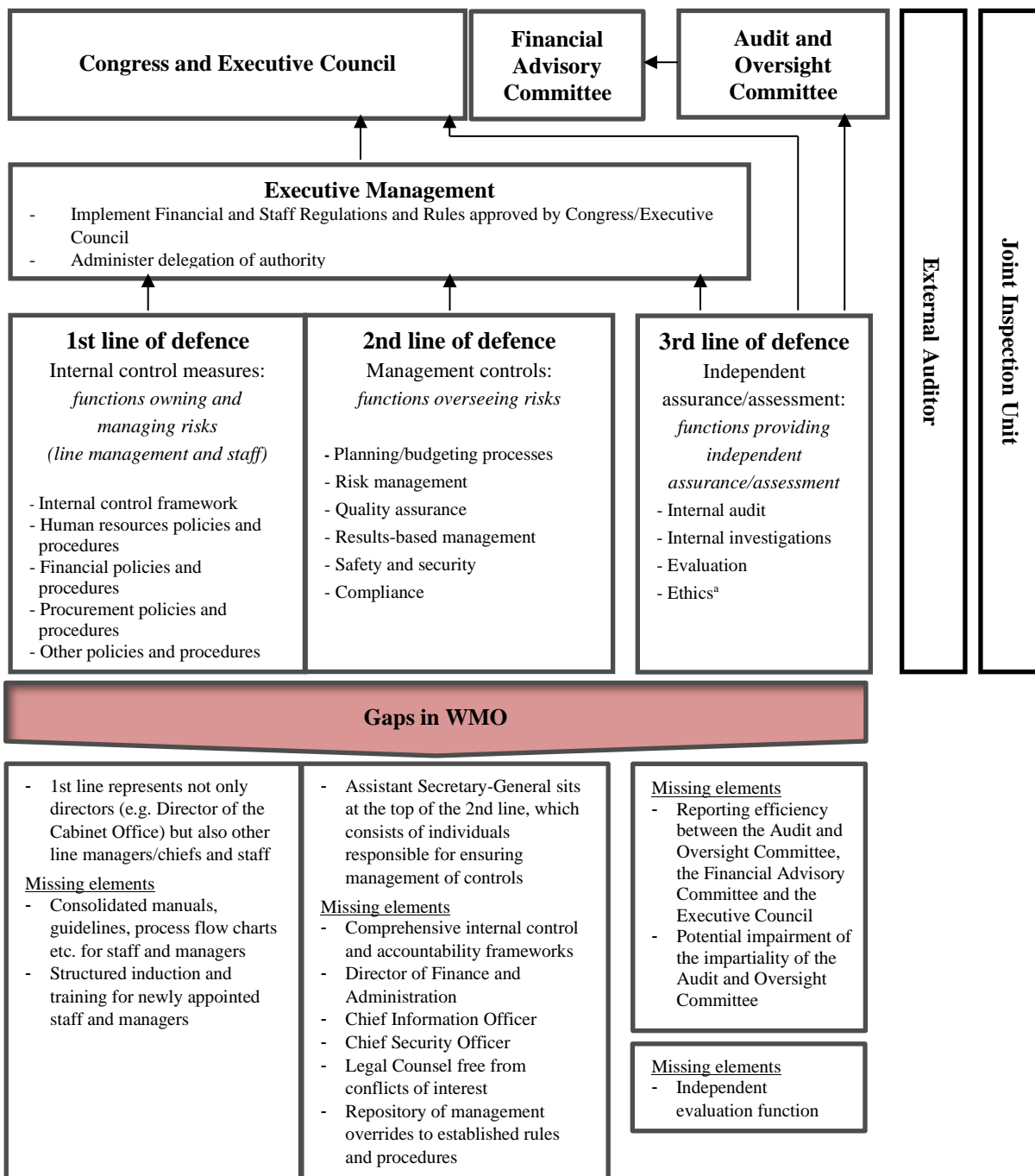
108. Operational manuals, guidance and flow charts should be further developed by each department and/or business owner and coordinated by the Human Resources Section, and training and induction should be conducted accordingly, so that staff members can properly discharge their duties and responsibilities and manage risks with a full knowledge of regulatory frameworks, rules and procedures governing their areas of operations.

³⁸ Institute of Internal Auditors, “Leveraging COSO across the three lines of defense” (Durham, North Carolina, Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, 2015).

³⁹ WMO, Service Note No. 31/2018.

⁴⁰ Chief Executives Board for Coordination, “Conclusions of the 23rd meeting of the Finance and Budget Network: International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, 16–17 June 2014”, CEB/2014/HLCM/FB/11, chap. VI.

Figure XI
WMO “three lines of defence” model



Source: analysis by JIU.

^a Some organizations place this function in the 2nd line of defence.

Second line of defence

109. The second line of defence is to support management by monitoring the function of the internal control system, performing reviews and providing specialist expertise in quality assurance and risk management, financial control, security and compliance with the regulatory framework. This includes setting clear policies and guidelines, internal control and accountability frameworks, providing advice and overseeing the actions of the first line of defence. While Service Note No. 31/2018 assigns this set of tasks to the Assistant Secretary-General, Chief Risk Officer, Legal Counsel, Chief Information Officer, Chief Security Officer and Controller also play key roles in the second line of defence. Currently,

there are no such positions as Director of Finance and Administration, Chief Information Officer and Chief Security Officer in WMO. This issue will be discussed further in chapter V.

110. The **Legal Counsel** should be independent of the Governance Services Department and act solely in the best interests of the organization. This function should report directly to the Secretary-General providing legal advice to Congress, the Executive Council, other constituent bodies and management on all issues arising from the management and administration of the secretariat. Currently, the incumbent of this position serves a dual role as both Legal Counsel (second line of defence) and as Deputy Director of the Governance Services Department (first line of defence). This creates a potential conflict of interest for those seeking legal advice that may involve the Governance Services Department and a loss of independence and credibility. **The Legal Office should be decoupled from the Governance Services Department and become an independent office as it used to be. The Legal Counsel should not engage in operational activities other than managing his or her staff in order to avoid any conflict of interest.**

111. The **Risk Officer**, namely the current Risk and Quality Management Officer, reports to the Director of the Cabinet Office (first line of defence) even though the provision of a risk management framework and guidance and training related to risk management are the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary-General according to Service Note No. 31/2018, internal control framework. Therefore, **the reporting line of the Risk Officer should be moved to the Assistant Secretary-General.**

112. In terms of the risk management framework, a new chapter of the Standing Instructions on risk management was introduced in December 2020, and the WMO risk management framework of 2013 is currently being updated accordingly.

113. As regards the positions of **Chief Information Security Officer** and the **Chief Information Officer**, according to the report of External Auditor in April 2018, a new Chief Information Security Officer was hired in 2016, although currently WMO purchases the services of a Chief Information Security Officer from the United Nations International Computing Centre, which conducts an annual information security risk assessment exercise as per audit requirements and aligned with risk assessment process of WMO. The organization does not have a position of Chief Information Officer who would typically establish a strategy and policies and procedures related to information technology and would oversee the services provided by the United Nations International Computing Centre.

114. The **Controller** also currently reports to the Director of the Cabinet Office even though two key responsibilities of the Controller are to (a) develop, maintain and improve the internal control system and train senior managers and staff; and (b) monitor compliance with the WMO regulatory framework, including the Regulations and Rules. Primary responsibilities to develop internal control and implement the Financial Regulations and Rules are vested with the Assistant Secretary-General, while the role of the Controller, as currently defined, is to assist the Assistant Secretary-General to fulfil his mandate in this respect. Therefore, **the Controller's Office should be separated from the Cabinet Office and the Controller should report directly to the Assistant Secretary-General**, not to the Director of the Cabinet Office, who is placed in the first line of defence with line management responsibilities for the operation of the Cabinet Office, which covers the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk and Performance Unit, the External Relations, Protocol and Registry Unit, the United Nations and European Union Affairs Offices and the Strategic Communications Office, in addition to approving all travel requests from all departments. This point is also made by the External Auditor in the audit of the 2019 financial statements of WMO.⁴¹

115. Currently, WMO does not have a system to keep a central repository of **management overrides** to the established rules and procedures regarding finance, human resources, procurement, travel and other policies. The Inspector was informed that these management overrides were kept by the respective departments in different forms and systems.

⁴¹ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, "Audit of 2019 financial statements", EC-72/INF. 7(4), recommendation No. 3.

116. As a central repository of all management overrides is an important control and accountability mechanism, a centralized record should be established. The Controller function is best placed to monitor and keep a central repository of all management overrides as the function has no operational responsibilities and covers internal controls and management accountability over cross-cutting issues, such as finance, human resources, procurement, travel and other policies. **The Inspector, therefore, recommends that the task of keeping a central repository of all management overrides be added to the terms of reference of the Controller.**

Third line of defence

117. The third line of defence performs oversight and accountability activities responsibly, independently and impartially and provides independent assurance and/or assessment to the constituent bodies and senior management concerning the effectiveness of the management of risk and control.

118. **Internal Oversight Office** is staffed with one director, one senior internal auditor and one internal oversight assistant to perform internal audit, internal investigation, independent evaluation, management advisory services and the role of focal point with JIU. While the Inspector commends the quality and quantity of work produced within the allocated resources, the current resource level may need to be reassessed given the increasing risk exposure of the organization, owing to, for example, the deteriorating financial situation of the organization, the knowledge deficiency caused by the secretariat restructuring (as discussed in paras. 75 and 157–163) and the threat of cybercrime in the United Nations system including WMO. Therefore, the level of resources should be commensurate with the risks, which cannot be covered with the current level of resources.

119. The Inspector also shares the same concern as the Audit and Oversight Committee regarding the Internal Oversight Office's involvement in the administrative review of staff appeals.⁴² Without prejudice to the competency and integrity of the Internal Oversight Office, such involvement presents a risk for the Office to jeopardize its independence and potentially create a conflict of interests when conducting an audit or evaluation of the secretariat restructuring process. Therefore, **the Inspector recommends that the Internal Oversight Office should recuse itself from engagement in the administrative reviews of staff appeals in the future.**

120. The **Evaluation Officer**, namely the current Head of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Risk and Performance Unit, currently reports to the Director of the Cabinet Office (first line of defence). The position was formerly in the Internal Oversight Office and was transferred to the Cabinet Office in 2017. As a result, the Internal Oversight Office has had no dedicated officer conducting independent evaluations of WMO programmes and policy frameworks. The Internal Oversight Office has only produced one evaluation report by an external consultant since 2017. The organization needs to conduct independent evaluations of policy frameworks, such as those concerning risk management, programmes and projects, as well as of the constituent bodies reform and the secretariat restructuring. **It is therefore recommended that the position of Evaluation Officer be transferred back to the Internal Oversight Office to re-establish its independence, impartiality and organizational credibility.** Alternatively, a separate evaluation office should be established in the third line of defence, ensuring its independence through the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.⁴³

121. The WMO ethics framework was issued in 2018 by consolidating the WMO code of ethics, policy on protection against retaliation, policy against fraud and other proscribed practices and the mandate of the Ethics Office. The position of **Ethics Officer** is shared with the International Telecommunication Union (on the basis of 20 per cent capacity available to WMO and 80 per cent to the International Telecommunication Union). The Inspector supports the recommendation made by the Audit and Oversight Committee, namely that the

⁴² WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, "Report of the Audit Committee", EC-72/INF. 7(3).

⁴³ United Nations Evaluation Group, "Norms and standards for evaluation" (New York, 2017), norm 4 on independence.

Ethics Officer needs more time allocated to WMO in order to carry out activities aimed to raise awareness about ethics and the “speak up” initiative at WMO and to offer support in this regard.⁴⁴

External bodies

122. The **Audit and Oversight Committee** plays an important role in good governance and management of WMO through the provision of expert advice on risk, control, and financial and administrative issues to the Executive Council, the Financial Advisory Committee, Members and the Secretary-General.

123. The Inspector welcomes the Audit and Oversight Committee’s initiative to modify its terms of reference based on the recommendations of the JIU review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system in order to further strengthen its impartiality and credibility.⁴⁵

124. The Secretary-General and his representatives regularly participate in the meetings of the Committee except for those held in camera. While it can be seen that the process is transparent and the management attaches great value to the work of the Committee, the presence of management at the meetings may impair the perception of the Committee as an independent and impartial body. It could also potentially intimidate those who are asked to speak to the Committee in the presence of their senior managers. **The Inspector recommends that the format of the Audit and Oversight Committee meetings be reviewed and revised, as appropriate, in order to ensure the independence, impartiality and integrity of the Committee.**

125. The Committee conducts an annual self-assessment, which is not a simple box-ticking exercise. It is time-consuming for the Committee members to jointly review 161 questions, some of which are related to policies and procedures that are unlikely to change from year to year. Considering the fact that the Committee meets only twice a year and issues one annual report, it appears disproportionate to allocate so much time and effort to conduct such a heavy self-assessment exercise annually.

126. In order to streamline the self-assessment process, the Committee may wish to review the self-assessment questions and separate questions that should be answered annually from those policy and procedural questions that should be answered only when changes occur. **The Inspector would like to recommend that the Audit and Oversight Committee’s performance be assessed by an independent external expert once every three to five years, which was also recommended in JIU/REP/2019/6.**

127. The **Financial Advisory Committee** was established in 1987 to advise Congress and the Executive Council on budgetary and financial matters.⁴⁶ The Committee’s membership is open to all WMO Members; core membership comprises the President of WMO and the Presidents of the Regional Associations.⁴⁷

128. The Inspector noted that the same discussion on audit, finance and administrative issues took place at both the thirty-ninth session of the Financial Advisory Committee and the seventy-second session of the Executive Council, from 24 September to 2 October 2020. There may be an opportunity to streamline the process in order to eliminate such duplication and maximize the efficiency of the Executive Council. The Inspector would like to reiterate the observation made in the previous review of management and administration of WMO, “to the extent that [the Financial Advisory Committee] has full membership, wide

⁴⁴ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, “Report of the Audit Committee”, EC-72/INF. 7(3).

⁴⁵ JIU/REP/2019/6.

⁴⁶ WMO, *Tenth World Meteorological Congress, Geneva, 4–28 May 1987: Abridged Report with Resolutions* (Geneva, 1987), WMO-No. 681, resolution 29 (Cg-X).

⁴⁷ WMO, *Fifteenth World Meteorological Congress, Geneva, 7–25 May 2007: Abridged Final Report with Resolutions* (Geneva, 2007), WMO-No. 1026, resolution 39 (Cg-XV).

participation and consensus-based decision-making, its recommendations should be accepted by the Executive Council as the decisions of the whole membership of the Organization".⁴⁸

129. The **External Auditor** is the Auditor-General of a Member and appointed by the Executive Council on the advice of the Audit and Oversight Committee. The External Auditor conducts statutory audits of the financial statements of WMO and issues an independent opinion to the Executive Council on the fairness of the presentation of the financial statements and accompanying information. The departing External Auditor in 2020 warned WMO to take more proactive measures against the ever-increasing negative equity balance, which had become a threat to the financial health of the organization. This issue should be kept under close scrutiny by the new External Auditor.

130. **JIU** provides an independent view through inspection and evaluation aimed at improving management practice and achieving greater coordination between organizations. WMO became a JIU participating organization in 1983.

131. WMO responses to the JIU recommendations related to system-wide reviews have been good. Between 2012 and 2019, WMO accepted 80 per cent of the recommendations made in JIU system-wide reviews, of which 83 per cent have been implemented. Both rates are higher than the average (that is, 68 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively) of all 28 JIU participating organizations. The Inspector commends WMO for its actions to accept and implement the recommendations of JIU system-wide reviews.

132. However, the present review has revealed that the implementation rate of JIU recommendations made in the WMO-specific reviews is unsatisfactory. In the past, JIU conducted five reviews of WMO:

- Review on the adequacy of internal controls at WMO, in which 12 recommendations were made;⁴⁹
- Review of the Working Capital Fund in WMO, in which 6 recommendations were made;⁵⁰
- Review of management and administration in WMO, in which 27 recommendations were made;⁵¹
- Follow-up on the JIU 2004 review on the adequacy of internal controls at WMO,⁵² in which JIU provided comments on the implementation status of the 12 recommendations made in 2004;
- Review of management and administration in WMO (additional issues), in which 11 recommendations were made.⁵³

133. The issues raised repeatedly in the above five reviews were: strategic and operational planning, delegation of authority, accountability, internal control, management control, roles and responsibilities, human resources strategy, the need for manuals and guidelines, the need for training, ethics, the need for independent evaluation, and the information technology system, among many others.

134. The Inspector would like to draw the attention of the Executive Council and the Executive Management to the numerous observations and recommendations made in the above five reviews, many of which have not been properly addressed and are repeated in the present review. **The Inspector strongly recommends that those critical recommendations made by JIU, once accepted by the organization, should be institutionalized into its policies and procedures, as appropriate, in order to avoid the recurrence of the same issues after changes in leadership and the transfers of key staff to other roles.**

⁴⁸ JIU/REP/2007/11, para. 17.

⁴⁹ JIU/CL/2004/1.

⁵⁰ JIU/REP/2007/3.

⁵¹ JIU/REP/2007/11.

⁵² JIU/CL/2008/1.

⁵³ JIU/ML/2008/1.

B. Strengthening management accountability

135. At the time of drafting the present report in February 2021, WMO had neither a comprehensive internal control framework nor an accountability framework. The service note issued in December 2018 (mentioned in para. 102 above) does not provide a comprehensive picture of the WMO internal control framework. These framework documents are intended to provide an enabling environment for staff at all levels to act responsibly with a full understanding and knowledge of their delegated authorities and corresponding responsibilities, as well as of the rules, regulations and procedures that govern the activities associated with their respective duties and responsibilities.

136. In the absence of an accountability framework or mechanism and with no established system of internal control, it is not clear whether the secretariat is operating under a centralized or decentralized system and to what extent managers and staff are held accountable for their actions and the results achieved.

137. The senior managers' compacts for 2020 neither indicated the level of resources allocated nor the authorities delegated to them, yet the compacts listed the results that they were expected to be delivered. Compacts, which originated in the United Nations Secretariat, reflect, in principle, the objectives and expected results of an organization, which then cascade down through the workplans of successive levels to managers and staff at all levels. These workplans become fundamental building blocks for holding senior managers and staff at all levels accountable for their performance.⁵⁴

138. Introducing senior managers' compacts is a good initiative, but it requires further refinement in placing such an instrument within an overall architecture and framework of accountability, internal control and risk management. It should also be noted that compacts were not signed between the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General. **Accountability should start at the top and the Executive Management should demonstrate an appropriate tone. It is strongly recommended that senior managers' compacts be signed by the Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General, starting in 2021.**

139. **Delegation of authority:** the assignment of responsibilities, segregation of duties and corresponding delegated authorities are prerequisites for the successful implementation of results-based management.⁵⁵ To be accountable for results, managers have to be duly empowered through a clear delegation of authority in all areas. Senior managers' compacts, a statement of internal control, job descriptions, designations of certifying and approving officers and service notes provide staff with fragmented information on delegated authorities and the corresponding responsibilities. Many such instruments are neither consistent nor coherent among themselves and in some instances directly contradict the Standing Instructions and Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules. Similar observations were made in the previous JIU reviews conducted in 2004 and 2007.⁵⁶ In the report on the audit of the 2019 financial statements, the External Auditor also addressed the same concern.

140. One example of such a discrepancy is the case in which the Secretary-General delegates the authority and responsibility to implement the Financial Regulations and Rules to the Assistant Secretary-General, but that responsibility is not listed in the job description of the Assistant Secretary-General. Another example is the situation in which the delegation of authority and responsibility for certain activities, such as managing the designation of certifying officers and certifying ex gratia payments, appears to have been delegated to the Director of the Cabinet Office, in accordance with the relevant service note, but the corresponding clause in the Financial Regulations and Rules has not been amended nor has the Assistant Secretary-General delegated this authority to the Director of the Cabinet Office

⁵⁴ A/72/773, para. 54.

⁵⁵ In JIU/REP/2017/6 (executive summary, p. v), JIU defines "results-based management" as "management strategies in individual United Nations system organizations based on managing for the achievement of intended organizational results by integrating a results philosophy and principles into all aspects of management and, most significantly, by integrating lessons learned from past performance into management decision-making".

⁵⁶ JIU/CL/2004/1 and JIU/REP/2007/11.

in writing. Moreover, this delegation of authority and responsibility was not reflected in the compact of the Director of the Cabinet Office.

141. **The Secretary-General should review all instruments such as senior managers' compacts, the statement of internal control, delegations of authority, job descriptions and the performance appraisal system to ensure consistency and coherence among such instruments and with the Standing Instructions, Rules and Regulations.**

142. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive accountability and internal control framework that lays out the architecture of accountability, starting from Congress, the Executive Council, the Secretary-General and continuing all the way to staff at all levels and in all locations. The framework should pull all the relevant elements together to empower all actors and hold them accountable within their respective domains.

143. The following recommendation is intended to enhance accountability, control and compliance of WMO.

Recommendation 3

By the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive accountability and internal control framework and submit it to the Executive Council for approval.

V. Management

Summary of JIU findings and recommendations

After examining key aspects of management in WMO, JIU concludes that the secretariat needs several important strategic documents for its management, which should be developed, and progress on those strategies should be regularly reported to the Executive Council. The restructured secretariat needs further improvements as some of the arrangements lack logical business sense and compromise internal control.

Findings:

- ✓ WMO has not produced strategies or plans for human resources, knowledge management, business continuity management and financial resources management;
- ✓ There are several weaknesses in the secretariat structure, some of which lack logical business sense and compromise internal control;
- ✓ There is very limited job-specific training being offered to staff;
- ✓ The departing External Auditor alerted WMO that it had been running a continuous deficit (on IPSAS basis), which has now resulted in a negative net worth;
- ✓ The policies and procedures related to information technology, which were issued in 2007, have become outdated;
- ✓ The WMO Enterprise Resource Planning system does not have built-in controls and instructional materials to streamline processes and procedures due to financial considerations;
- ✓ A staff survey has not been conducted since the secretariat restructuring started in 2019.

Recommendations:

- ✓ The Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive human resources strategy and submit it to the Executive Council for approval. Progress on the strategy should be reported at least annually thereafter as a regular item on the Executive Council's agenda (recommendation 4);
- ✓ Before proceeding further with the restructuring, the secretariat should conduct an organizational review to ensure logical grouping of work units and a streamlined workflow in order to maximize the use of limited resources without compromising control and risk mitigation;
- ✓ Strategic documents relating to the following should be developed: (a) knowledge management, together with mechanisms to retain institutional knowledge; (b) business continuity management; and (c) financial resources management. Progress thereon should be reported, at least annually thereafter, as a regular agenda item at the sessions of the Executive Council;
- ✓ Policies and procedures related to information technology should be updated as soon as possible. In addition, the Secretary-General should establish the position of Chief Information Officer or designate someone qualified to carry out this function;
- ✓ A comprehensive review of the Enterprise Resource Planning system with a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted in the next upgrade of the system;

- ✓ The Secretary-General should recruit a qualified senior-level official who can direct, organize and coordinate financial, accounting, human resources, corporate information technology, procurement and other administrative activities, as well as design, maintain and enhance the Enterprise Resource Planning system with a full knowledge of IPSAS;
- ✓ A staff survey, jointly designed by management and the Staff Committee, should be conducted in 2021 to gather data on the experiences and suggestions of staff.

A. Human resources management

144. **Human resources strategy:** staff are the most valuable assets in an organization as they are the driving force in delivering its core mandate. The cost of staff resources represents the largest expenditure item for WMO (73 per cent of the 2020–2021 regular budget).⁵⁷ It is one of the primary responsibilities of the Executive Management to establish a planning and management strategy for human resources. The governing body has a fiduciary responsibility to provide oversight of the use of the budget allocated to human resources and how those resources are managed at a strategic level.

145. As of February 2021, WMO had not produced a human resources strategy. The Inspector was informed that the report on human resources submitted to the seventy-second session of the Executive Council,⁵⁸ an activity report with useful statistics, was the first of its kind ever submitted to the Executive Council.

146. During its previous review in 2007, JIU was informed that the secretariat had established a task force to review the human resources management strategy and align it with the organization’s new strategic plan. However, no strategic paper on human resources management has been submitted to the Executive Council for approval.

147. As discussed in chapter III, WMO is in urgent need of a comprehensive human resources strategy to lay out the vision and strategy for the restructured secretariat and the strategic plan on the whole range of human resources management activities, such as staff development, performance management, flexible working arrangements, staff welfare, gender mainstreaming and workforce planning.

148. The following recommendation is intended to enhance the transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of WMO.

Recommendation 4

By no later than the end of 2021, the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive human resources strategy and submit it to the Executive Council for approval. Progress on the strategy should be reported at least annually thereafter as a regular item on the Executive Council’s agenda.

149. **Organizational design:** as pointed out in chapter IV (paras. 110–111, 114 and 120), several weaknesses in the current state of the secretariat structure should be examined for efficiency gains, and shortcomings in internal controls should be addressed.

150. For example, the Administrative Team of the central service platform comprises staff performing duties related to human resources, finance and procurement, with a single generic job description even though they perform different tasks utilizing different knowledge and skills. They are the first line of internal control and risk management in their respective areas of competency.

⁵⁷ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-First Session of the Executive Council (EC-71)*, “Budget for the biennium 2020–2021”, EC-71/INF. 5.

⁵⁸ WMO, *Progress Activity Report of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council (EC-72)*, “WMO human resources report”, EC-72/INF. 6.3(2).

151. Another example is the logic of placing travel and common service operations, including facilities management, under the Linguistic, Conference and Common Services Division of the Governance Services Department. Given that conference services are the major recipient of travel services, having the same director/manager take responsibility for providing and receiving such services does not provide adequate checks and balances.

152. The corporate information technology function in the Infrastructure Department was previously in the former Administrative Services Department and consideration should be given to moving it back to increase efficiency.

153. In addition, there are two units dealing with partnerships. One is the Public-Private Engagement Office, reporting directly to the Secretary-General, while the other deals with partnerships with academia, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations and is placed under the Member Services and Development Department. Each one stores agreements – for example, letters of agreement and memorandums of understanding – in a different format and system. The Inspector was also told that both units are understaffed. A review should be carried out on merging these units in order to maximize delivery and consistency, using their combined resources, and standardize policies and procedures.

154. As recommended in chapter III, before proceeding further with the restructuring, the secretariat should conduct an organizational review to ensure logical grouping of work units and a streamlined workflow in order to maximize the use of limited resources without compromising control and risk mitigation.

The right people at the right place with the right numbers

155. Once the secretariat structure is reviewed and re-established, it is important to review whether each work unit is staffed with the right skill mix and a sufficient number of staff to deliver its mandate. As discussed in chapter III with regard to the creation of seven coordination officer positions, allocating excess resources in one area could create undue shortages in other areas given the tight financial situation (as discussed in paras. 79 and 93).

156. The case of resource mobilization serves to illustrate the problem. Extrabudgetary resources are being mobilized by technical staff at headquarters and in the field. This is a commendable effort given the tight financial situation concerning regular budget resources. However, the interviews with some line managers revealed that there was not enough staff capacity to manage such resources administratively and technically, both in terms of the number of staff and their technical competencies. Likewise, each regional office covers a vast geographical area when providing its services to meet the different needs and priorities of its constituents and coordinating work with the relevant United Nations regional commission, other United Nations organizations and other actors to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed action programmes. The regional offices are also in need of additional staff in order to cope with increasing demands. This issue was also raised by Members in their comments provided in the context of the JIU survey (chapter II, para. 36).

157. As mentioned in chapter IV, WMO purchases the services of a **Chief Information Security Officer** from the United Nations International Computing Centre and this may be a practical solution for a small organization such as WMO. However, the secretariat needs an in-house **Chief Information Officer**. An information technology system is the most basic and important element of infrastructure for the proper functioning of an organization. In order to ensure proper use and functioning of software and hardware and manage the associated risks, such as cyberattacks, the secretariat needs a position/function that can oversee an organizational information technology operation and establish and maintain appropriate strategies, policies and guidelines, train staff and oversee the contract with the United Nations International Computing Centre. Cyberattacks are one of the top organizational risks and threats to any organization nowadays. Many United Nations organizations, including WMO, have already experienced such attacks.

158. The policies and procedures related to information technology were last issued in 2007 and are now outdated. The secretariat should update them as soon as possible. The Chief Information Officer should be able to assess the quality of services that WMO

acquires from the United Nations International Computing Centre. The secretariat should establish a position of Chief Information Officer or designate someone qualified for such a function, with the key roles and responsibilities being included in his or her compact and performance plan.

159. The position/function of **Chief Security Officer** is also absent from WMO. With myriad threats, including the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and natural and human-made disasters affecting vast areas, including locations in which WMO has regional and project offices, it is essential to have someone who can establish policies and procedures, draw up a business continuity plan and train staff. The WMO guidelines for handling the COVID-19 pandemic were quickly prepared in response to the crisis in early 2020 and they require further refinement.

160. Subsequent to this observation, the Inspector was informed that the Director of the Governance Services Department and the Director of the Cabinet Office have been given this responsibility, but it was not reflected in their 2020 compacts. It is therefore recommended that this task be included in their 2021 compacts, job descriptions and performance plans.

161. **Director of Finance and Administration:** for specialized agencies such as WMO, in which most senior managers and professionals are recruited on the basis of their expertise and experience as scientists and not necessarily on the basis of their managerial skills, it is important to have at least one individual who has professional qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience in accounting, financial and human resources management, procurement and other administrative areas at a senior level. One of the key tasks of this position/function is to look after the financial health of the organization and the design, maintenance and enhancement of the Enterprise Resource Planning system. Ideally, the incumbent of this position should be a qualified accountant with full knowledge of IPSAS and the related implications for the operation of WMO. The incumbent should have delegated authority to coordinate, moderate and take decisions on cross-cutting issues affecting information technology, human and financial resources, procurement, travel, facilities management and other administrative operations.

162. There is no senior official at the director level or above who possesses such specialized skills in the secretariat at present. A position that included such responsibility used to exist (i.e. Director of the Administrative Services Department at the D-2 level), but it has been abolished. An organization without such a key position in managing the resources entrusted to it by its Members is exposing itself to the risk of mismanagement and loss of institutional credibility and integrity.

163. **The Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General recruit, as soon as possible, a qualified senior-level official who can direct, organize and coordinate financial, accounting, human resources, corporate information technology, procurement and other administrative activities, as well as design, maintain and enhance the Enterprise Resource Planning system with a full knowledge of IPSAS.**

B. Financial resources management

164. **After-service health insurance:** the Inspector is pleased to note that liability for such insurance has been under close watch by the Audit and Oversight Committee, the Financial Advisory Committee and the Executive Council. This is a common issue for organizations within the United Nations system and several studies were done on it by a working group commissioned by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Liability for such insurance should continue to be a standard agenda item for the oversight bodies even though the discussion of full or partial funding may not be feasible given the current financial situation of the organization.

165. **Building maintenance costs:** the WMO headquarters building is almost 20 years old and requires constant maintenance and frequent repairs. The Inspector is informed that such costs are not budgeted for but instead covered by the rental income from external entities. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the general trend towards alternative meetings and working arrangements introduced by many organizations, the demand for rental space may

not stay at the same level and thus rental income may decrease. Delaying repair and maintenance work would eventually cost more in terms of a major refurbishment later. The secretariat should consider including these inevitable and necessary costs in the regular budget in future budget cycles. This issue should be included on the watch list of the Audit and Oversight Committee, the Financial Advisory Committee and the Executive Council, and the secretariat should report on the condition of the building, the medium to long-term plans for its repair and maintenance and the required cost, at least annually.

166. **Financial health:** as mentioned in chapter IV, the former External Auditor, over the course of his two-term tenure at WMO, alerted the organization to the fact that it was running a continuous deficit (on IPSAS basis).⁵⁹ This has now resulted in the negative net worth of the organization. The Audit and Oversight Committee, the Financial Advisory Committee and the Executive Council have all expressed concerns on this issue and asked for explanations.

167. Some Members also raised concerns in their comments in the JIU survey on the constituent bodies reform. One respondent commented that “being told that the organization is about to run out of cash with no options, details or plans for dealing with such a situation is a big distraction from strategic matters.” Another respondent would appreciate a “review and potentially a re-prioritization of activities as needed in light of the financial picture of WMO”.

168. The secretariat’s response to such concerns was that the cause of the increasing deficit was due to delayed payment of regular budget contributions by Members and non-cash expenditure related to liabilities for after-service health insurance and depreciation of the headquarters building. These are the facts that will continue in the future and the secretariat should take more proactive measures by temporarily suspending certain activities or setting up a reserve.

169. **The Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General prepare, as soon as possible, a financial resource management strategy and submit it to the Executive Council for approval and continuous monitoring.**

C. Knowledge management

Institutionalization of key knowledge

170. **Staff training:** as mentioned earlier, staff are the most important assets of the organization as they are the ones that deliver the mandate of the organization and provide quality services to the constituents. It is important to keep their knowledge and skills updated and upgraded throughout their careers in the organization. In response to the JIU questionnaire, the secretariat replied that there was very limited job-specific training being offered to staff. The generic training courses of the United Nations Office at Geneva and LinkedIn Learning, such as management skills and fraud prevention, are made available to staff. This approach is cost effective and the management should further encourage staff to take advantage of these training programmes. At the same time, the secretariat urgently needs to design and conduct WMO-specific or job-specific training, as explained in the following paragraph.

171. As a result of the secretariat restructuring, many staff were recruited and placed in new posts. They should be given training on accountability and risk management at WMO, which line of defence they belong to, their roles and responsibilities in terms of risk management and how they are held accountable in the overall architecture of the organization. In addition, those who are required to represent the organization should be given a comprehensive induction course so that they speak with consistency and coherence wherever they are posted. Staff in the General Service category also need job-specific training on manuals, workflows, policies, procedures, rules and regulations governing their areas of responsibility. The importance of providing comprehensive training was also mentioned in the previous JIU reviews of WMO but the issue has not been adequately addressed.

⁵⁹ Ibid., “Audit of 2019 financial statements”, EC-72/INF. 7(4).

172. **Knowledge retention:** the previous JIU review conducted in 2007 noted that “for any organization, written internal procedures and workflows and a clear division of responsibilities between departments have paramount importance for operational efficiency, internal control and accountability. WMO suffers from the lack of a set of internal procedures, guidelines and instructions regarding work processes, departmental responsibilities, and workflow.”⁶⁰ The Inspector is of the opinion that the situation has not improved since then. Staff posted to the central service platform mentioned that they were trying to find out the right way to process tasks assigned to them while looking for the relevant directives and rules on their own in the absence of manuals or process flow charts. This is not a conducive and enabling environment to achieve efficiency and effectiveness and to hold staff accountable for their diligence.

173. Several references to recommendations made in the previous JIU review on the need for a human resources strategy, clear delegation of authority and an accountability framework point to weaknesses in knowledge management systems to capture lessons learned over the leadership changes and/or staff turnover. With the recent secretariat restructuring and its subsequent staff changes, knowledge management is even more crucial. **The Inspector strongly recommends that the Secretary-General create, as soon as possible, a knowledge management and staff training strategy and plan, including comprehensive training programmes and mechanisms to retain institutional knowledge.**

174. **Junior Professional Officers:** it should be noted that, of the 34 P-2 level staff, 18 are Junior Professional Officers, who are entirely financed by individual donor countries for a limited duration. While the Junior Professional Officers programme provides young professionals with a great opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field of international cooperation as well as free resources for the organization, too great a dependency on such a short-term programme may affect the retention of institutional knowledge and skills.

Enterprise Resource Planning management

175. An Enterprise Resource Planning system is not just another information technology system. It is a corporate system that serves as a general ledger, subledgers and tools for resource planning and tracking. Financial statements, donor reporting, budget allocation and usages and all other management information are generated from this system. Designing and enhancing the Enterprise Resource Planning system, while ensuring the accuracy and integrity of data going into and out of this system, requires coordination among many business units by someone at the senior level with the relevant knowledge, skill set and authority, as discussed in para. 161 above.

176. A well-designed Enterprise Resource Planning system offers lots of capabilities and built-in controls and instructional materials to streamline processes and procedures, achieving more efficiency and effectiveness. The Inspector has been informed that such functionalities are not included in the design of the WMO Enterprise Resource Planning system due to financial considerations. Use of offline systems and manual processes with scattered directives also come at a cost. **A comprehensive review of the Enterprise Resource Planning system, together with all the issues discussed in the preceding paragraphs and a cost-benefit analysis, should be conducted in the next upgrade of the system.**

D. Risk management and business continuity

177. While delivering on its mandate, WMO is exposed to various risks, from fraud, corruption, reputational risks and cybercrime to risks of a political nature, mismanagement and natural and human-made disasters. The current risk exposure of WMO is now high due to simultaneous changes introduced in the secretariat structure, staffing and working arrangements and the jurisdiction of the tribunal, as well as the new working environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁶⁰ JIU/REP/2007/11, para. 57.

178. The WMO risk management policy was approved by the Executive Council in 2011 and the associated risk management framework was published in 2013. A new chapter of the Standing Instructions on risk management was introduced in December 2020 and the risk management framework of 2013 is currently being updated accordingly. Once updated, the WMO risk management framework should be submitted to the Executive Council for approval at its next session in 2021.

179. A risk management framework should be integrated into high-level decision-making on day-to-day operations throughout the organization. It would seem that the secretariat had not conducted a thorough risk analysis prior to the implementation of its restructuring. This is just an example of the high price that the organization might end up paying if a major undertaking is launched without a thorough risk analysis. Now that a new framework is being developed, it is important to make risk management a useful and essential tool for the entire organization. The Executive Management should implement the new risk framework as soon as possible and the Executive Council should provide oversight at a strategic level. The JIU report on enterprise risk management⁶¹ could assist and guide both the Executive Management and the Executive Council to properly discharge their respective responsibilities in this regard.

180. WMO lacks a comprehensive business continuity plan and specifically one that goes beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. **It is imperative that the Secretary-General appoint an appropriate staff member to develop a business continuity strategy and/or policy, or include such a function in an existing position, and to draft a guideline on developing business continuity plans for each office/entity.** For example, each regional office needs an individual business continuity plan. The appointed official for business continuity management needs to ensure its integration within the overall risk management framework and to train staff. Each business continuity plan requires regular updates and testing as well.

E. Good practices

181. As noted by Congress at its seventeenth session in 2015, WMO has introduced paperless sessions for all constituent bodies and virtual meetings, enabling off-site staff and experts to participate in meetings. WMO has also introduced a personal environmental responsibility in Staff Rule 112.2 to carry out duties in a resource efficient way, minimizing environmental harm. These are good practices that other United Nations organizations should follow.

F. Staff-management relations

182. The secretariat restructuring was a major change management process for the organization. Even though WMO participated in the JIU review on change management,⁶² it is regrettable that the secretariat did not make use of the study's findings and recommendations in its own change management process for the secretariat restructuring. However, its constituent bodies reform seems to have followed good practices. For example, in the review, JIU emphasized the importance of forming "a coalition of people working throughout an organization to shape and deliver the intended reform" and constant, clear and targeted communication. In the review, JIU also referred to the use of surveys: "when used well, surveys can gauge the readiness for change management, and assess the actual changes that are taking place through the gathering of data over time."

183. Regrettably, there is no verifiable evidence that feedback from staff was taken into consideration in the restructuring and reduction in the number of staff. The restructuring process, if managed differently, may have resulted in less turmoil and more buy-in by staff and line managers.

184. Re-establishing trust and partnership between management and staff is crucial going forward. Learning from the first phase of the restructuring, a coalition of line managers and

⁶¹ JIU/REP/2020/5.

⁶² JIU/REP/2019/4.

staff who have a full appreciation of the actual work at ground level could be formed and jointly conduct a structural and process review of the overall secretariat restructuring, as recommended in chapter III above. Such a process would create joint ownership of the new structure and new work processes by both management and staff. Staff Regulation 8.1 requires such a consultative process to be carried out on issues affecting staff. The function of the Joint Consultative Committee should be restored as a formal mechanism to improve two-way communication between management and staff.

185. WMO has not conducted a staff survey since the secretariat restructuring started in 2019. Periodic staff surveys with clear and transparent objectives, coupled with a plan for sharing and using the results thereof, can provide management with useful insights into how the reform and restructuring efforts, as well as the leadership, are perceived by staff. The JIU report on whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations offers a useful guide on staff surveys.⁶³

186. As also urged by the Executive Council at its seventy-second session, **it is recommended that a staff survey, designed jointly by management and the Staff Committee, be conducted to gather data on the experiences and suggestions of staff.**

⁶³ JIU/REP/2018/4.

Annex

Overview of actions to be taken by participating organizations on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

		Intended impact	United Nations, its funds and programmes														Specialized agencies and IAEA														
			CEB	United Nations ^a	UNAIDS	UNCTAD	ITC	UNDP	UNEP	UNFPA	UN-Habitat	UNHCR	UNICEF	UNODC	UNOPS	UNRWA	UN-Women	WFP	FAO	IAEA	ICAO	ILO	IMO	ITU	UNESCO	UNIDO	UNWTO	UPU	WHO	WIPO	WMO
Report	For action		<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"/>	<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"/>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Recommendation 1	a																														L
Recommendation 2	a																														E
Recommendation 3	e																														E
Recommendation 4	a																														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 transparency and accountability **b:** dissemination of good/best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** strengthened coherence and harmonization **e:** enhanced control and compliance **f:** enhanced effectiveness **g:** significant financial savings **h:** enhanced efficiency **i:** other.

^a As listed in ST/SGB/2015/3