



Governing Body

331st Session, Geneva, 26 October–9 November 2017

GB.331/PFA/10

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section
Audit and Oversight Segment

PFA

Date: 19 September 2017

Original: English

TENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Matters relating to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU): Reports of the JIU

Purpose of the document

This paper summarizes the annual report of the JIU for 2016, its programme of work for 2017 and six reports published in 2015 and 2016 on the following United Nations (UN) system-wide issues: public information and communications policies and practices; organizational ombudsman services; succession planning; fraud prevention, detection and response; contribution to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed goals; and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), with a particular focus on poverty eradication.

The Governing Body is invited to provide guidance on the information contained in this document and on any of the recommendations addressed to the ILO in those six JIU reports, as well as on the status of follow-up to the recommendations presented to the Governing Body in the past three years (see the proposed point for discussion in paragraph 23).

Relevant strategic objective: None.

Main relevant outcome/cross-cutting policy driver: Enabling Outcome B: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

Policy implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Legal implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Author unit: Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM).

Related documents: This document is submitted annually, in accordance with the procedure established in GB.294/PV, paragraph 210. Reference documents: GB.331/PFA/10/REF/1 and GB.331/PFA/10/REF/2.

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2016 and programme of work for 2017

1. The 2016 annual report¹ of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) provides information on, among other things, JIU reports and management letters issued in 2016² and follow-up to recommendations by the participating agencies. It also lists the reviews planned for 2017, including on five issues that concern the ILO as part of the United Nations (UN) system, namely: administrative support services delivery; disaster risk reduction strategies;³ mechanisms and policies addressing conflict of interest; follow-up to JIU reports and recommendations; and donor reporting requirements.
2. Annex III of the JIU annual report shows that the ILO's share of the JIU costs for 2016–17 represents 2.2 per cent of the total contributions of all participating organizations. The ILO's share of the 2016–17 JIU budget amounts to some US\$295,000.

Selected JIU reports published in 2015 and 2016

3. In accordance with the established procedure, the Office submits to the Governing Body annually a summary of JIU reports containing recommendations addressed to UN system organizations, along with a summary of the comments of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the comments by the Office. A summary of six such JIU reports is being presented to the Governing Body at its current session, as set out in paragraphs 5–22 below.
4. The ILO's follow-up status for each JIU recommendation is presented in a separate reference document, which is available on the Governing Body website.⁴ In line with previous practice, the Office has also made available an additional reference document that provides an updated status of the follow-up to those JIU recommendations that were presented to the Governing Body in the previous three years.⁵

¹ United Nations: *Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2016 and programme of work for 2017*, Official Records of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 34, General Assembly, 71st Session, New York, 2017 (A/71/34).

² All published JIU reports are available on the JIU website: <http://www.unjiu.org/> in English, French, Spanish and other UN official languages.

³ This review has been postponed; another review on internship programmes was included in the programme of work for 2017, as communicated by the JIU in April 2017.

⁴ GB.331/PFA/10/REF/1, available (in English only) at: <http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/GB331/pfa/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁵ GB.331/PFA/10/REF/2, available (in English only) at: <http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/GB331/pfa/lang--en/index.htm>.

Public information and communications policies and practices in the United Nations system

(JIU/REP/2015/4)⁶

5. The report includes five recommendations for ILO action. All of the recommendations have been accepted, of which four have been implemented and one, on reinforcement of the strategic role of the public information and communication function (recommendation 2), is in progress.
6. The CEB members welcomed the report and generally supported the recommendations and the nine benchmarks proposed, on: (1) organizational goals and priorities; (2) overarching principles of communications; (3) access to executive management; (4) coherent planning and messaging; (5) multilingualism; (6) resources; (7) internal and external communications; (8) training; and (9) monitoring and oversight. The CEB members expressed willingness to incrementally include these in the policies and practices of their organizations, as needed, while several noted that they were already in the process of doing so.
7. The Office notes with appreciation that the JIU recognized a number of good practices from the ILO, among other organizations, in this report. The ILO is one of a few UN system organizations that have integrated all seven components considered essential in the corporate public information and communications frameworks/strategies (Annex I) and also developed all of the main public information and communications guidelines (Annex II). The Office will continue its efforts to further progress, building on improvements steered by the reform undertaken since 2012.

Review of the organizational ombudsman services across the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2015/6)⁷

8. This report examines the role of ombudsman services, which in the ILO correspond to the function of the mediator. The report contains eight recommendations for ILO action. Six of these have been accepted and have either been implemented or are in progress; the remaining two, on the inclusion of questions relating to the ombudsman service in staff surveys and the use of the survey responses (recommendation 2) and the option for field staff to have an in-person consultation with the ombudsman of another UN system organization in the same location (recommendation 3), are under consideration.
9. CEB members noted that the report offers a valuable analysis of this important function, complementing a series of reports on other independent functions such as ethics, investigation, audit and evaluation. They expressed particular caution with regard to recommendation 3, noting that it required further consideration beyond concerns about resource implications and practical feasibility, as well as further consultations on specific modalities to be worked out bilaterally with each organization concerned.
10. The Office generally supports the findings and recommendations of the report. It also shares the caution expressed by some CEB members in respect of several recommendations, not

⁶ See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2015_4_English.pdf for the full report. See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/CEB%20and%20organisation%20documents/A_71_383Add1_English.pdf for the full CEB comments.

⁷ See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2015_6_English.pdf for the full report. See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/CEB%20and%20organisation%20documents/A_71_117Add1_English.pdf for the full CEB comments.

wishing to compromise the independence and effectiveness of the ombudsman service by any adverse impact of measures intended to strengthen the function.

Succession planning in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2016/2) ⁸

11. Four recommendations are designated for ILO action, including one that is actually addressed to the UN Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairperson of the CEB, and therefore not relevant for the ILO. Recommendation 1 on the introduction of formal succession planning has been accepted and implemented, as relevant mechanisms have been developed and are operational. Accordingly, recommendations 2 and 3 asking executive heads to instruct their human resources management offices to take specific action to introduce formal succession planning are not accepted as appropriate mechanisms are already in place.
12. The CEB members welcomed the report as being informative and useful and expressed agreement with its overall thrust. At the same time, they noted that it would have benefited from an analysis and estimate of resource requirements, as well as from a cost–benefit analysis for implementing formal succession planning, in view of alternative human resources activities, frameworks and initiatives that can enhance succession planning and of competing priorities in the human resources area.
13. The Office joins the CEB members in welcoming the report and shares their concern with regard to the cost effectiveness of the recommendations; it will continue its efforts to make progress in this area within the available resources.

Fraud prevention, detection and response in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2016/4) ⁹

14. The report includes 16 recommendations for ILO action. All recommendations but one have been accepted and are either implemented or in progress. Recommendation 16 concerning the placement of a permanent or standing item relating to fraud prevention, detection and response on the agendas of legislative and governing bodies is under consideration. It broadly overlaps with recommendation 15, which has already been accepted and implemented in the ILO, but is not supported by sufficient analysis in terms of its added value and from a cost–benefit perspective.
15. CEB members welcomed the report, considering it a valuable contribution to increasing transparency and strengthening anti-fraud measures in the UN system. Apart from the comments specific to this report, they noted that the JIU has recently issued reports on a number of similar topics, including the use of non-staff personnel; the function of the ombudsman; the internal audit, investigation, evaluation and ethics functions; contract management; and the use of implementing partners. Considering the potential proliferation of various review findings and recommendations from the JIU and other oversight functions

⁸ See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_2%20_English.pdf for the full report. See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/CEB%20and%20organisation%20documents/A_71_393%20Add1_English.pdf for the full CEB comments.

⁹ See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_4_English.pdf for the full report. See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/CEB%20and%20organisation%20documents/A_71_731_Add1_English.pdf for the full CEB comments.

and stakeholders, as well as the resource implications of their implementation, the JIU is encouraged to consider the subject more holistically.

16. The Office takes note of the reference to the ILO among the good practices identified in the report and will continue to make progress in implementing the relevant recommendations in a cost-effective manner within the available resources.

Evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals (JIU/REP/2016/5) ¹⁰

17. This report results from an evaluation led by the JIU and conducted in partnership with evaluation offices of UN system organizations. The report includes five recommendations designated for ILO action. Four of these are addressed to the UN General Assembly and are therefore not relevant to the ILO. Recommendation 3 on the establishment of an interagency network, which is addressed to the ILO and other relevant UN entities, has been accepted and implemented.
18. The CEB members supported all five recommendations and appreciated the involvement of a large number of organizations in the evaluation in order to enhance its validity and utility. They were pleased with the overall conclusion concerning the important contributions made by the UN entities to the development of national statistical capacities. They also concurred with the conclusions on the critical role of statistics for informed policy decisions, on the need to give priority to enhancing the use of statistics in the work of the UN system, and on the challenges and complexities involved in the coordination and coherence of capacity development among the UN system organizations.
19. The Office supports all five recommendations, subject to the acceptance and implementation by the UN General Assembly of the four recommendations addressed to it, particularly in the context of supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations, with a particular focus on poverty eradication (JIU/REP/2016/6) ¹¹

20. This report results from an evaluation led by the JIU and conducted in partnership with evaluation offices of UN system organizations. It points to the lack of commitment on the part of stakeholders in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation process and to associated issues, such as low level of compliance with the requirement for an evaluation and with the quality standard; low level of participation; and

¹⁰ See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_5_English.pdf for the full report. See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/CEB%20and%20organisation%20documents/A_71_431_%20Add1_English.pdf for the full CEB comments.

¹¹ See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_6_English.pdf for the full report. See https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/CEB%20and%20organisation%20documents/A_71_533_Add1_English.pdf for the full CEB comments.

significant issues concerning coordination and cooperation in the evaluation activities of UN entities at the country level. Recommendation 4, addressed to the UN Secretary-General, is designated for ILO action and concerns the better coordination of country-level evaluation activities and their better integration into the UNDAF evaluation process.

21. The CEB members supported the key conclusions and recommendations and noted that their implementation would result in improvements in terms of effectiveness, transaction costs and accountability for the UNDAF generally. They also noted, in relation to the key issues identified in the report, the tendency of national governments to prefer their own national review processes, not seeing the added value of a separate evaluation of the UNDAF; specific donor requirements, or the need for agencies to engage in evaluations as part of a government-led process; and, to a lesser extent, the insufficient level of relevant resources.
22. The Office concurs with the comments of the CEB, particularly with regard to the donor-specific reporting requirement, as a bigger challenge to be addressed beyond individual organizations. At the same time, it is of the view that agency-specific evaluations are essential for internal accountability and organizational learning needs. It welcomes UNDAF evaluations assessing ILO contributions within the system-wide results framework at the country level, provided that such evaluations do not compromise key ILO corporate requirements.

Proposed point for discussion

23. The Governing Body is invited to provide guidance on this document and on any of the recommendations addressed to the ILO in the corresponding JIU reports as summarized above and as set out in GB.331/PFA/10/REF/1, as well as in GB.331/PFA/10/REF/2.