Governing Body

319th Session, Geneva, 17–31 October 2013

GB.319/PFA/9

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section
Audit and Oversight Segment

PFA

NINTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

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

Purpose of the document

This paper summarizes the JIU's annual report for 2012 and programme of work for 2013 and seven reports addressed, inter alia, to the ILO, with regard to the following UN system-wide issues: multilingualism; business continuity; investigation functions; information and communication technology (ICT) governance; management of sick leave; UN-Oceans inter-agency mechanism; and strategic planning.

Relevant strategic objective: Governance, support and management objective.

Policy implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Legal implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Financial implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Decision required: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

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

Author unit: Bureau of Programming and Management (PROGRAM).

Related documents: This paper is submitted annually, in accordance with the procedure established in GB.294/PV, paragraph 210. Reference document GB.319/PFA/9/REF.

Report of the JIU for 2012 and programme of work for 2013

1. This JIU report provides information on the revised strategic framework 2010–19, reports prepared in 2011, and follow-up to recommendations by the participating agencies. It also presents the reviews planned for 2013, including on several issues that concern the ILO and/or other United Nations (UN) system organizations, namely the resource mobilization function, use of non-staff resources and related contractual modalities in the field offices, the resident coordinator system, management of implementing partners, management of contracts of capital/construction/refurbishment projects, the evaluation function, use of retirees and staff beyond the retirement age, and environmental governance following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–22 June 2012).

2. Annex III of the report indicates that the ILO's share of the JIU costs for 2013 represents 2 per cent of the total contributions of all participating organizations. The ILO's share of the 2012–13 JIU budget amounts to US$267,858. In 2012, in addition to the share for that year, the ILO paid $6,644 as its 2011 share of the cost for the web-based JIU recommendation follow-up system.

Other JIU reports

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 or specifically to the ILO, along with the comments of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the Office. There are seven such reports to submit to the current session, as summarized in paragraphs 5–25 below.

4. Information on the ILO's follow-up status for each JIU recommendation is presented in a separate reference document available on the Governing Body website, [1] following the practice introduced at the November session of the Governing Body in 2012.

Multilingualism in the UN system organizations: Status of implementation
(JIU/REP/2011/4 and A/67/78/Add.1)

5. The report includes twelve recommendations for ILO action. One of them is addressed to the CEB. All other relevant recommendations have been accepted and are mostly implemented.

6. UN system organizations, as members of the CEB, largely support the main recommendations in the report. Some members note the lack of cost–benefit analysis to support recommendations that have clear financial and staff-time implications.

7. The Office concurs with the CEB comments, including on the need for cost–benefit analysis.

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[1] GB.319/PFA/9/REF (in English language only) at http://www.ilo.org/gb/lang--en/index.htm.

Business continuity in the UN system
(JIU/REP/2011/6 and A/67/83/Add.1)

8. The report includes seven recommendations for ILO action. One of them, concerning the provision of financial and human resources for business continuity plans, is under consideration, while all the other recommendations have been accepted and are being implemented.

9. The CEB members generally support the conclusions of the report, and some organizations indicate that many of the recommendations have already been implemented.

10. The ILO is among the organizations that have implemented many of the recommendations, either fully or in part. The Office continues to pursue action in this area in collaboration with other UN entities, where appropriate and feasible and within the resources available.

The investigations function in the UN system
(JIU/REP/2011/7 and A/67/140/Add.1)

11. The report includes seven recommendations for ILO action. Two of them, concerning the consolidation of all investigations in the internal oversight entity and the discontinuation of investigators' mobility within the same organization, are under consideration. All the other recommendations, apart from one addressed to another entity, have been accepted and implemented.

12. The CEB members welcome the analysis in the report and acknowledge its contribution to enhanced effectiveness of the UN system. With respect to recommendation 8, requesting the UN Secretary-General to set up an inter-agency task force to develop options for establishing a single consolidated UN system Investigation Unit by the end of 2013, the organizations note that it would require revising the mandates of all the existing investigative units in all the organizations concerned, and that an approval of the governing body of each organization would be necessary before establishing the proposed inter-agency task force.

13. The Office concurs with the CEB comments.

Information and communication technology (ICT) governance in the UN system organizations
(JIU/REP/2011/9 and A/67/119/Add.1)

14. The report includes ten recommendations for ILO action. All of them have been accepted and are being implemented.

15. The CEB members generally support the report, noting that it provides useful benchmarking information and also advocates a "best practice" approach to ICT governance. Furthermore, they express appreciation for the high degree of collaboration between the JIU and the heads of ICT of the participating organizations during the review.

16. The Office concurs with the CEB comments.

The management of sick leave in the UN system
(JIU/REP/2012/2 and A/67/337/Add.1)

17. The report includes four recommendations for ILO action. One of them has been accepted and implemented, while two others are not relevant, and the last one has not been accepted. This last recommendation (No. 5), concerns the submission of comprehensive annual or biennial reports on sick leave to the legislative body in each organization. Of the two recommendations that are not relevant, one is addressed to another entity, the UN Medical Directors Working Group, to establish a set of common information requirements to be included in sick leave certificates and reports (No. 2). As for the other recommendation (No. 3), requesting each UN system organization to ensure such common requirements for sick leave certificates and reports, the Office had put in place a rigorous procedure prior to this JIU review and in the absence of the common requirements.

18. The CEB members welcome the report and support its findings and recommendations in general. However, they note that the report did not provide analysis or specific recommendations on the question of reducing absenteeism linked to sick leave, which would have been useful and appreciated. With respect to recommendation 5, the organizations question the suggested role of the legislative bodies in the matter of statistical data and measures taken on sick leave, and suggest that the recommendation should be addressed to the executive heads who are responsible and accountable for ensuring the normal functioning of the organizations, including the well-being and health of their staff.

19. The Office concurs with the CEB comments.

Evaluation of UN-Oceans
(JIU/REP/2012/3 and A/67/400/Add.1)

20. The report includes two recommendations for ILO action. The one concerning resource mobilization to establish a dedicated UN-Oceans secretariat is under consideration, together with the other member organizations. The other recommendation is addressed to the UN General Assembly.

21. The CEB members welcome the report and appreciate the opportunity to improve UN-Oceans as a mechanism for coordination and cooperation on oceans and coastal issues. Some of them are concerned by the report's implications in that the proposed direction for greater institutionalization of UN-Oceans would make the coordination mechanism more costly and less flexible. In this regard, the members of UN-Oceans may need to evaluate cost-effectiveness in light of the scope of their respective mandates on oceans and coastal issues, as well as the overall cost to each organization.

22. The Office concurs with the CEB comments, particularly in terms of the need to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the coordination mechanism in view of the ILO mandate relating to oceans and coastal issues.

Strategic planning in the UN system
(JIU/REP/2012/12 and A/67/873/Add.1)

23. The report includes four recommendations for ILO action. One of them has been accepted, while its implementation entails UN system-wide coordination through various inter-agency mechanisms. The recommendation on the formulation of system-wide sectoral strategic frameworks through the UN Economic and Social Council (No. 4) has not been accepted. Another recommendation on the alignment of planning and reporting cycles (No. 5) is under consideration. The remaining recommendation (No. 1) is not relevant as it is addressed to the UN Secretary-General.

24. While they appreciate the report for providing useful information on the experiences in strategic planning in the UN system, the CEB members note that the recommendations apply mostly to those organizations that participate in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the UN system. Among several observations, they note the lack of analysis on the issue of both the value of implementing coordination measures and the implementation costs. They are also concerned by the questionable added value of having an additional layer of the UN system-wide sectoral strategic frameworks proposed (recommendation 4), and by the costs associated with preparing and operationalizing such frameworks, including for their monitoring and evaluation, against any benefits that they might bring. The report lacks a solid analysis to support such a recommendation.

25. The Office concurs with the CEB comments. The alignment of the ILO planning and reporting cycles with that of the QCPR is to be considered by the Governing Body as part of the debate and guidance on the next Strategic Policy Framework. The current Strategic Policy Framework has been aligned with the Millennium Development Goals time frame, rather than with the QCPR.

Point for guidance

26. The Governing Body may wish to provide guidance on any of the 46 recommendations addressed to the ILO, included in the seven JIU reports as summarized in this document. As noted under paragraph 4 above, the ILO's follow-up status on each recommendation is available in the separate reference document (see paragraph 4).