



United States Mission to the United Nations

Statement by Stephen Lieberman
U.S. Minister Counselor for United Nations Management & Reform
On Agenda Item 140: Joint Inspection Unit Annual and Programme of Work Report
Before the Fifth Committee
March 3, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to thank the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, Mr. Cihan Terzi for introducing the annual report of the Unit for 2013 and the program of work for 2014. Oversight bodies such as the JIU play a key role in ensuring the effectiveness of the UN system. My delegation appreciates the JIU's efforts to professionalize, codify and streamline its procedures and working methods in carrying out its mandate. We take this opportunity to welcome the efforts made in 2013 toward evaluating and reforming the organization through two major undertakings – the JIU self-evaluation and external peer review. We note the findings and suggested areas of improvement discussed in these two assessments and look forward to hearing the Unit's reactions to them.

We are particularly interested in how the JIU will improve the quality, relevance and utility of JIU reports and look forward to hearing details about the comprehensive action plan. The United States appreciates that the Unit is striving to produce better quality reports. In its recent history, the Unit has produced several reports which have contributed to major accomplishments in areas we view as critical, such as the establishment of independent audit committees throughout the common system, improvements in results based management and implementation of IPSAS. However, there is potential for greater impact.

As we have previously expressed, the JIU needs to issue reports in a timelier manner and that are better aligned with the issues under consideration by the General Assembly. Often, reports are issued too late or too early to add value to the process. The United States is concerned by the delay in the completion of the reports from the 2013 program of work and we look forward to reviewing the remaining reports.

We take note of the Unit's concerns in the report regarding resources. My delegation looks forward to learning more about these concerns and their impact, and how they can be addressed given the current constrained budget environment.

Turning to the JIU's work for this year, we welcome the Unit's efforts to better align its program of work for 2014 to the Unit's long-term strategy. We hope that with a focus on improving the selection of topics, the Unit's work and reports will be more relevant to the interests of its clients. We also welcome the JIU's role in 2014 and 2015 in working with other oversight bodies on the two proposed pilot evaluations for the independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development.

The United States has long advocated for greater system-wide focus by the JIU. We therefore remain concerned that acceptance rates of recommendations contained in system-wide reports are relatively low, as compared with single organization reports. While we welcome the new web-based system for tracking JIU recommendations, we encourage ongoing outreach to clients to ensure acceptance and implementation of these recommendations.

Finally, we would like to echo the message of the Chairman regarding future inspectors. We reiterate our long held position that member states should present candidates with senior level, high-quality inspection, evaluation and audit expertise to this body and should hold inspectors to high professional standards in their work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.