
Geneva May 14, 2012

The JIU welcomes the final version of the report “Independent System-Wide Evaluation Mechanisms” mandated by General Assembly resolution 64/289 and carried out by a team of two independent external consultants. The report appropriately reflects the current challenges of commissioning, funding, managing, undertaking and utilizing independent system-wide evaluations (ISWE). The JIU supports the report’s conclusions that the existing sub-system mechanism should be continued with improvements. Thus a separate mechanism would not be warranted. The JIU is furthermore convinced that a new entity would not by itself solve all problems identified in the independent report.

The JIU agrees with the team’s main finding that although it will not be easy to move ISWE forward due to a number of issues, “that there is willingness in the UN system to have substantive discussions and dialogue on ISWE.”¹. This confirms a growing enabling environment for discussing system-wide evaluations and the opportunity for all key stakeholders to proactively contribute to the enhancement and use of ISWE. JIU’s experience in system-wide evaluations spans nearly 40 years and it looks forward to using its expertise and experience to support the implementation of the recommendations identified by the consultants.

Way forward and follow-up to the Report

Recommendation 1: The President of the General Assembly should set up a working group to explore the specific function it wants ISWE to play within the United Nations system.

The JIU agrees with this recommendation and expresses its interest, given its role as a relevant subsidiary body of the General Assembly, to be part of the working group to be set up by the President of the General Assembly. The review identified several areas which the working group would need to discuss (pg. 59). The JIU could bring to the table its concrete expertise in issues related to the role played by ISWE, governance including priority setting, follow-up mechanisms, resources needed and mandates.

Recommendation 2: The Secretary-General should establish a process for strengthening coordination of the existing ISWE activities in the UN system. An interim coordination mechanism in the form of a Steering Group should be tasked with managing the process.

The JIU welcomes the recommendation to strengthen the existing mechanism in accordance with GA resolution 64/289, para. 13. The JIU believes that the location of the secretariat for the Steering

¹ Pg. viii Independent System Wide Evaluation Mechanisms final report
Group should be carefully considered so as to make it most effective. It may be appropriate to request the Secretariat of UNEG to initially facilitate the work of this Group. The Steering Group should, amongst other tasks, capture information on demand for ISWEs, analyse current prioritization, assess resource needs and coordinate evaluations across the system and report on them. The JIU can contribute its knowledge to this endeavour and could assist in capturing the information across the system.

Recommendation 3: The JIU should be supported in its on-going efforts to improve its effectiveness and relevance as an ISWE mechanism. This support should include providing the JIU with the opportunity to test its ability to coordinate operational work of ISWE.

The JIU fully welcomes this opportunity and is prepared to take the work on ISWE further and enhance its effectiveness especially regarding its utilization and follow-up. The JIU has already begun work on implementing a new on-line follow-up system for its participating organizations to record, implement, track and report on the acceptance and implementation status of JIU recommendations. The JIU is exploring other means to enhance utilization by producing user-friendly products to accompany its evaluation reports. The JIU is also open, as noted by the report, to explore other working methods and to utilize existing capacity to coordinate, manage and undertake ISWE. However, the JIU wishes to emphasize that it believes that the current resources allocated to carry out its programme of work are already limited and any further work on ISWE would need to be accompanied by additional resources.

Recommendation 4: The UN system should take action to improve the quality of system-wide, policy-focused evaluations such as the QCPR. As a starting point, the Secretary-General should commission an independent evaluation of the QCPR purpose, approach, credibility and usefulness.

The JIU sees this recommendation as a first step in a series of reviews that will need to be undertaken to understand the status of evaluation work on the implementation and results of policy decisions made by the General Assembly and ECOSOC. As the independent evaluation on QCPR would need to fit into a larger framework, the JIU suggests that this be considered as part of the small working group to be set up in response to Recommendation 1. This group should therefore also be tasked to discuss the bigger picture, i.e. the issue of evaluation of the implementation of GA and ECOSOC mandates and policies. If requested, the JIU would furthermore be prepared to lead the proposed evaluation of QCPR purpose, approach, credibility and usefulness.

Recommendation 5: The Secretary-General should request UNEG to work with its members in developing specific standards, guidance and competencies associated with system-wide evaluation. The Secretary-General should ensure that the necessary resources are made available to UNEG to facilitate this work.

Through UNEG, JIU will share its experience to support the development of such standards, guidance and competencies associated with ISWE work. While only an observer to UNEG, JIU would be willing to participate in any working group UNEG may set up for this purpose.

Recommendation 6: The Secretary-General should update the evaluation guidelines for the United Nations and include special directives related to ISWE in these guidelines.

The JIU would endorse such directives and believes that the time has come to not only update the existing guidelines but also for the Secretary-General to exercise strong leadership in regard to the commissioning, application, use and follow-up of joint and system-wide evaluation work. In this context it would be useful if follow-up and implementation of system-wide evaluation recommendations are part and parcel of system-wide accountability frameworks.