



Check Against Delivery

United Nations General Assembly Seventy-second Session

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Introduction of the Note of the Secretary-General on the
“Administrative support services: the role of service centres in redesigning administrative service
delivery”

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the note of the Secretary-General conveying his comments and those of CEB members on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit “Administrative support services: the role of service centres in redesigning administrative service delivery” as contained in A/72/299/Add.1.

Organizations of the United Nations system welcomed the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on administrative support services and its review of the methods and practices of United Nations system organizations for the delivery of administrative support services through the use of shared services and service centres and appreciate its detailed analysis and sound recommendations.

Organisations recognised the value of the report, while noting that some areas could have benefitted from additional analysis or clarity. For example, organizations noted that in several places in the report a focus on costs was indicated as a driver for organizations to establish service centres by, for example, moving to low-cost locations, and, to a lesser extent, delivering better quality services. However, organisations emphasized the importance of considering a third

aspect, that of focusing on liberating talent for more value -adding functions, either strategic or programmatic.

Furthermore, taking note of the review of existing service centres contained in the report, some organizations observed that it was mainly large organizations that implemented centralized service centres, and if so, it would have been useful to clarify options for other organizations which did not possess the scale to proceed on their own, including whether to work together with other smaller organizations to reach the critical mass necessary to create an independent service centre or to join a larger organization's centre. Organizations noted that, in the latter case, other issues would need to be resolved, such as different enterprise resource planning systems, internal control frameworks (including risks) and the need to establish formal service relationships.

Some organizations felt that more information on the cost of the transition from one service model to another would have been useful. In addition, organizations appreciated the inclusion of the business case and cost-benefit analysis, and also noted the business cases centred mainly on location cost differentials and not so much on efficiency gains obtained.

Finally, organizations, observed that the report could have benefitted from more comprehensively addressing the way administrative services are integrated into organizational control frameworks, including any assurances offered on the services provided and, if so, by whom and to whom.

On behalf of the organizations of the UN system, I would like to thank the JIU for this report, which covered a topic of interest to CEB members and importance to the entire UN system.

Thank you