



JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

of the United Nations System

CORPS COMMUN d'INSPECTION

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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STATEMENT TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Agenda item 141

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2019 and Programme of Work for 2020

A/74/34

Eileen A. Cronin, Inspector and Chair

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to introduce the report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2019 and the programme of work for 2020, as contained in document A/74/34. In addition to reporting on last year and setting out our current year's programme of work, this document also presents the strategic framework for the JIU for the period 2020-29, about which I will speak later in these remarks.

In 2019, the Unit completed seven system-wide and two single organization reviews and one management letter. The mix of products reflects our distinct mandate in applying a system-wide perspective, while concurrently supporting individual legislative bodies through organization-specific management and administration reviews, as was done for UNAIDS and ICAO. The thematic mix of completed reviews covered an array of topics that are essential to strengthening the ability of the United Nations system to:

- a) Enhance accountability, as elaborated in the JIU review of audit and oversight committees;
- b) Effectively undertake reforms, as detailed in our reviews of organizational change management and inter-agency mobility;
- c) Harness opportunities presented by technological progress, as expounded upon in our reviews of cloud computing services and externally outsourced services to commercial service providers; and
- d) Support the attainment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda concerning gender and climate change adaptation, as detailed through our reviews of the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system entities.

Our programme of work for 2020 contains a management and administration review of UN-Habitat as well as five system-wide reviews covering the ethics function, cybersecurity; the use of blockchain applications; environmentally sustainable facilities, policies and practices in United Nations system organizations; and the support provided by the United Nations system to landlocked developing countries. Seven reviews have been carried over from 2019 and are in the process of completion. In line with the General Assembly's

request to optimize the number of projects in our programme of work through prioritization, we have taken on fewer reviews in 2020, through co-authorships by two or more Inspectors, which in turn allows us to allocate our limited resources more effectively and capitalize on our internal expertise and synergies.

The relevance of the topics in the Unit's programme of work has benefitted from extensive consultations with participating organizations.

The General Assembly has asked us to consider carrying out certain reviews on priority subjects, which we continue to stand ready to do. The Assembly has also asked us to be mindful of its own programme of work so that thematic reports could be used to maximum effect.

While the Unit will continue to produce increasingly relevant and high-quality reports, the real impact is dependent on the respective legislative bodies. After the consideration of our reports, legislative bodies should compel their respective organizations to implement the recommendations in the Unit's reports. The Unit's analysis conducted in 2015 found that only 16 out of the Unit's 28 participating organizations schedule its reports for consideration -- with FAO and the United Nations Secretariat being the only two that table the full text of reports for consideration.

This gap can be effectively addressed by drawing to the attention of the governing bodies of all JIU participating organizations that:

- a) All JIU reports should be adequately disseminated and taken up for consideration in a timely manner under an appropriate agenda item, with sufficient time set aside for consideration, decision-making and follow-up; and
- b) The relevant Inspectors authoring a review could be invited to present their reports to meetings where such reports are taken up for consideration.

Indeed, as the JIU is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, it is in the best interest of Member States to maximize the value that they receive from the Unit. A case in point of a win-win scenario was the recent adoption of resolution 74/253 on 27 December 2019, whereby the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to implement all ten recommendations contained in the JIU report on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system, and to report on implementation in the Assembly's 75th session.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The strategic framework for 2020-29 builds upon lessons learned from the implementation of its predecessor and responds to your call that the Unit focus its work programme on the priorities of participating organizations and Member States.

Five key targets outlined in the previous framework were fully met, including the full operationalization of a web-based tracking system, a recommendations acceptance rate in excess of 70%, all reports were related to the framework's strategic areas, 80% of reports covered multiple entities, and visits to the JIU website exceeded 100,000 per year.

Two areas in the previous strategic framework in which we fell short include: 29% of the participating organizations were not reviewed at least once in eight years (some not at all), and only 71% of system-wide reviews originated from the proposals of participating organizations, Member States and oversight bodies – which was just short of our target of 75%.

For the present framework, we have identified five fundamental work principles, four long-term goals rooted in the General Assembly's guidance, and four thematic areas of work. The framework outlines time-bound quantitative and qualitative performance criteria and targets which will be used for annual reporting of JIU performance. An assessment will also be undertaken at the mid-point in 2024, based on which the criteria and targets may be updated.

To strengthen product quality, the Unit's internal working procedures have been supplemented to enhance rigor in several project cycle stages. In line with your request to focus on the impact of implemented recommendations, the Unit's web-based tracking system will be updated in the medium-term to facilitate data analysis, validation and verification.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

We are confident that through the successful implementation of this new framework, we will be better placed to meet the expectations that you have set for us.

I thank you for your time and look forward to answering any questions you may have, either now or in the informal consultations.
