



COUNCIL  
96th session  
Agenda item 14(b)

C 96/14(b)/Add.1  
11 April 2006  
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## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### (b) Joint Inspection Unit

#### Note by the Secretary-General

#### SUMMARY

**Executive summary:** This document provides information on a JIU report entitled “Policies of United Nations System Organizations Towards the Use of Open Source Software (OSS) for Development” (JIU/REP/2005/7)

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 6

**Related document:** C 96/14(b)

1 Since the issuance of document C 96/14(b), the Secretary-General has received a JIU report entitled “Policies of United Nations System Organizations Towards the Use of Open Source Software (OSS) for Development” (JIU/REP/2005/7). A copy of the report is attached in the annex\* to this document.

#### “POLICIES OF UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE (OSS) FOR DEVELOPMENT” (JIU/REP/2005/7)

#### GENERAL

2 The Secretariat participated in the JIU study on the use of open source software (OSS). The Secretary-General and the senior management have considered the report and welcomed the thrust of the report which presents a number of possible benefits to be derived from the use and promotion of OSS within the UN system organizations and Member States. The benefit of the wide-spread use of OSS, which would foster digital inclusion in the context of achieving the specific objectives of the Millennium Development Goals, is a worthwhile undertaking that should be encouraged.

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\* For reasons of economy, the distribution of this annex is limited to one copy each per Council Member.

3 The ensuing text contains four recommendations included in the said report, which the Council may find of interest.

### ***Recommendation 1***

*In line with the relevant provisions of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action related to the possibilities offered by different software models, including proprietary and open source software, the General Assembly should:*

- (a) Invite Member States to emphasize the role of ICT in achieving the MDGs and to better reflect in their MDG-oriented strategies, particularly in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF), their ICT requirements including by taking adequately into account the proposal of OSS to foster competition and increase freedom of choice and affordability;*
- (b) Call on the Secretary-General and other executive heads of United Nations system organizations to provide, as appropriate, their full support to Member States opting to develop initiatives for using OSS to reach the Goals.*

### ***Recommendation 2***

*The General Assembly should encourage Member States to adopt pro-poor policies to foster digital inclusion by:*

- (a) Promoting access to low-cost hardware and software including those based on OSS;*
- (b) Increasing awareness among decision-makers of the potential of OSS and the availability in many instances of tested and well supported OSS applications;*
- (c) Fostering capacity-building programmes and providing incentives for ongoing local OSS development and support.*

### ***Recommendation 3***

*The Secretary-General and other executive heads of United Nations system should consider taking as appropriate the following measures:*

- (a) Increase awareness through (i) a dedicated OSS portal; (ii) a dedicated portal on the MDGs or on ICT for development containing information and hyperlinks related to OSS; and (iii) improving the layout of current web sites so as to give better exposure to OSS initiatives relevant to the mandate of their organization;*
- (b) Develop software applications under OSS licences whenever possible and make them readily accessible online to various stakeholders;*
- (c) Provide support to Member States pro-poor policies geared at promoting digital inclusion through affordable access to hardware and software, including by making available low-cost computers and refurbished personal computers (PCs) running on OSS applications.*

**Recommendation 4**

*In the framework of initiatives related to Goal 8 of the MDGs, the General Assembly should:*

- (a) Call on the donor community to include or maintain in its official development assistance programmes adequate funding for poverty reduction OSS-based projects;*
- (b) Request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), to consider all appropriate steps that members of CEB could take to allow United Nations system organizations to better serve as catalysts for multi-stakeholder partnerships involving different OSS role players, including private sector enterprises and civil society organizations.*

4 With regard to the Secretariat's policy and approach to OSS, consideration is given to every possibility for the use of OSS, where feasible, based on a sound business case, with visible operational and cost advantages.

5 The Secretary-General supports the recommendations contained in the report and whenever the possibility exist for the Organization to contribute to information and communication technologies (ICT) for development, all efforts will be made to do so, particularly through the United Nations ICT Task Force.

**Action requested of the Council**

6 The Council is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and to comment as it may deem appropriate.

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**ANNEX**

**POLICIES OF UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS THE USE  
OF OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE (OSS) FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**JIU/REP/2005/7**

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