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Agenda item 18(b)

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EXTERNAL RELATIONS

(b) Joint Inspection Unit

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides information and comments on JIU reports received since C 109

Strategic direction: 1.1

High-level action: 1.1.2

Planned output: 1.1.2.14

Action to be taken: Paragraph 24

Related documents: C 109/12(b)¹ and C 109/D, paragraph 12(b).1

INTRODUCTION

1 Since the 109th session of the Council in November 2012, the Secretary-General has received the following JIU reports, which contain recommendations addressed to him and the Council:

- .1 "Evaluation of UN-Oceans" (JIU/REP/2012/3);
- .2 "Staff recruitment in United Nations system organizations: a comparative analysis and benchmarking framework" (JIU/REP/2012/4);
- .3 "Lump-sum Payments in Lieu of Entitlements" (JIU/REP/2012/9); and
- .4 "Strategic Planning in the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2012/12).

Copies of the aforementioned reports are available from the website of the JIU at www.unjiu.org.

¹ C 109 deferred consideration of document C 109/12(b) to this session of the Council. Delegates attending the meeting are requested to bring their copies of the document with them.

2 The Secretary-General and the senior management have given due consideration to the reports and their recommendations, and the comments provided in the ensuing paragraphs are on those recommendations that are applicable and germane to the role and functions of the Organization.

EVALUATION OF UN-OCEANS (JIU/REP/2012/3)

General

3 The objective of this evaluation was to examine the UN-Oceans inter-agency mechanism and propose tangible recommendations. The report contains five recommendations: two addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, two addressed to the General Assembly and one (recommendation 3) addressed to legislative organs and executive heads.

Recommendation 1

The General Assembly should recommend at its sixty-seventh session that a national focal point on oceans and related issues in each country be established, if it does not exist, to enhance communication between delegates of the same country with the various United Nations meetings/entities dealing with oceans and coastal issues, to ensure coherence of the relevant national positions.

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General, as the chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should request UN-Oceans to revise its Terms of Reference, which should be reviewed periodically every three to four years, paying particular attention to avoiding possible overlaps with existing mechanisms and taking into consideration the relevant outcomes of Rio+20.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General, as the chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should, not later than 2013, direct the High-Level Committee on Programmes to develop operational guidelines (internal working procedures) for UN-Oceans' decision making, membership, meetings and task force arrangements and clarify reporting and other governance issues.

Recommendation 5

The General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session should request the Secretary-General, as the chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to ensure that the three mechanisms, namely UN-Oceans, UN-Energy and UN-Water, institutionalize their coordination efforts under the High-Level Committee on Programmes.

4 The Secretary-General supports and welcomes the above recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Recommendation 3

The legislative and governing bodies of the organizations that are members of UN-Oceans should, not later than 2013, direct their executive heads to mobilize the necessary resources to establish a small dedicated secretariat to work on UN-Oceans, taking into consideration the experience of other United Nations mechanisms.

5 An offer to host the UN-Oceans Secretariat has been proposed by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). Moreover, in recent discussions the United Nations General Assembly member states showed a preference to have a secretariat to work on UN Oceans established in UN-DOALOS.

STAFF RECRUITMENT IN UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (JIU/REP/2012/4)

General

6 The objective of this review was to assess, in the context of the diverse organizational needs of the United Nations system organizations, issues of efficiency, transparency and fairness in the recruitment process, bearing in mind principles such as geographical representation, gender balance and equality of official working languages. The review addressed recruitment rules, policies and procedures across the United Nations system organizations, focusing on external recruitment leading to appointments of one year or more. It delivered a comparative analysis that identified commonalities and differences, as well as good practices.

7 The review contains four recommendations addressed to legislative bodies or executive heads. The Secretary-General welcomes the recommendations and comments are provided in the ensuing paragraphs.

Recommendation 1

The legislative bodies of United Nations system organizations should direct executive heads to be guided by the 15 recruitment benchmarks proposed in this review when hiring external candidates to fixed-term positions of one year or more (JIU/REP/2012/4, paragraph 27).

8 The Secretary-General supports and welcomes this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

Executive heads of United Nations system organizations should report periodically to the legislative bodies on the authority delegated for recruitment, the accountability mechanisms set up in relation to such delegated authority, and their results, in line with benchmark 4 (JIU/NOTE/2012/1, paragraphs 16-42).

9 The Secretary-General supports and welcomes this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

Executive heads of United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should reduce the posting time for vacancies to no more than 30 days and seek the approval of the legislative bodies as appropriate (JIU/NOTE/2012/2, paragraphs 4-23).

10 This is the current practice in IMO.

Recommendation 4

CEB/HLCM should continue to pursue initiatives for harmonizing business practices in recruitment and should extend the scope of its activities in this area (JIU/NOTE/2012/2, paragraphs 115-121).

11 The Secretary-General supports and welcomes this recommendation, and agrees with the overall need to harmonize business practices and regularly participate in this regard with other agencies through the subsidiary mechanisms of the CEB.

LUMP-SUM PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF ENTITLEMENTS (JIU/REP/2012/9)

General

12 The objective of this review was to consider the current and possible future application of the lump sum option for selected entitlements to determine whether its use saves on overheads and provides greater flexibility for staff while not having a significant financial implication. It considers whether there is a need to harmonize existing lump sum procedures and establish acceptable and consistent calculation criteria and procedural rules, particularly to ensure fairness to staff working in different United Nations system organizations, and especially those in the same duty station. The review contains five recommendations, of which four are addressed to legislative bodies and executive heads and one to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

Recommendation 1

The legislative/governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request their respective executive heads to prepare a report on the usage of the lump-sum option for home leave travel which, inter alia, would compare the costs for providing the lump-sum option with those of organizing the travel for the eligible headquarter-based staff members for a period of two years. Upon consideration of the report, the legislative/governing body should decide in 2015 whether to take any action deemed appropriate.

13 The Secretary-General agrees with this recommendation and will report to the Council on the usage of the lump-sum option for home leave travel.

Recommendation 2

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure, if not already done so, that the ICSC daily subsistence allowance rates are fully complied with, including the disbursement of the relevant percentage for meals and incidental expenses when accommodation is provided.

14 The Secretary-General agrees with this recommendation, which is the current practice in IMO. IMO uses the ICSC DSA rates and ICSC methodology for the calculation of room rate, meals and incidental expenses.

Recommendation 3

The legislative/governing bodies should request their respective executive heads to suspend, if not already the case, the payment of additional DSA (15 or 40 per cent), to those officials travelling on organizational budgets.

15 The Secretary-General agrees with this recommendation, which is the current practice in IMO. This has been implemented since January 2011.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the CEB, and through its latter finance and budget, as well as its human resources networks, should adopt a unified methodology for calculating the cost of implementing the statutory entitlement when the staff member concerned selects the lump-sum option for him/herself or an eligible family member.

16 The Secretary-General supports this recommendation to adopt a unified methodology for calculating the cost of implementing the statutory entitlement when the staff member concerned selects the lump-sum option for him/herself or an eligible family member.

Recommendation 5

The Executive Heads of United Nations system organizations should adopt a lump-sum amount to cover all travel-related expenses when a staff member and his eligible family members undertake home leave travel when the organization purchases the air tickets.

17 The Secretary-General supports this recommendation. However, since most IMO staff request the lump-sum option for home leave, except for terminal expenses and one day's daily subsistence allowance, IMO has had no claims for any other travel-related expenses where tickets have been purchased by the Organization.

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (JIU/REP/2012/12)

18 The main objective of this review was to provide the organizations with a tool proposing good practices as well as with system-wide guidelines to assist them in elaborating and formulating strategic plans. The effective use of these guidelines for establishing processes and planning mechanisms, as well as for monitoring, evaluating, auditing and further budgeting strategic plans, would make strategic planning an instrument for promoting system-wide coordination and coherence in major programmatic sectors.

19 The review resulted in five (5) recommendations. Four of the recommendations were addressed to legislative organs and executive heads. One recommendation (recommendation 2) was addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General welcomes the four recommendations and comments are provided in the ensuing paragraphs.

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), drawing upon the support of the United Nations Strategic Planning Network and/or a CEB ad hoc task force, should review with the executive heads the respective strategic plans of their organizations with a view to defining a coherent overarching framework and common goals for strategic planning to ensure consistency and avoid the overlap of activities across the United Nations system.

20 The Secretary-General supports this recommendation. CEB discussion with the aim of ensuring consistency and avoiding overlaps in strategic plans will be in the interest of all United Nations system organizations and support Delivering as One. Defining a coherent overarching framework and common goals for strategic planning is, however, not a simple task. It would most likely be an iterative process and the overarching framework should not be restrictive in respect to the organizations' individual mandates.

Recommendation 3

The Executive Heads of the United Nations system organizations, through the existing inter-agency coordination mechanism of the CEB, including HLCEM, HLCP and UNDG, should define and agree on a commonly accepted terminology for strategic planning, and report thereon to their legislative bodies and the Economic and Social Council, in order to establish a comparison basis and facilitate aggregation in planning, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on implementation of the strategic plans of their respective organizations.

21 The Secretary-General supports this recommendation. Alignment of terminology would be beneficial in order to better facilitate exchange of information and knowledge within the United Nations system.

Recommendation 4

The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should formulate and define relevant system-wide sectoral strategic frameworks through the Economic and Social Council to address the long-term goals established by the 2005 World Summit Outcome, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 60/1, as well as those established by the missions and mandates of the system organizations as a result of global conferences.

22 The Secretary-General agrees with this recommendation. The establishment of sectoral strategies across the mandates of United Nations agencies already takes place through for example UN OCEANS, and is as such – in principle – supported. The individual mandates of the agencies will need to be respected, but in order for this to be effective there would also need to be a consistent approach by Member States in each relevant organization – and then maintain that consistency in the bargaining of ECOSOC.

Recommendation 5

The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should instruct their respective secretariats to adopt the necessary measures by the end of 2015 to harmonize and/or align the planning cycles of their strategic plans so that all the organizations are ready to start a new harmonized reporting cycle to Member States in 2016.

23 The Secretary-General agrees with this recommendation which is the current practice in IMO as the strategic planning cycles have been aligned with the new quadrennial cycle for the General Assembly's comprehensive policy reviews of operational activities for development.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE COUNCIL

24 The Council is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and to consider and decide, as appropriate, on the reports identified in paragraph 1 and the Secretary-General's comments therein.
