

Governing Body

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Programme, Financial and Administrative Section
Audit and Oversight Segment

PFA

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EIGHTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Matters relating to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU): Reports of the JIU

Purpose of the document

This paper summarizes the annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for 2018 and its programme of work for 2019, and seven reports published in 2017 and 2018 on the following United Nations (UN) system-wide issues: donor reporting requirements; UN system – Private sector partnership in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; mechanisms and policies addressing conflict of interest; internship programmes; whistle-blower policies and practices; efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services; and accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the UN system.

The Governing Body is invited to provide guidance on the information contained in this document and on any of the recommendations addressed to the ILO in those seven JIU reports, as well as on the status of the follow-up to the recommendations presented to the Governing Body in the past three years (see the draft outcome in paragraph 28).

Relevant strategic objective: None.

Main relevant outcome/cross-cutting policy driver: Enabling outcome B: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

Policy implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Legal implications: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Subject to guidance from the Governing Body.

Author unit: Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM).

Related documents: This document is submitted annually, in accordance with the procedure established in GB.294/PV, paragraph 210; GB.337/PFA/8/REF/1; GB.337/PFA/8/REF/2.

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2018 and programme of work for 2019

1. The 2018 annual report ¹ of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) provides information on, among other things, JIU reports issued in 2018 ² and the follow-up to recommendations by the participating agencies. It also lists the reviews planned for 2019, including on six issues that concern the ILO as part of the United Nations (UN) system, namely: policies and practices in outsourcing of services; staff exchange programmes and similar inter-agency mobility measures; multilingualism; policies, programmes and platforms to support learning; current practices and future requirements on UN common premises; and the status of implementation of enterprise risk management.
2. As a significant activity planned for 2019, the report refers to the development of the JIU's strategic framework for the next 10 years, from 2020 until 2029. The strategic framework will be submitted to the General Assembly at its 74th Session as part of the JIU's 2019 annual report.
3. Annex III of the JIU annual report shows that the ILO's share of the JIU costs for 2018–19 represents 1.8 per cent of the total contributions of all participating organizations. The ILO's share of the 2018–19 JIU budget amounts to US\$233,955.

Selected JIU reports published in 2017 and 2018

4. In accordance with the established procedure, the Office submits to the Governing Body annually a summary of JIU reports containing recommendations addressed to UN system organizations, along with a summary of the comments of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the comments by the Office. A summary of seven such JIU reports is being presented to the Governing Body at its current session, as set out in paragraphs 7–27 below.
5. The status of the ILO's follow-up to each JIU recommendation is presented in a separate reference document, which is available on the Governing Body website. ³ In line with previous practice, the Office has also made available an additional reference document that provides details of the updated status of the follow-up to those JIU recommendations that were presented to the Governing Body in the previous three years. ⁴
6. The Governing Body is invited to provide guidance on this document and on any of the recommendations addressed to the ILO in the seven JIU reports as summarized below and as set out in the two reference documents.

¹ United Nations: *Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2018 and programme of work for 2019*, Official Records of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 34, General Assembly, 73rd Session, New York, 2019 (A/73/34).

² All the JIU reports that have been published to date are available on the [JIU website](#) in English, French and Spanish, among other UN official languages.

³ [GB.337/PFA/8/REF/1](#) (in English only).

⁴ [GB.337/PFA/8/REF/2](#) (in English only).

Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2017/7) ⁵

7. The report includes seven recommendations that are addressed to all UN system entities for action, including the ILO. Four of them were accepted and have been implemented at the ILO. The recommendation to develop and adopt a UN system-wide common report template, is under consideration (recommendation 6), while the other two were not accepted. The recommendations that were not accepted concern: disclosure of donor reporting and a corporate repository for contribution agreements and donor reports (recommendation 3); and systematic inclusion in donor agreements of costs associated with preparing donor reports (recommendation 5).
8. The CEB members expressed appreciation for the report as it provided a broad overview of various aspects of donor relations. They recognized the value of streamlining and standardizing donor reporting in light of the increasing non-core voluntary contributions. They supported the overall idea of exploring a common, standard reporting template, as proposed in recommendation 6, while noting that there were ongoing UN system-wide practices to that effect.
9. The Office joins the CEB members in expressing appreciation for the report. It will continue to participate in the UN system-wide harmonization efforts in this area in pursuit of an efficient practice, without compromising organization and donor requirements.

The United Nations system – Private sector partnership arrangements in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (JIU/REP/2017/8) ⁶

10. Four out of a total of 12 recommendations are designated for ILO action, among other concerned UN system entities. All of the recommendations are under consideration, either pending the relevant Governing Body discussion at its current session (recommendations 3 and 7) or due to insufficient clarity of the recommendations, including in terms of feasibility and cost implications (recommendations 5 and 6).
11. The CEB members welcomed the report and expressed support for the idea of updating the framework of collaboration with the private sector. Meanwhile, they invited the JIU to formulate the recommendations in more specific terms, given the importance of taking into consideration the specific features of individual organizations and their governing and reporting structures. They anticipated that adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach to procedures and safeguards (recommendation 7) would pose considerable challenges and limitations, in view of the organizations' specific needs and objectives in engaging with the private sector. They also noted that the report did not reflect on the Results Group for Strategic Partnerships which was established in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Group in order to develop a UN-coordinated approach to strategic partnerships with the private sector.
12. The Office concurs with the CEB comments and will further consider relevant follow-up to the recommendations in the ILO context, as informed by the Governing Body discussion on the report of the High-Level Evaluation on Public–Private Partnerships.

⁵ See full [report](#). See full [CEB comments](#).

⁶ See full [report](#). See full [CEB comments](#).

Review of mechanisms and policies addressing conflict of interest in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2017/9)⁷

13. Six recommendations are designated for ILO action, among other UN system entities. One of them was accepted and its implementation is in progress. The recommendation concerning organizational conflicts of interest is under consideration (recommendation 1), and the other four were not accepted (recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 6).
14. While welcoming the report, the CEB members made a number of observations on specific recommendations, in terms of effectiveness of the recommended action (recommendation 2), lack of supporting evidence or analysis (recommendations 3 and 4), and attribution of the responsibility for action (recommendation 6).
15. The Office concurs with the CEB comments. It will pursue effective and efficient measures to address conflicts of interest, including through active participation in relevant inter-agency forums.

Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2018/1)⁸

16. The report includes five recommendations for ILO action, among other UN system entities. Four of them have been accepted and implemented. The other recommendation is under consideration and concerns the establishment of ad hoc multi-donor trust funds and other innovative financing mechanisms in support of internship schemes (recommendation 6).
17. The CEB members welcomed the report, concurring that a system-wide reform should not seek to adopt the lowest possible standard but to align with good practices, without jeopardizing good progress in some organizations. Several member organizations expressed concern as regards elements of the proposed benchmarking framework for good practice, in terms of cost implications (benchmarks 1 and 3), effectiveness including in comparison with the organizations' current arrangements (benchmarks 2, 7 and 8), and alignment with the organizations' policies and practices (benchmarks 9 and 13).
18. The Office joins the CEB members in welcoming the JIU report. It further notes with appreciation that the JIU fully considered the ILO's advanced experiences in this area, as an inspiration for the proposed benchmarking framework. Meanwhile, it shares the CEB members' concern regarding the said framework, particularly with respect to the possibility for interns to travel as part of their duties during their internships (benchmark 9) and the full recognition of an internship as working experience (benchmark 13). As part of a community of practice among the Geneva-based UN agencies, the Office has been sharing and advising on good practices. It will have further exchanges and make improvements, where relevant, in an informal working group on internship programmes which was recently created under the CEB High-Level Committee on Management.

⁷ See full [report](#). See full [CEB comments](#).

⁸ See full [report](#) and [corrigendum](#). See full [CEB comments](#).

Review of whistle-blower policies and practices in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2018/4) ⁹

19. The report includes 11 recommendations, all of which are designated for ILO action, among other concerned UN entities. Nine recommendations were accepted and have either been implemented or are in progress. The recommendation concerning an appeal mechanism to address instances where a prima facie case of retaliation is not determined, is under consideration (recommendation 2). The other recommendation concerning the definition of the independence of the ethics, oversight and mediator functions, in accordance with the relevant recommendations issued in the past, was not accepted. (recommendation 4).
20. The CEB members commended the report for the richness and usefulness of its UN system-wide information and data on this subject. While expressing appreciation for the efforts to identify good practices, they noted that the application of those practices, including from public and private sectors at the national level, need to be adapted to the specific characteristics of a wide variety of UN system organizations.
21. The Office concurs with the CEB comments on the richness of the report and the need for differentiated implementation of the recommendations according to the organizational context.

Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (JIU/REP/2018/5) ¹⁰

22. Four recommendations are designated for ILO action, among the concerned UN entities. Two of them were accepted and have either been implemented or are in progress. The other two recommendations are under consideration. Both of them entail UN system-wide coordination and common action, to be undertaken by the end of 2020. They concern the accurate identification of resources devoted to administrative support services and setting out how efficiency should be defined and assessed (recommendation 1), and refocussing the common business operation of UN country teams on a more limited agenda, such as common premises, facility services and procurement (recommendation 6).
23. The CEB members noted that the report rightly emphasizes that inter-agency cooperation in this area should not only be devoted to achieving efficiency gains but also to improving the quality of service providers, which encourage the utilization of common services. They suggested revisiting the ambitious time frames of the recommendations, in line with relevant ongoing processes in the UN system. In terms of cost implications, they noted that common approaches have not always resulted in savings or greater efficiency compared to the previous processes in place. They further noted that the report did not fully articulate the underlying assumptions of the savings figures, making it impossible to assess whether they were reasonable.
24. The Office concurs with the CEB comments.

⁹ See full [report](#). See full [CEB comments](#).

¹⁰ See the full [report](#). See the full [CEB comments](#).

Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system
(JIU/REP/2018/6)¹¹

25. The report includes ten recommendations, all of which are designated for ILO action as well as for other concerned UN entities. Five recommendations were accepted, of which one is being implemented, whereas the implementation of the other four has not started yet. The other five recommendations are under consideration, in terms of the feasibility of recommended action (recommendations 2, 6 and 7), pending UN system-wide coordination and common action (recommendation 9), or subject to the implementation modality of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy at the ILO (recommendation 10).
26. The CEB members welcomed the findings of the report and were generally supportive of the recommendations, noting that they should be implemented within the framework of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, as endorsed by the CEB in 2019. They expressed partial support for those recommendations that require further consideration in terms of cost implications, proper needs assessments, and of any alternative measures that are potentially more efficient and effective (recommendations 6 and 7).
27. The Office joins the CEB members in welcoming and supporting the report findings and recommendations. It will continue to play a leading role among the concerned UN agencies in developing the UN system-wide framework for disability inclusion, including through its implementation in the ILO context.

Draft outcome

28. *The Governing Body noted the information provided in documents GB.337/PFA/8(Rev.1), GB.337/PFA/8/REF/1 and GB.337/PFA/8/REF/2, and provided guidance to the Office.*

¹¹ See full [report](#). See full [CEB comments](#).