



UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/8658  
21 January 1972

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

---

Twenty-seventh session

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE  
OF EXPERTS TO EXAMINE THE FINANCES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND  
THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

Note verbale dated 17 January 1972 from the Permanent Representative  
of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to  
the Secretary-General.

The Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to request him to circulate the attached paper as an official document of the General Assembly.

At the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly the representative of the United States in the Fifth Committee expressed the special interest of the United States in seeking the establishment of a more effective inspection and evaluation mechanism within the United Nations system and the intent of the United States subsequently to request the circulation of a paper on this subject. The United States believes that in this manner early consideration can be given to this important question by all Member States in the expectation that a positive course of action can be agreed to at the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES TO STRENGTHEN INSPECTION  
AND EVALUATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

This paper contains the preliminary views of the United States on measures to be taken to provide an effective inspection and evaluation mechanism for the United Nations system with particular reference to the role to be played by the Joint Inspection Unit. While the question of the future of the Unit will not be considered until the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly (resolution 2735 (XXV)), the United States believes that the importance and complexity of the issue makes it essential to begin consideration of the matter at this early date. The suggestions which follow are made at this time in order to stimulate thinking on the part of Member Governments prior to the twenty-seventh session.

I. Background

The United States attaches special importance to assuring within the United Nations system the existence of a fully effective and strengthened mechanism to inspect or evaluate the implementation and accomplishment of objectives of ongoing programmes, as well as the management effectiveness of the various agencies of the system. Such a mechanism is particularly essential since the activities of the various agencies play a significant role in dealing with the multitude of problems in the political, social, economic, human rights and legal fields. The General Assembly, with the establishment of the Joint Inspection Unit, provided for such a mechanism in the United Nations system, but on an experimental basis. The United States believes, on the basis of experience to date, that the time has arrived to consider the establishment of a permanent mechanism to carry out these tasks.

II. Matters to be considered in determining  
the role of such a mechanism

1. For the inspection and evaluation function to be performed in an effective manner, it should be the responsibility of a small body which is completely independent of the management officials of the various secretariats. It should have broad authority and responsibility to perform its assigned tasks and report directly, both to the agency heads and the various governing bodies. Present procedures for handling reports of the Joint Inspection Unit are generally considered to be satisfactory.

2. There is a need for continuing in-depth and comprehensive inspection and evaluation being conducted by specially qualified individuals who can devote full time to examining, on a selected basis, the totality of activities and operations of the various United Nations agencies.

3. The valuable experience gained by the Joint Inspection Unit should be the basis on which to build the desired mechanism. Having recognized the essentiality of providing within the United Nations a mechanism charged with inspecting the

/...

activities of the various agencies, an initial task is to examine critically the experience to date with the Unit. The objective of this examination should be to determine what action is required so that this Unit can become even more useful in providing essential information on the operation of the various agencies - first to the respective agency head for review, comment and action as appropriate; and second to the appropriate governing bodies.

4. The strengthened Unit should operate in close proximity to and in harmony with other established bodies such as the external and internal auditors, internal management review groups, etc., while at the same time fully respecting their individual independence and objectivity.

### III. Factors to take into consideration when reassessing the role of the Joint Inspection Unit

1. While independence has been a corner-stone of the Joint Inspection Unit, this should not be interpreted so broadly as to give the appearance that the Unit operates as eight individuals pursuing a like number of separate approaches. Rather, the Unit should operate as a closely knit group of individuals performing its tasks in a fully complementary manner.

2. Responsible leadership is required if the efforts of each member are to be successfully directed toward the accomplishment of a common set of objectives. The existing terms of reference of the Joint Inspection Unit should be amended to provide for the establishment of such leadership through the designation of a Permanent Chairman. The Chairman of the Unit, however chosen, should have adequate authority, in the day-to-day administration of the Unit, for the preparation of a coherent programme of work and for determining the rational division of labour among the inspectors.

3. The qualifications required of inspectors should be specific enough to ensure experience, training, aptitude and ability to function effectively in such a role. Such qualifications should include:

(a) Clear understanding of and ability to perform within established objectives, responsibilities and policies of the Unit;

(b) Systematic approach to and effective organization of one's assignments;

(c) Capability to determine quickly and accurately the essential from the non-essential, deal with problems using inter alia the "problem-solving" approach, make reasonable judgements and decisions, and prepare concise, objective and action-oriented reports;

(d) Sufficient initiative, resourcefulness, dependability and tact;

(e) Educational qualifications and experience in such fields as organizational behaviour, budgeting, programme review, management auditing, etc.

/...

4. With the goal being to ascertain what the actual situation is and, based on this information, to arrive at meaningful and practical conclusions and recommendations for improving the status quo, both the individual inspector and the Unit as a whole should develop and employ an accepted evaluation technique.

5. Since all or even most of the units in the United Nations system could not - as well as should not - be inspected in a given year, the Unit should develop a time-phased work plan to provide full coverage over a reasonable period of time according to a predetermined set of priorities. This plan should be revised periodically. In the formulation of this plan and determining priorities, attention should be given to organizational units or matters which appear, for one reason or another, to be particularly appropriate for inspection by the Unit. These might include potential areas of undesirable overlap and duplication both within and between agencies, problems inhibiting interagency co-operation, etc.

6. The work plan of the Unit should be made available to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as is the case now with the Board of External Auditors, prior to its being put into effect. Such a procedure is critical if within the United Nations system duplication and overlap of effort are to be avoided, the demands on Secretariat staff by external bodies are to be minimized, and maximum utilization of available resources is to be realized.

7. With the basic purpose of the Joint Inspection Unit being to review, recommend and propose action for improving current operations - both on its own initiative and in response to requests from governing bodies and agency officials - its inspection reports should:

(a) Comment on the extent to which performance is consistent with established objectives, guidelines and operating procedures;

(b) Refrain from becoming total management studies or philosophical policy dissertations;

(c) Be limited to only the directly relevant aspects of the organizational unit or problem under review;

(d) Clearly spell out alternative courses of corrective action to existing problems, be limited in their descriptive content and size, and contain a full summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations;

(e) Be action-oriented and as specific as possible with regard to its recommendations.

8. The quality of the work of the Unit, as reflected directly in its reports, would be dependent upon the degree to which:

(a) Established methodology and operating procedures are employed by each inspector, either directly or under effective supervision;

(b) Findings and conclusions are the result of an objective evaluation of all pertinent facts;

(c) Factual statements and conclusions are fully supported by facts obtained during the course of the inspection;

(d) Work is adequately planned and carried out according to schedule;

(e) Sufficient attention is given to identifying the purposes, scope and objectives of the activities being examined; the manner in which these activities are carried out and funded; their conformity with both existing legislation and the intent of governing body decision and/or discussions; the extent to which they adhere to efficiency and economy criteria; and how well they contribute to the accomplishment of established objectives.

9. The work of each inspector should be co-ordinated fully with that of other members of the Unit, and the activities of the Unit as a whole should be carried out in full recognition of its close relation to other bodies, both internal and external, which are performing work of a similar though distinct nature. The Joint Inspection Unit should not assume, either explicitly or implicitly, the financial auditing or internal management review functions of bodies established especially for those purposes, nor should those bodies assume any of the functions which are the primary responsibility of the Unit.

10. The Unit's efforts should be fully directed to scrutinizing, evaluating and recommending leaving to others primary responsibility for implementation.

#### IV. Staff

If inspection and evaluation performed by the Joint Inspection Unit and the work of the Unit itself are to be of the quality, scope and type which is considered essential, the Unit should be provided with a very small but highly competent staff which would be permanent in nature and professional in competence. This is necessary not only to ensure that the inspectors obtain the required information on which to base their conclusions and recommendations, but also that they are provided with the expert assistance which is required. To the maximum extent possible, the Unit should utilize existing staff at inspection sites, and the various agencies should be encouraged to co-operate. Without such assistance, it would be all but impossible for the Unit to perform the tasks entrusted to it.

Since it can be anticipated that certain monetary savings are likely to accrue to the various United Nations organizations from the work of the Joint Inspection Unit, they will more than offset the cost of increasing the permanent staff of the Unit. More importantly, in the long run, the results of the work of the Unit should provide for optimal utilization of existing resources and, in particular, improved performance by the various agencies in accomplishing their legislated objectives.

-----