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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with article 9, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit (General Assembly resolution 31/192, annex), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the work programme of the Joint Inspection Unit for 1991 and the nucleus of its work programme for 1992-1993.

* A/46/50.

ANNEX

Work programme of the Joint Inspection Unit

The following work programme was drawn up in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, and takes into account the guidelines laid out in General Assembly resolutions 42/218 of 21 December 1987, 43/221 of 21 December 1988, 44/184 of 19 December 1989 and 45/237 of 21 December 1990. The work programme is divided into two sections: section I lists the Unit's work programme for 1991, and section II indicates those studies which the Unit contemplates undertaking after the current year and broad themes which are being researched for shaping into specific studies. As hitherto, the work programme is subject to change in the course of the year; new studies may be added and planned studies may be modified, postponed or cancelled when circumstances warrant. Titles may be changed to reflect the new thrust of studies.

I. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1991

1. Management and conference services (organization and methods, budget and finance, personnel, general administration)

(a) Organization of the buildings management function

The aim of the study is to present a comparative analysis of the administration and management of the buildings and facilities of certain organizations in the United Nations system and to draw conclusions therefrom.

(b) Status of internal evaluation in organizations of the United Nations system*

Fourth report on evaluation in the United Nations system*

Every four years, between 1977 and 1985, the Joint Inspection Unit has produced reports on the status of evaluation in the United Nations system. Progress made since then will be documented, earlier themes will be re-examined and new directions will be explored.

(c) Grade overlap

For several years there has been an overlap in salaries between General Service levels and the lower Professional categories in Rome. The study will investigate the reasons for that phenomenon in that duty

* Evaluation study.

station, and in others where it might occur, and will analyse its possible impact on staff recruitment, development, performance appraisal and promotion. Appropriate recommendations will be made.

(d) Staff rotation

The issue of staff rotation is of special concern to many organizations, in particular the United Nations and its affiliated operational entities in the field and the regional commissions. The purpose of the Unit's study will be to see how best an equitable rotation system can be established in consonance with an impartial implementation of United Nations staff regulation 1.2. Consultations will be held with the International Civil Service Commission throughout the conduct of the study.

(e) Advantages and disadvantages of the post system*

The Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has asked the Joint Inspection Unit to undertake a system-wide study of the post system. The study will review the reasons for introducing the post system, assess how it is working, and suggest modifications if necessary. The issues will be addressed from the perspectives of Member States, management and staff. Consultations will be held with the International Civil Service Commission throughout the preparation of the study.

(f) Purchase and utilization of the transport equipment of the United Nations Children's Fund

There has been a continuous increase in the procurement of vehicles and other means of transport by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to a level where UNICEF considers a full review of both procurement policies and operations in this area to be vital. The Joint Inspection Unit, at the request of UNICEF, is undertaking such a review.

(g) Follow-up study on common services of organizations of the United Nations system at the Vienna International Centre

The Joint Inspection Unit prepared a study several years ago on common services at the Vienna International Centre. 1/ The main purpose of the study, in addition to examining the implementation of the recommendations made earlier, would be to see what, today, are the most rational ways and means to harmonize better the activities of the various United Nations entities in the light of changed circumstances since 1984 and discussions at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly during consideration of agenda item 118 on the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989.

- (h) United Nations Library, Geneva - the introduction of an integrated information system

The study will identify the elements of an integrated information system that would best serve the Geneva library as an institutional memory allowing fluid and easy access to its material. Appropriate recommendations for the establishment of such a system will be made.

- (i) Follow-up report on the Management Advisory Service of the United Nations

In its report on management services in the United Nations system, 2/ the Joint Inspection Unit concluded that the Administrative Management Service of the United Nations (now the Management Advisory Service) was playing a useful management role in keeping with its mandate. The present study will review the performance of the Service since the issuance of the Unit's report in 1981.

- (j) Follow-up report on accommodation in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Office accommodation, being in short supply, has always presented problems for the regional economic commissions. Document JIU/NOTE/87 dealt with a specific accommodation problem in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and offered solutions to the problem which have been implemented. The present study will look at the wider problem of accommodation in the subregional offices of ECLAC.

- (k) Managing works of art in the United Nations system

Over the years, the United Nations and many of the specialized agencies have acquired important and valuable cultural properties. In many cases these have neither been valued, nor has a conservation policy been adopted for their protection. The study would identify the ingredients of a rational acquisition/de-acquisition policy and recommend an effective programme for the conservation of the cultural property of the organizations.

- (l) United Nations peace-making and peace-keeping operations

The study will review the role of the United Nations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts as evidenced by certain of its peace-keeping operations. The institutional, administrative and financial consequences of the role of the United Nations will be addressed, as well as the impact of those conflicts on development efforts, human rights and social progress.

2. Development cooperation

- (a) Technical and other cooperation between selected agencies of the United Nations system and development finance institutions, including the World Bank and regional development banks

The aim of the study is to examine the effectiveness of the coordination arrangements between selected agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and the development finance institutions, including the World Bank and the regional development banks. The study will focus on such aspects as programming procedures, joint project execution and coordination arrangements both at Headquarters and in the field. The findings and recommendations of the study will assist Member States in their endeavours to obtain greater coordination between agencies of the United Nations system and the finance institutions; they will also benefit the agencies and finance institutions in indicating areas where cooperation could be strengthened and the different technical assistance programmes harmonized.

- (b) A review of the specific development needs of small Member States and the responsiveness of the United Nations development system in meeting those needs

The study would suggest improved measures to identify activities corresponding to the needs and interests of small Member States. The study would be developed around three main issues: the mechanisms and channels developed by the United Nations system; how small Member States can better organize themselves to overcome the handicap of a shortage of human resources; and how such countries can ensure their effective presence and participation in United Nations activities, hampered as they are by limited human and financial resources.

- (c) The environmental focus of projects financed by the United Nations Development Programme*

The many factors that have a bearing on maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment are interrelated and have begun to be seriously investigated from a multidisciplinary and global perspective in the wake of growing public concern about its deterioration. Specific problems such as the causes and effects of global warming, the degradation of natural resources, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, toxic waste disposal, and ozone layer depletion are being addressed. This study would attempt to examine, through a number of case studies and field visits, how the United Nations system in general and those projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in particular take into account environmental aspects during project identification, planning, implementation and evaluation. It would also examine the instruments and guidelines they use to address the environmental impacts of the projects at various stages of implementation.

(d) Technology transfer and the United Nations system*

In an increasingly technical world, the transfer of technology from the developed to the developing world is recognized as crucial to the transformation of the economies of the lesser developed countries. The present study would aim at assessing existing capacities within the United Nations system - institutional, financial, managerial - to deal with the transfer of technology.

(e) Technical cooperation and the use of national professional project personnel

The implications of the use of national personnel are not clear to everyone (executing agencies, financing agencies, recipient countries), even though this modality is increasingly being used. The study will attempt to delineate these implications, while defining the role of the several categories of national staff employed on projects vis-à-vis their colleagues in government services and among the international staff on projects.

(f) The revised round-table process

The objective of the study would be to review the system of UNDP round tables for the least developed countries, with a view to making recommendations that would enhance benefits for both donor and recipient countries. The scope of the study would include the examination of preparations, procedures and structures for the round-table negotiations, implementation procedures, the participation and role of specialized agencies, the mobilization of availability capacities of the United Nations system, as well as coordination arrangements.

(g) A comparative study of decentralization

The governing bodies of most United Nations system organizations have been calling for increased decentralization. Secretariats have responded in different ways based on their mandates, structures and budgets, among other influences. The aim of the study would be to move beyond conceptualization and organization and deal with the practical, operational problems of decentralization, such as delegation of authority, communications and information flow, staffing - rotation and training, maintaining programme coherence, feedback, Headquarters support and responsiveness.

(h) National execution of projects

The Governing Council of UNDP has emphasized that government execution (now broadened to national execution) and management of its projects should be the ultimate modality of all UNDP-supported projects. The modality has been studied, but there remains a need for greater understanding of this important method of carrying out projects,

including the role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations in contributing to and enhancing this form of execution, the system's support to Governments, and the Governments' own acceptance of this modality at the operational level.

II. NUCLEUS OF THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1992-1993

Management and conference services (organization and methods, budget and finance, personnel, general administration)

(a) Review of the Economic Commission for Europe

The role and structure of the Economic Commission for Europe will be analysed in the light of the activities of other European regional economic organizations and in the context of recent events in the region.

(b) Early warning systems

The study will review the United Nations system's performance in providing early warning for emerging major issues in the economic, social and security areas.

(c) Coordination in the United Nations system

During preliminary work, the specific aspects of coordination, which the study will address, will be identified.

In addition to the three studies that have been identified above, several other themes are being researched for shaping into clearly defined studies. The areas of investigation include, but are not limited to, United Nations competitive examinations, inter-office telecommunications systems, staff compensation, resource allocation for evaluation and substantive research.

Notes

1/ See A/39/520 (JIU/REP/84/10).

2/ See A/36/296 (JIU/REP/81/3).
