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

Report on the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit  
during the period 1 July 1969-30 June 1970

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary  
Questions to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1304 and Corr.1) transmitting a report submitted by the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit on the Unit's activities during the year from 1 July 1969 to 30 June 1970. In an earlier report, submitted to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session,<sup>1/</sup> the Unit had covered the first eighteen months of its activities; the Advisory Committee's observations on that report were submitted to the Assembly.<sup>2/</sup>
2. The Advisory Committee has also taken note of document A/C.5/1299 in which the Secretary-General indicates that the initial four-year period for which the Unit has been established will expire on 31 December 1971. So that the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency can take appropriate action before the end of that period, it will be necessary for the General Assembly, at its current session, to consider the question of the continuation of the Unit and to make recommendations thereon to the organizations in the United Nations system.

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes, agenda item 81, document A/C.5/1241.

<sup>2/</sup> Ibid., document A/7728.

3. In their report on the Unit's activities in 1969-1970, the Inspectors call attention to some positive developments in the period under review. For example, in paragraph 3 they refer to a progressive development of consultations with other bodies whose activities are closely related to those of the Unit. The Advisory Committee, which for its part has encouraged and participated in such consultations, is pleased to note that they have helped avoid duplication of activities related to administration and management. Moreover, in the conclusion to their report (para. 32), the Inspectors observe that the procedural aspect of the handling of their reports has improved. The Advisory Committee notes that, in his report of transmittal, the Secretary-General has called attention to the fact that the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had reported to the Governing Council at its tenth session (June 1970) on reports of the Unit of concern to UNDP,<sup>3/</sup> thus partly meeting the reservation in the Inspectors' report as to the existing handling procedures.

4. In paragraph 4 of their report, the Inspectors refer to certain agreed positions arrived at during their meeting in April 1970 with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. In the view of the Advisory Committee, the creation of a close understanding between the Unit and the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency is of fundamental importance if the Unit is to have the impact which the Assembly envisaged in setting it up. In this connexion, the Committee notes that, despite evidence of better "receptivity" of Joint Inspection Unit reports by the United Nations and other organizations, the Inspectors remain concerned at what they consider to be a tendency to defer action and at the difficulty they experience in ascertaining precisely the status of implementation of their recommendations (para. 33).

5. The Inspectors indicate in their report that they have selected five priority areas of study and investigation: conferences and documentation, programming and budgets, decentralization, the organization and operation of United Nations development assistance, and personnel questions. The first four themes have been the subject of reports already submitted, as detailed in convenient form in paragraphs 7 to 25 of the Unit's report (A/C.5/1304 and Corr.1, annex). As for

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<sup>3/</sup> DF/L.137.

personnel questions, the Unit indicates that it may submit a report in 1971. Indeed, the Unit's report describes for all five priority areas not only the work already carried out or, where appropriate, in progress, but also the Unit's future plans.

6. The Advisory Committee takes this opportunity to suggest that, when submitting observations on particular issues of limited significance for the United Nations system as a whole, the Unit consider making greater use of confidential letters or notes to executive heads, rather than formal reports calling for the attention of legislative bodies. In the Committee's view, such communications provide in selected cases a simple and convenient channel for effecting improvements of detail in United Nations procedures and activities.

7. In his report (A/C.5/1304 and Corr.1) transmitting the report of the Unit, the Secretary-General has included a detailed table indicating the status of all reports of concern to the United Nations issued by the Unit since its inception and up to June 1970; the Committee found this table convenient for reference and commends it to the attention of the General Assembly.

8. In the same report, the Secretary-General records his appreciation of the efforts made by the members of the Unit and adds that their contribution to the improved efficiency and economical operation of the United Nations and its family of organizations has already assumed significant proportions (A/C.5/1304 and Corr.1, para. 4). He recognizes the continued constructive approach adopted by the members of the Unit to the tasks they have undertaken.

9. The Advisory Committee agrees with this evaluation. The Committee suggests that at its current session the General Assembly might wish to decide to continue the Unit on an experimental basis for a further period of two years beyond 31 December 1971.

10. In the meantime an opportunity will be provided for a thorough review of the activities of the Unit so that the General Assembly, taking into account the views of all the competent organs, may take such decisions as it deems appropriate regarding the terms of reference of the Unit.

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