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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, at its thirty-seventh session, requested the Secretary-General to submit annually to the General Assembly a succinct report on those major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) affecting the United Nations which had not been implemented, together with the reasons therefor. At its thirty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 32/199, by which it decided that the future reports of the Secretary-General on implementation of the recommendations of JIU should provide concise information only with regard to those reports that have been indicated by the Unit to be of interest to the General Assembly, one of its Main Committees or its other subsidiary organs. The present report is submitted in accordance with those decisions.

2. Consequently, in the present report, the Secretary-General has included the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the JIU reports relating to the following matters:

- (a) Control and limitation of documentation in the United Nations (A/36/167);
- (b) Application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat (A/36/407 and A/37/378);
- (c) Relationships between the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and entities of the United Nations Secretariat (A/36/419);
- (d) United Nations University (A/37/111);
- (e) Secretariat organization and procedures for preparation of United Nations special conferences (A/37/112);

- (f) Economic Commission for Africa: regional programming, operations, restructuring and decentralization issues (A/37/119);
- (g) Organization and methods for official travel (A/37/357 and Corr.1);
- (h) Use of consultants and experts in the United Nations (progress report) (A/37/358).

A. Control and limitation of documentation in the United Nations system

3. The JIU report on control and limitation of documentation in the United Nations system (A/36/167) was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, together with the comments thereon of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (A/36/167/Add.1) and of the Secretary-General (A/36/167/Add.2).

4. The report contained 18 specific recommendations, 10 of which required decisions by the legislative organs of the United Nations organizations, while the other 8 could be implemented by the executive heads of the organizations.

5. In their comments on the JIU report (A/36/167/Add.1), the organizations subscribed generally to the concerns expressed by the Inspectors but indicated that the severity of the problems varied substantially from one organization to another, as did the applicability of the specific recommendations.

6. In his observations on the JIU report as it applied to the United Nations (A/36/167/Add.2), the Secretary-General reiterated his concern over the high volume of documentation and pointed out that the objective of control and limitation of documentation could only be effectively sought through joint efforts of Member States and the Secretariat.

7. Of the 8 recommendations addressed by JIU to the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system, 7 have been or are being implemented by the United Nations. The remaining one is dealt with below.

Recommendation 11. "United Nations organizations should consider introducing a documents quota system as appropriate."

8. As the Secretary-General indicated in his comments on the JIU report (A/36/167/Add.2), a quota system for documents originating in the Secretariat is considered unworkable in a situation where the nature and volume of documentation is determined largely by Member States. In addition, any attempt to administer the provision of central services, such as those for documentation, in the same way as budgetary appropriations would substantially detract from the flexibility of those services to respond to the priority needs of the Organization as they arise.

9. Moreover, the main purpose of a quota system, that is, to limit the volume of documentation originating in the Secretariat, is being sought through the application of a maximum-length rule to individual documents. On 24 February 1982,

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the Secretary-General directed that documents submitted to United Nations organs and bodies in the name of the Secretary-General or of the Secretariat should not exceed 24 single-spaced pages in length (ST/AI/189/Add.20/Rev.1). Any exception to that rule for reasons of complexity of subject or abundance of detail must be authorized by the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments.

B. Application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat

10. The first of two JIU reports on this subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (A/36/407), together with the related comments of the Secretary-General (A/36/407/Add.1). The JIU report dealt mainly with the principle of equitable geographical distribution as set forth in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and developed in a number of General Assembly resolutions. The report discussed the evolution of the principle and factors hindering its application.

11. The report concluded that the strict implementation of the Charter and the relevant decisions of the General Assembly concerning the attainment of equitable geographical distribution of staff was necessary to ensure that unrepresented and underrepresented countries achieved their midpoint ranges and to improve the representation of Member States at all levels, in accordance with weighted desirable ranges. It contained 10 recommendations designed to achieve those objectives.

12. By its decision 36/457, of 18 December 1981, the General Assembly took note of the JIU report and the related comments of the Secretary-General and decided to continue discussion of the report at its thirty-seventh session.

13. The second of the two JIU reports on the subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (A/37/378), together with the related comments of the Secretary-General (A/37/378/Add.1 and A/37/378/Add.1/Corr.1). Their second report was conceived by the Inspectors as supplementary to the first one, and, accordingly, both documents were to be considered together.

14. Of the 10 recommendations, 3 (recommendations 1, 3 and 8) dealt with questions which were the subject of decisions taken by the General Assembly. Those decisions are being implemented. Of the remaining 7, recommendations 2, 5, 9 and 10 either have already been or are being implemented fully or in part. The remaining recommendations are discussed below.

Recommendation 2 (a). "At least three out of every five candidates appointed to vacant geographic posts in each entity should be nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States."

15. As pointed out in the Secretary-General's related comments (A/36/407/Add.1, para. 10), that measure would raise to 60 per cent the existing target of 40 per cent. That target, however, has been specifically set forth by the General Assembly in resolution 33/143 and confirmed in its resolutions 35/210 and 37/235. It should also be noted that in resolution 37/235, the General Assembly welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to develop and apply a medium-term plan of recruitment in order to bring the number of staff from unrepresented and underrepresented countries within their desirable ranges by 1985 at the latest. The recommendation of JIU should be read in conjunction with that provision, bearing in mind the progress already achieved towards the latter objective.

Recommendation 4. "Consideration should be given to introducing a new type of interruptible (rotation) fixed-term contract which will help in filling some posts of a permanent nature by persons of Member States whose nationals serve primarily on fixed-term appointments, as well as by nationals of other Member States who serve under fixed-term contracts."

16. In his related comments (A/36/401/Add.1, para. 21), the Secretary-General expressed his belief that the type of contract proposed would interrupt the continuity of the work being undertaken in the Secretariat and result in increased difficulties for the career development and the administration of the staff. It would be mutually advantageous to have arrangements for the secondment from their Governments of individual staff members regulated in a more systematic manner, so that the Organization might obtain maximum benefits from the services of such seconded officials without the introduction of a new type of appointment.

Recommendation 6. "In order to ensure an equitable geographical distribution of staff in senior and policy-formulating posts, it is necessary to improve the representation of unrepresented and underrepresented countries in these posts. To this end, national targets should be set for senior and policy-formulating posts, for each geographic region, and in filling vacancies in these posts, due attention should be paid to the established weighted desirable ranges."

17. In resolution 37/235, the General Assembly stressed the importance of having the largest possible number of Member States represented at the higher levels of the Secretariat, that is, the D-2 level and above. The present efforts of the Secretariat, accordingly, are directed towards achieving this objective, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Recommendation 7. "The posts occupied by technical advisers, regional and interregional advisers and the project personnel of the United Nations institutes mentioned in paragraph 52 of this report should be included among the posts subject to geographical distribution and brought within the system of desirable ranges. The conversion of staff from the 200 to the 100 series of the Staff Rules should be made only at the expiration of contracts, every case to be considered on its merits and a decision made either for the granting of an appointment under the 100 series or for the non-extension of the previous contract."

18. The Secretary-General continues to believe, as he stated in his related comments (A/36/407/Add.1), that the posts occupied by technical advisers and by regional and interregional advisers should be excluded from geographical distribution by reason of the nature of the posts and that those occupied by project personnel of the United Nations institutes should be excluded by reason of the funding of such institutes.

C. Relationships between the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and entities of the United Nations Secretariat (A/36/419)

19. The General Assembly acted on the JIU report concerning this matter at its thirty-seventh session in section V of its decision 37/442 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. The General Assembly decided:

"(a) To take note of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit with respect to relationships between the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and entities of the United Nations Secretariat, and of the comments made thereon by the Secretary-General, as well as the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of section VIII of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197; and (b) To request the Secretary-General to undertake implementation of the aforementioned recommendations along the lines indicated in his comments."

20. In section VI of the same decision, the General Assembly decided:

"(a) To review the implementation of all aspects of its resolution 32/197 during its next consideration of the subject 'Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system', which will be undertaken at its thirty-ninth session and thereafter only once every three years, without prejudice to future decisions of the Assembly regarding the periodicity of such consideration; and (b) To request the Secretary-General, in this regard, to submit a report, including, as appropriate, proposals for further action, on the implementation of sections III to VIII of the annex to resolution 32/197 to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session."

21. Accordingly, actions being taken by the Secretary-General pursuant to the above decisions will be covered in a report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

D. The United Nations University

22. The JIU report on the assessment of the United Nations University (A/37/111) was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, together with the comments thereon of the Secretary-General (A/37/111/Add.1).

23. The Inspectors focused mainly on the structure of the University and only in a limited way dealt with the substance of the University's programmes. The Inspectors made 15 recommendations dealing with the organizational structure, functions and activities of the University, including fund-raising.

24. The report made a useful contribution to clarifying ideas about the University at a time when it was preparing to move in new directions. The University Council, which reviewed the JIU report at its nineteenth session, found it to be "generally positive in its attitude towards the University and supportive of the new direction and broader intellectual concerns as embodied in its medium-term perspective, 1982-1987". 1/

25. In their comments on the JIU report and the Secretary-General's note thereon, the Rector of the University and the University Council expressed general agreement with the conclusions reached and made specific comments on various points including their agreement or differences of opinion with the views expressed in the JIU report.

26. Of the 15 recommendations put forward by the Inspectors, only 2 have not been implemented. These are:

Recommendation 2 (i), second sentence. "It [the University Council] should normally meet once a year, preferably in Tokyo."

27. The University Council, after careful consideration of the above recommendation, has concluded that its responsibilities, including those to the General Assembly, require that it should continue to meet twice yearly in the foreseeable future. Because the University is a relatively young institution, its work demands periodic policy review and change for effective programme and institutional development. It should be noted that the Council meets only for one week.

Recommendation 3. "In order to avoid compartmentalization of UNU research activities, the organizational structure of the UNU should be modified in such a way as to have only one position of Vice-Rector (at the ASG level). Present Vice-Rectors should have their functional titles changed to Programme Directors or Deans and maintain their present grades (D-2)."

28. The Council of the University supports the Rector's preference for maintaining, for the time being, the present structure, which is required for ensuring collegiality in the direction and co-ordination of the diverse, multidisciplinary and multidimensional nature of the University's work. The reduction in status of the vice-rectors, as recommended, would make it more difficult in future to attract distinguished scholars to these positions. The

medium-term perspective, 1982-1987, of the University, which was adopted by the Council in November 1981, had as one of its principal objectives the avoidance of compartmentalization of research activities and provided for the restructuring and reorganization of the University's work in order to reflect the management requirements to achieve this.

E. Secretariat organization and procedures for preparation of United Nations special conferences

29. The Inspectors, in their report (A/37/112), made three principal recommendations with regard to the organization and preparation of United Nations special conferences. That report and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/37/112/Add.1) were examined during the discussion of the matter by the Committee on Conferences at its 1982 substantive session.

30. On the basis of its consideration of the above reports, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it approve a set of guidelines for Secretariat organization of United Nations special conferences to complement the guidelines already adopted by the Assembly in its resolutions 35/10 C and 36/117 D dealing with other aspects of special conferences.

31. The updated guidelines are annexed to General Assembly resolution 37/14 B of 16 November 1982. Many of them reflect the concerns and the language of the Inspectors' report, as modified or amplified by the Secretary-General's commentary upon them. However, the recommendations which are not so reflected are as follows:

Recommendation 1 (c). "The function of Conference Secretary should be merged with that of Executive or Administrative Officer. The official combining these functions should be an outposted member of OSSECS assigned to the conference secretariat and charged to the special conference budget, without increasing overall costs. OSSECS should ensure that these officials are adequately trained in conference management including PERT and should arrange for their assignment to new special conferences when they complete each assignment."

32. The reasons for the non-implementation of recommendation 1 (c) are given in the Secretary-General's comments on the JIU report (A/37/112/Add.1, paras. 17-24).

Recommendation 1 (e). This new preparatory mechanism should be supplemented by standard guidelines for the preparation of special and other conferences, and by the development of basic servicing requirements and costing rates where they do not already exist."

33. The reasons for the non-implementation of recommendation 1 (e) are explained in the Secretary-General's comments (ibid., para. 34).

Recommendation 3. "ECOSOC and the General Assembly should consider developing and adopting guidelines for the formulation and evaluation of future special conferences, similar to those adopted for future international years in ECOSOC resolution 1980/67 and Assembly decision 35/424."

34. Similarly, the reasons for non-implementation of recommendation 3 are set forth in the same document (ibid., para. 49).

F. Economic Commission for Africa: regional programming, operations, restructuring and decentralization issues (A/37/119)

35. The JIU report on the subject (A/37/119) and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/37/119/Add.1) were submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session, 1982. In addition to recommendations relating specifically to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the report contains a number of recommendations on decentralization within the United Nations and the system as a whole of concern to all regional commissions.

36. In its resolution 1982/63, the Economic and Social Council, inter alia, took note of the recommendations contained in the JIU report, approved the comments of the Secretary-General thereon and requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures with regard to those recommendations, in particular, those which were urgent and required priority, and to report thereon to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session, 1983.

37. In its resolution 37/214 on the subject, the Assembly endorsed the above-mentioned resolution of the Economic and Social Council, welcomed the recommendations made by JIU in its report and approved the comments of the Secretary-General thereon. The resolution also contained a number of specific recommendations addressed to the Secretary-General and the Executive Secretary of ECA based on the JIU recommendations and the Secretary-General's comments. In particular, the resolution, inter alia, called upon the Secretary-General "to investigate new approaches to regional and subregional programming and management of the intercountry projects of the United Nations system, working closely with the organizations of the system" (para. 3 (b)), and invited the Secretary-General to submit a report on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session (para. 7).

38. In his report on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions (E/1983/86/Add.1), submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session, 1983, under the item on regional co-operation, the Secretary-General reported on arrangements being made to pursue the implementation of the resolution and report thereon to the intergovernmental bodies.

39. As provided for in paragraph 7 of resolution 37/214, the Secretary-General is providing information on progress made in the implementation of the resolution in a separate report to the current session of the General Assembly. A further report on the subject will be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council, as provided for in paragraph 3 (b) of the resolution quoted above.



G. Organization and methods for official travel (A/37/357 and Corr.1)

40. In its report to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly on organization and methods for official travel (A/37/357), JIU made specific recommendations aimed at assisting the organizations of the United Nations system to achieve greater economies. The report also dealt with current arrangements with travel agencies and airlines, options for improving travel arrangements and travel procedures within the Organization.

41. At its current session, the General Assembly will have before it the Secretary-General's report on this subject (A/C.5/38/22), which will address the recommendations made by the Inspectors, as endorsed by the Assembly.

H. Use of consultants and experts in the United Nations

42. A progress report on this subject was submitted by JIU to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (A/37/358), together with the related comments of the Secretary-General (A/37/358/Add.1). The report assessed the status of the implementation of the guidelines established by the General Assembly for the use of consultants and experts by its decision at its 2325th plenary meeting of 18 December 1974 relating to an earlier report by JIU on the same subject (A/9112).

43. Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 have been implemented.

Recommendation 3. "In order to increase the efficiency of the Secretariat, which would have the effect of decreasing the need for outside expertise, it would be worthwhile to consider establishing effective productivity norms for those categories of regular staff, where it is feasible."

44. For the reasons stated in paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's comments, it has not been considered necessary to establish productivity norms for regular staff in this context.

Recommendation 6. "In determining the level of remuneration for consultants who are former staff members receiving pension from the UNJSPF, it would be worthwhile to consider establishing a rule that for assignments of longer than one month the consultancy fee plus pension together should not be greater than the last pay level of the former staff member before his/her retirement. An alternative consideration might be the extension of the present rule by which pension payments cease when a UNJSPF pensioner is re-employed under a condition involving renewed participation in the UNJSPF, to cover all re-employment including that of consultants, even if unaccompanied by re-entry into the UNJSPF."

45. This recommendation has been superseded by the decision of the General Assembly, in section VIII of its resolution 37/237 of 21 December 1982, that

"as an interim measure, no former staff member who is in receipt of a pension benefit from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund shall receive from United Nations funds, regular budget or extrabudgetary, for work performed by him under contract or a special service agreement, emoluments in a total amount exceeding \$12,000 in any one calendar year".

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh session, Supplement No. 31 (A/37/31) para. 44.

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