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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

Activities of the Joint Inspection Unit, from
January 1968 to June 1969

Sixth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary
Questions to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has received, under cover of a note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1241), a report on the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit during the period from January 1968 to June 1969.
2. This report covers the first eighteen months of the work of the Unit which came into existence on 1 January 1968. During that period members of the Unit submitted to the several organizations of the United Nations family seven formal reports and three informal notes. A brief account of their contents and of such follow-up action as was taken on them during the period under review is given in section C of the report.
3. Of the seven formal reports covered in section C, two (one on WHO assistance to developing countries and the other on a rationalization of the proceedings and documentation of the UNESCO General Conference) are not addressed to the United Nations. The remaining five reports are as follows: (a) a report on United Nations activities in Turkey; (b) a report on the Economic Commission for Africa; (c) a report on co-ordination and co-operation at the country level; (d) a report on documentation; and (e) a report on overhead costs of extra-budgetary programmes and on methods of measuring performance and costs.

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4. All but the last of these five reports have been transmitted to the Advisory Committee by the Secretary-General in accordance with the procedures recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies and approved by the General Assembly in resolution 2150 (XXI). The action taken by the Advisory Committee is described in the Committee's first report to the General Assembly at its current session.^{1/} The full texts of the first four reports listed in paragraph 3 above have been made available to Member States.^{2/} The Secretary-General has not yet transmitted to the Advisory Committee the report on overhead costs, since it is still under consideration at the inter-agency level.

5. The three informal notes described in section C dealt with field inspections in Ghana, Mexico and Morocco. The follow-up action taken, as necessary, by the Executive Heads of the organizations concerned is indicated in each case in section C of the over-all report. The existing arrangements do not call for the transmission to the Secretary-General or the Advisory Committee of such informal notes on the specialized agencies.

6. Sections D and E of the report deal, respectively, with six inspection reports, on which work was in progress as of 30 June 1969, and with the future work of members of the Unit. The latter includes studies on the role of the regional economic commissions, co-ordination at the country level, ways and means of improving United Nations field activities, standardization of budget presentation, methods of work of legislative bodies, the question of decentralization, methods for the recruitment of experts, the effectiveness of the information services of the United Nations, the reasons for the ever-increasing size of budgets, the question of documentation and other related questions raised by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts.

7. The last chapter of the report deals with the treatment of inspection reports, with particular emphasis on delays in the circulation of reports and the follow-up action on them, and on the distribution of inspection reports.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/7608), para. 74.

^{2/} See A/7576, E/4698 and E/4733.

Observations by the Advisory Committee

8. The activities of the Joint Inspection Unit during the first eighteen months of its existence cover a wide range of subjects. In transmitting the report the Secretary-General records his appreciation for the contribution which the studies by the members of the Unit have already made to the work of the relevant parts of the United Nations, and his recognition of the Unit's constructive approach to the tasks with which it has been entrusted.

9. As indicated in paragraph 4 above, the Advisory Committee has already taken action on each of the reports which have been formally transmitted to it by the Secretary-General during the eighteen-month period covered by the over-all report. The Committee appreciates the contribution made by the Joint Inspection Unit to the work of the Organization.

10. The subjects studied by the Joint Inspection Unit in those reports and also in the reports listed in section D (Work in progress), indicate that the members of the Unit have laid particular stress on matters related to the technical assistance activities of the United Nations system, especially in the field. This stress on programme matters has increased the interest of the Economic and Social Council in the activities of the Unit and led it to formulate recommendations for supplementary arrangements for the handling of inspection reports. The Advisory Committee will submit a separate report to the General Assembly on this aspect of the question.

11. The Joint Inspection Unit's present and future programme, as indicated in sections D and E of its report, was the subject of informal consultations between members of the Unit and the Advisory Committee during the past several weeks. The Committee and the Unit agreed that the discussions were very useful and should lead to more effective co-ordination of activities, without restricting the Unit's terms of reference. It was also agreed that further informal consultations would be held.

12. With regard to the delays in the circulation of inspection reports and the follow-up action on them, the Advisory Committee has already voiced concern over this question. In its twenty-sixth report to the General Assembly at its twenty-

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third session,^{3/} it expressed the belief that if the Unit's reports were to have the maximum effect the comments by the organizations concerned should be issued as expeditiously as possible, and it recommended that time-limits should be laid down for the submission of such comments. The Committee made more specific recommendations on this question in paragraph 77 of its first report to the Assembly at its current session.^{4/} Moreover, the Advisory Committee itself will comment as expeditiously as possible upon the inspection reports it receives from the Secretary-General so as to ensure that its comments may be available without delay to other interested organs.

13. The question of the distribution of inspection reports is dealt with by the Advisory Committee in its report to the General Assembly on the supplementary arrangements for the handling of such reports.

^{3/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Annexes, agenda item 79, document A/7380, para. 34.

^{4/} Ibid., Twenty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/7608).