



SEVENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Other financial and general questions**Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of
the United Nations****(b) Follow-up on the reports of the
Joint Inspection Unit**

1. At the 271st Session of the Governing Body (March 1998), the Committee took note of the Director-General's intention¹ to submit for consideration, at its 273rd Session (November 1998), the proposals by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to establish a new system of follow-up on its reports (JIU proposals). The JIU proposals are reproduced in Appendix I to this paper.² At its 273rd Session the Governing Body decided to defer consideration of the JIU proposals until after it had received the report of the United Nations General Assembly on this issue.³ The General Assembly discussion on the JIU proposals, which were submitted to its Fifth Committee in 1997, was postponed until November 1999, at which time the General Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing the system of follow-up as set out in the JIU proposals.⁴
2. The JIU also submitted a note to the Director-General in September 1999 addressing issues included in the JIU proposals with specific reference to the ILO's practices and procedures regarding the handling of JIU reports. JIU representatives and the ILO secretariat discussed this note in November 1999.
3. The JIU proposals are based on what it considers to be the necessary conditions to be fulfilled for effective follow-up on its reports. They cover, inter alia, (a) distribution of the JIU reports, (b) discussion of JIU thematic reports under substantive agenda items of the

¹ GB.271/PFA/7/4, para. 5 and GB.271/1Q/1, para. 99.

² The JIU proposals were also outlined in Annex I to the JIU's annual report covering its activities.

³ GB.273/PFA/8/1, GB.273/7/1 and Minutes of the Governing Body, 273rd Session (November 1998), seventh sitting.

⁴ UNGA RES/54/16 (19 Nov. 1999).

Governing Body or other relevant “legislative organs”, (c) concrete action to be taken on each recommendation of a JIU report by the Governing Body (or other organs) and (d) the establishment of a tracking system. These various issues are discussed below.

4. A brief description of the ILO’s current procedures and practices applied in connection with its contribution to the preparation and follow-up on JIU reports is outlined in Appendix II.

A. Distribution of JIU reports

5. The JIU proposes, in paragraphs 6-8 of Annex I to its proposal, that “Upon receipt of reports, the executive heads concerned will distribute them immediately, with or without their comments, to the member States of their organizations, as called for in article 11, paragraph 4(c), of the JIU Statute”.
6. In accordance with article 11, paragraph 4(c), of the JIU Statute, the ILO is required, on receipt of JIU reports, to “take immediate action to distribute them ... to [its] State members”. With a view to achieving savings and reducing the considerable volume of documentation, the Governing Body established a practice for the distribution of JIU reports in 1978 and reconfirmed this practice in 1980 whereby JIU reports are made available to members of the Committee or to the Governing Body on request.⁵ There does not appear to be any need to change this practice.
7. It is understood that this JIU proposal aims at making its reports as widely available as possible to members of the international organizations concerned. System-wide JIU reports are distributed through the participating organizations and also as a General Assembly document. A number of copies of these reports should accordingly be available and probably circulated within national administrations. The availability of JIU reports will obviously increase once, as announced, the reports are made available by the JIU on the Internet. With a view to implementing this JIU proposal and without having to incur unreasonable expense, the ILO could contribute to the dissemination of JIU reports by providing a link to the JIU home page on its own Internet website. Such action, which fits in with the purpose of the JIU proposal, could be considered consistent with the objectives of the requirement under article 11, paragraph 4(c), of the JIU Statute, which is to immediately distribute JIU reports to all ILO member States.

B. Discussion of JIU thematic reports under substantive agenda items of the Governing Body

8. General Assembly resolution 50/233, referred to in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the JIU proposals, calls on the executive heads of the international organizations concerned “to take the necessary measures to ensure that the thematic reports of the Unit are listed under the appropriate substantive agenda items of the work programme of the appropriate legislative organs of the participating organizations”.
9. In accordance with the JIU Statute, both system-wide and ILO-specific JIU reports have been submitted to the Governing Body. By established practice and because the matters dealt with by JIU reports usually fall within the competence of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (PFA) and the Committee on Technical Cooperation (TC),

⁵ GB.205/PFA/8/2; GB.209/PFA/2/7 and GB.212/PFA/5/5.

reports concerning issues of oversight, management, administration and other Office-wide concerns have been submitted and considered by the former, while reports addressing various aspects of operational activities are dealt with by the latter committee.

10. In principle, this JIU proposal could be implemented if the subject discussed is clearly relevant to a specific item on the agenda of the Governing Body or its committees. It is, however, extremely rare that this happens, if ever. It would appear best to maintain the present practice of providing for JIU reports as separate items on the agenda of the appropriate Governing Body committee.

C. Concrete action to be taken on each recommendation in a JIU report by the Governing Body

11. Paragraphs 11 and 12 of the JIU proposals refer to General Assembly resolution 50/233 and state that:

With the assistance of the executive heads, the legislative organs should plan their work programmes so that sufficient time is allocated to allow for active and serious consideration of the relevant JIU reports. The legislative organs should take concrete action on each recommendation of a JIU report under consideration, as called for in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 50/233, rather than just taking note of the report as a whole. This is a necessary requirement for JIU reports to have an impact, in view of article 5, paragraph 5 of the JIU Statute, which provides that the inspectors of the Unit may make recommendations but have no power of decision.

12. The effect given to JIU recommendations ultimately depends on their quality and usefulness in the eyes of Governing Body members. This point was recognized by the JIU itself when, in its proposals, it stated that:

In order for the JIU reports to be thoroughly and effectively utilized by the legislative organs of participating organizations, as called for by the General Assembly in paragraph 13 of resolution 50/233, the recommendations included in JIU reports must be (a) directed at correcting clear deficiencies with practical, action-oriented measures to solve significant problems; (b) convincing and well-supported by the facts and analysis in the report; (c) realistic in terms of implied resource commitments and technical capabilities; (d) cost-effective; and (e) specific regarding the action to be taken, and those responsible for taking actions, so that implementation and resulting impact can be clearly tracked.

13. The Director General agrees with these conditions and believes that recommendations meeting the above criteria would facilitate the consideration of JIU reports and the implementation of JIU recommendations, as appropriate, by the ILO.

D. Establishment of a tracking system

14. Paragraphs 14 to 16 of the JIU proposals suggest the establishment of an internal tracking system, which would enable the JIU to monitor each step taken towards the consideration of a report by the Governing Body as well as the measures subsequently taken by the Office.⁶

⁶ A detailed outline of this system is found in paragraphs 17 to 25 of the proposals.

15. In this regard the ILO has no objection, provided that the JIU's requests for information through its tracking system do not entail undue expense and so long as they fit within the ILO's own system of monitoring and reporting on its activities. If the Office encounters serious problems in the implementation of this JIU proposal, it will inform the Governing Body in due course. It is understood that the tracking system will concern recommendations that it is within the competence of the ILO to implement and that the Governing Body or Director-General, as appropriate, has approved the recommendation for implementation.
16. *The Committee may wish to propose that the Governing Body agree that the JIU proposals be implemented by the Office in the manner indicated in the preceding paragraphs.*
17. Copies of General Assembly resolutions 50/233 and 54/16, and the JIU Statute are available to the Committee.

Geneva, 28 February 2000

Point for decision: Paragraph 16.

Appendix I

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

General Assembly

Official Records – Fifty-second Session

Supplement No. 34 (A/52/34)

Link to Appendix I is not currently available

Appendix II

ILO contribution to the preparation and follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)

1. The Bureau of Programming and Management (PROGRAM) acts as focal point for cooperation with the JIU and draws on contributions from other units at headquarters or in the field, as appropriate, depending on the subject matter and scope of the JIU reports. The ILO has been involved in the preparation of most of the system-wide reports the JIU has issued during the last 30 years.
2. The process for handling JIU reports is as follows:
 - A formal communication is received, announcing the launching of a new system-wide or ILO-specific study. It may include a questionnaire and/or seek preliminary views and/or propose meetings to be held between the ILO officials concerned and the author-inspectors of the report, together with other JIU staff.
 - Information and data are requested from the ILO units concerned or, if appropriate, their assistance is sought in completing the questionnaire.
 - Programmes of meetings with the inspectors are organized in cooperation with the units concerned. JIU research officer(s) or a research assistant(s) may accompany the inspectors.
 - Follow-up on such meetings usually involves sending supplementary information, documents and other material.
 - In the case of field visits, the ILO field units are informed and briefed as necessary.
 - The draft report, when received, is circulated for comments, observations, and textual or factual corrections, if any, to the units concerned, and their views are consolidated and sent to the JIU.
 - The final report is again sent to the units concerned for review, requesting them to ascertain whether the ILO's views are adequately reflected and to comment primarily on the implications for the ILO of the recommendations included in the report. These comments are consolidated and used in due course as ILO inputs to the comments of the Administrative Committee for Coordination (ACC) on the JIU report.
 - On receiving the ACC comments, the Office prepares a paper for the relevant committee of the Governing Body – the PFA or the TC – which highlights the main features of the report and includes a complete list of its recommendations, with comments by the Director-General, as appropriate.
 - The relevant Governing Body committee discusses the JIU report and makes its recommendations to the Governing Body, which makes comments and takes whatever decisions it considers appropriate.
 - Copies of all agency-specific reports are sent to the interested ILO units for information and use as appropriate.
 - Once a year the comments and decisions of the Governing Body on the JIU reports are sent to the United Nations, with copy to the JIU.