

**44th Meeting of the Standing Committee
3–5 March 2009**

**Agenda Item 5(c)
Outline for the oral update on the work of the Inspector General's Office**

Revised version

General

During 2008, the Inspector General's Office (IGO) underwent a management audit and a peer review. It also conducted 10 standard inspections (nine to field operations and one at Headquarters), two compliance missions, two ad hoc inquiries and 113 investigations.

A management audit of the Inspector General's Office was carried out by the Board of Auditors between 27 October and 14 November 2008. The IGO has provided written comments on the observations and recommendations.

Review of the Inspector General's Office

An independent review of the roles and responsibilities of the IGO was carried out by a Panel from the Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) of the European Commission between May and November 2008. The report makes a number of recommendations, some of which affect other parts of UNHCR. These are currently the subject of review by a working group set up by the High Commissioner. The report is available to ExCom members on a password-protected page of the UNHCR website (see www.unhcr.org/excom, Documents for the 44th meeting of the Standing Committee).

Ad hoc inquiries

During the reporting period, the IGO reported to the High Commissioner on two ad hoc inquiries: one into the Algiers bombing on 11 December 2007 and another into complaints regarding UNHCR's response to the 2008 xenophobic crisis in the Republic of South Africa.

Inspections

Amongst the principal trends emerging from inspections are the following:

a) Overall management

- Need to strengthen accountability to and dialogue with persons of concern, through more frequent field visits and less time spent by field staff in performing office duties.
- Ensure adequate budgetary provision for staff safety and security.

b) Protection

- Need to strengthen mechanisms for systematically tracking individual protection incidents.
- Ensure that all field offices have standard operating procedures for refugee status determination (RSD), resettlement and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response.

c) Programme

- Need to ensure that all partners, including people of concern, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors are regularly consulted during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Need to ensure more effective monitoring of implementing partners.

d) Administration and human resource management

- Regularize the use of non-staff resources – UNVs and staff deployees in temporary assistance positions.
- Ensure that all staff understand how to report misconduct.
- Strengthen field-level training and learning activities.

The Standard Inspection Reports are available to ExCom members on a password-protected page of the UNHCR website (see www.unhcr.org/excom).

Compliance missions

The IGO conducted two compliance missions during the reporting period. The first mission covered the Regional Representation in Sweden (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway); the second compliance mission was to Yemen.

The IGO will be revising its inspection methodology implementation in 2009, taking into consideration the recommendations of the OLAF and Management Audit Reports.

Investigations

- The Investigation Section has registered 113 cases of reported staff misconduct.
- Approximately one third of the reports of staff misconduct directly affect UNHCR beneficiaries. The trend remains consistent with previous reporting periods, with the two major categories of allegations being claims of abuse of authority and harassment (workplace and sexual) representing one category; and possible fraud in the determination of refugee status and resettlement as another category.
- In January 2009, the IGO introduced a new on-line complaint reporting mechanism which has resulted in a significant number of complaints being received from refugees and asylum-seekers. To date few of these complaints concern staff misconduct and most have been referred to the regional bureaux and/or relevant field offices.
- The IGO continues to increase its coordination with the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM) and the Legal Advice Section (LAS) so as to monitor cases better, from the time of first reporting of possible misconduct to the final sanctions.

UNHCR
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