

**50th Meeting of the Standing Committee
1-3 March 2011**

Agenda item 6(c)

Oral update on the work of the Inspector General's Office (IGO)

The IGO Road Map

- The results-based management activities contained in the Road Map have continued to provide direction for all aspects of the work of the Inspector General's Office (IGO), notably those aimed at improving the management of UNHCR's protection and assistance programmes. To this end, the IGO is working closely with the Regional Bureaux and Divisions to ensure wider dissemination of good practices and recurrent findings from investigation and inspection missions.

Update on activities undertaken by the IGO since October 2010

Inspections

- Between October 2010 and February 2011, the IGO carried out four standard inspections and two ad hoc inspections.

Achievements

- The 2011 inspection schedule, which for the first time includes an alternate country per Bureau, was endorsed before the end of 2010 thus enabling the IGO to spread out missions more evenly throughout the year.
- The 2010 revised inspection methodology, coupled with revisions of all the inspection tools, has enhanced the IGO's performance of inspections, resulting in growing confidence amongst UNHCR staff worldwide in the value-added of this central oversight function.
- In December 2010 an internal review of the conduct of inspections was undertaken, which will result in further refinement and improvement of the methodology used for inspections being introduced in 2011.
- In 2010, the trial phase of the IGO's Inspection Review Board (IRB) mechanism was assessed as having enhanced the quality of inspection reports. Drawing on a larger pool of Board members, each inspection in 2011 will continue to receive expert advice from an IRB member, including feedback on the focus, style, content and consistency of the draft inspection report.

Challenges

- Without additional investment in UNHCR's inspection capacity, the restrictions arising from having only four Senior Inspection Officers in the Inspection Service continue to require the use of non-IGO staff members to assist with inspections.

Investigations

Overview of statistics

Between October 2010 and January 2011, the Investigation Service:

- opened 16 investigations relating to allegations of staff misconduct;

- processed 317 complaints, the majority of which were from persons of concern reporting lack of access to UNHCR and the need for counselling;
- closed four investigation cases as they were either unfounded or lacking a sufficient degree of evidence to substantiate the case; and
- sent four Preliminary Investigation Reports to the Director of the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM).

Achievements

- The Investigation Service refers complaints falling outside its mandate to the concerned Bureau for follow-up. To respond to the need for improved interaction between persons of concern and UNHCR, expressed by both the Executive Committee and the High Commissioner, the IGO is working closely with the Bureaux to determine how to best respond to beneficiaries in a prompt and meaningful manner.
- Following an investigation into allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation which involved a number of sensitive issues relating to victim and witness protection, the IGO developed a draft policy and guidelines for the protection of witnesses, who are often beneficiaries in a vulnerable position. Two refugee witnesses involved in the investigation mentioned above were resettled.
- A new case-management software is being introduced and will be fully running by April 2011. This software will: facilitate the creation, assignment and management of investigation cases; allow accurate measurement of the progress of investigations, track the savings/expenses from investigation cases; and enable the Investigation Service to more easily identify trends and developments, and to produce reports.
- With a view to building a roster of staff to collaborate with IGO staff on investigations, 46 UNHCR staff were trained in basic investigation techniques at an Investigation Learning Programme (ILP) funded by the Canadian Consultant Management Initiative. This may allow the IGO to deploy only one investigator for certain investigation missions, supported by an ILP trained staff, thereby reducing costs and Investigation Service staff time.

Challenges

- The main challenge facing the Investigation Service continues to be one of capacity. The intake of allegations is becoming increasingly time and resource intensive, and the investigation capacity is further stretched by the type and complexity of certain investigations, as well as the need to field missions at short notice. By mid 2011, the IGO will take stock of the extent to which the collaboration of colleagues trained in the Investigation Learning Workshops has proven to be a useful, additional resource.

Compliance

- A mission took place to Ethiopia and confirmed that compliance in implementing inspection recommendations has remained high. Yet strengthening the accountabilities and responsibilities for delivering such compliance remains a challenge.
- Building upon the existing risk-based mechanism, the IGO recently created an internal Monitoring and Compliance Unit, to follow up on recommendations from the IGO's standard and ad hoc inspection reports, investigation Management Implication Reports and Ad Hoc Inquiries. This initiative is expected to ensure greater engagement by inspection/investigation team members, and inspected offices and Headquarters units, as well as by senior managers, and thereby increase the impact of inspection recommendations on the effective delivery of UNHCR operations.

The Way Forward

- The IGO is satisfied to report that much has been achieved in recent months. However, much remains to be done and in the coming months, the IGO will give priority to the following areas:
 - Establishment of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee (IAOC): The IGO is working closely with all actors involved in the creation of the IAOC (see EC/62/SC/CRP.8) and aims to provide its full support to the important work of this body.
 - Communication: One of the weaknesses revealed through the creation of an IGO Results-based Matrix was communication. Internal and external communication strategies have since been established, but the latter still requires full implementation.
 - Extension of the IGO's investigative mandate to third parties: While legal requirements are being addressed, the challenge of sufficient capacity to timely investigate allegations of wrongdoing of third parties remains an issue. In this regard, the IGO proposes at least as an interim measure, to limit IGO investigations of third parties to cases involving major financial loss, criminal misconduct, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse of persons of concern, and other cases that could seriously undermine UNHCR's reputation. The IGO is exploring "stand-by" arrangements with UN agencies, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and interested private sector agencies to obtain external qualified investigators to support IGO investigations into third party financial wrongdoing.
 - Conflict management in UNHCR: In 2010, 25 per cent of allegations of misconduct received by the IGO were related to workplace harassment and abuse of authority, often resulting in difficult and time consuming investigations. The new Administration of Justice System advocates for informal conflict resolution. While there have been informal discussions between the IGO, the Ombudsperson, the Director of Ethics and DHRM on how to improve conflict management, there is a need to explore more formally how conflict in the workplace, often caused by managerial shortcomings, can be addressed in a timely and constructive manner. In this regard, the IGO will advocate for a formula which involves all oversight actors as well as the Regional Bureaux. The IGO has promoted the use of management reviews led by the Bureaux and used Ad Hoc Inspections and Ad Hoc Inquiries to address possible managerial shortcomings that could be the cause of conflict in the work place.

18 February 2011