

70th Meeting of the Executive Committee

October 2019

Speech of the Inspector General

Chairperson,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen

The Inspector General's Office is an independent oversight entity which supports effective, efficient and accountable management of UNHCR operations and plays a key role in upholding an environment of integrity in UNHCR.

Today I will provide you with a brief update on the work of the Inspector General's Office, including highlights from the reporting period of 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, and some projections for the future. This complements the document entitled "Report on activities of the Inspector General's Office" (CRP A/AC.96/1196).

Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to report that the oversight reform process, initiated at the time of my appointment is nearing completion. Several changes impacting the IGO's structure, roles and responsibilities have taken place. Relationships with the IGO's key counterparts have been strengthened, particularly with executive and senior management and the OIOS UNHCR Audit Service. External relationships

have also been established or improved with counterparts in other UN agencies and with several Inspector Generals of Member States. Capacity in the IGO to analyze oversight findings and alert senior management on emerging trends has also been established, and an Oversight Policy and updated Administrative Instruction on Investigations, incorporating international best practice, are soon to be issued. Overall, these improvements are expected to ensure greater coherence and coordination amongst UNHCR's oversight entities and further professionalization of investigation processes, which, in turn, provide enhanced assurance to the High Commissioner, to Member States and to our persons of concern. Finally, one of the reform recommendations was to open the position of Inspector General to external recruitment and I am pleased to report that the position was advertised in June.

Turning to investigations into misconduct, the IGO received over 1,200 misconduct complaints during the reporting period, an increase of 40 per cent from the previous reporting period. The top three categories of misconduct complaints remained the same as in 2017-2018, namely: fraud with financial implications, sexual exploitation and abuse, and refugee status determination and resettlement fraud. New investigations were opened in 140 cases and investigation reports were concluded concerning 155 individuals. The High Commissioner imposed disciplinary measures on 29 staff members, 19 of which resulted in dismissal or separation.

Regarding sexual misconduct, 48 complaints concerning sexual harassment were received compared to 38 in the prior period and sexual exploitation and abuse complaints, where a victim was identified or identifiable, almost doubled from 65 to 126. Of these, 80% concerned UNHCR's partner personnel. We attribute the rise in complaints relating to sexual misconduct to greater awareness amongst our personnel and that of our partners as well as improved trust in reporting and response systems.

Efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse, including with our partner personnel, are on-going across the Organization and the IGO continues to play a key role in these activities. In addition to assisting senior management in combatting sexual exploitation and abuse, we have also sought to improve our investigation approaches to better protect and care for victims and witnesses. Our collaboration has also extended beyond UNHCR, with the IGO being actively engaged in several UN system-wide work streams. The IGO has also continued to prioritise sexual misconduct cases with 72 per cent of investigations into sexual exploitation and abuse being processed within a target timeline of six months.

Distinguished Delegates,

The IGO also completed four enquiries during the reporting period. The first inquiry was conducted by the Investigation Service into the death of a UNHCR staff member and the other three were conducted by Strategic Oversight into management areas where recurring oversight findings had been identified. These inquiries concerned partnership management, the implementation of the Emergency Policy in seven operations, and refugee registration in Uganda. The findings have been shared with executive management.

Looking to the future, while much of the oversight reform has been completed, the Inspector General's Office must continue to evolve through the professionalization of its services and adherence to best practices if it is to continue to meet the expectations of all stakeholders. Through our work we improve accountability to the people we serve, to host communities, our personnel and partners, and to Member States who so generously support UNHCR in its work. The IGO is firmly committed to delivering on its core mandate *and* contributing its expertise to organizational and system-wide initiatives. However, a growing number of initiatives requiring our expertise and increased reporting, rising misconduct complaints and complex cases often requiring urgent intervention, has stretched, and will continue to stretch, our abilities to meet all demands. While we are grateful for the additional funds and

the strong support received from executive management, a recently completed peer review of the Investigation Service does recommend a further increase of investigative capacity.

In closing, Distinguished Delegates, and on behalf of the IGO team, I would like to express appreciation for your strong interest in our work and your continued support.

Thank you.