

**47th Meeting of the Standing Committee
2-4 March 2010**

Agenda item 6 (c)

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

I. The IGO Road Map

The Inspector General's (IGO) Office has developed and started implementing a Road Map aimed at reinforcing the quality of administrative and operational management, including accountability at all levels of the organization; strengthening mechanisms for the systematic follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of the IGO; and enhancing both the IGO's reputation as an impartial actor and transparency in the administration of discipline in UNHCR.

In working to achieve these aims, the IGO will focus on four themes. The first is related to perceptions and cooperation, with the objective of improving communications and interaction between the IGO and UNHCR colleagues around the globe. The second deals with synergies and cross-cutting issues, with the objective of reinforcing the services provided by the IGO in terms of inspections, investigations and inquiries. The third is related to professionalism and integrity, which seeks to promote the IGO as a reference point for standards of excellence. The fourth and last deals with added-value and efficiency, with the objective of further developing current working methods, building on existing expertise.

II. Update on activities undertaken by the IGO since October 2009

Between October 2009 and January 2010, the Inspector General's Office conducted five standard inspection missions (four to field operations and one at Headquarters), one compliance mission, and one ad hoc inquiry. In addition, the IGO participated in one management review mission led by the concerned Bureau.

Implementation of the Recommendations of the OLAF Report

By the end of 2009, the IGO had implemented 85 per cent of the recommendations of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) report. The implementation of the remaining recommendations is an ongoing priority which includes the creation of an External Advisory Committee, the finalization of a revised Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and the enlargement of the IGO mandate to investigate third parties. In October 2009, the IGO carried out an ad hoc inquiry into the violent attacks which led to the deaths of three UNHCR staff members in Pakistan last year.

Inspections

An updated report on good practices and recurrent findings will be issued by the IGO in the first half of 2010. The main trends emerging from recent inspections are:

Overall and internal management

- Many offices are assessed as being well managed and Representatives maintain good contacts with key interlocutors, yet few offices have developed a common country operation strategy that is fully results-based.
- Resource constraints and heavy reporting requirements continue to negatively impact UNHCR's ability to ensure adequate protection and assistance to persons of concern

Protection management

- A number of offices do not have Standard Operating Procedures, even for key areas such as refugee status determination (RSD) and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

Programme management

- There is still room for improvement in a number of field operations for training and capacity building, notably of national NGO implementing partners.
- When partners use their own funds and other resources to implement UNHCR programmes, this needs to be better reflected in project descriptions and publicized.

Administrative management

- In many locations, the affiliate workforce e.g. (Junior Professional Officers and United Nations Volunteers) continues to be entrusted with core functions.
- Most offices conduct regular Code of Conduct training and refresher sessions. However, there are a number of additional office-related challenges that could usefully be addressed during these refresher sessions.

Compliance

- Incoming Representatives often do not benefit from a proper briefing on inspection findings before taking up their new assignments. This often delays timely action on inspection recommendations.

Investigations

- Between October 2009 and January 2010, the IGO registered 42 cases of alleged staff misconduct and three investigation reports were sent to the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM). Approximately 15 per cent of these allegations directly affect UNHCR beneficiaries and concern possible fraud related to the determination of refugee status and resettlement, and involving the sexual exploitation of refugees. The two most common types of allegations of staff misconduct remain the same as in previous reporting periods, namely abuse of authority by management and harassment. They represent 40 per cent of the allegations received.
- The IGO is in regular contact with other relevant sections and divisions within UNHCR - such as DHRM, the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Ethics Office, and the Staff Welfare Section. This interaction is useful in better understanding the causes of conflict among UNHCR staff and in finding ways to prevent such conflict.
- Following the OLAF recommendation that the IGO should be mandated to investigate third parties, the IGO is reviewing the related legal requirements with the UNHCR Legal Advice Section and looking at the practices of other organizations within the United Nations system.

III. Resources

A Senior Investigation Specialist was recruited effective 1 February 2010, with a view to bringing experience in international best practices into the IGO's investigation activities. In addition, the UNHCR Budget Committee approved five temporary assistance positions, which will enable the IGO to maintain its progress in introducing the necessary reforms.