

53rd Meeting of the Standing Committee
13-15 March 2012

Agenda item 4(d)

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

Since October 2011, the new Inspector General has given priority to obtaining clarity on the oversight function within UNHCR and to ensuring closer synergy between the IGO and the internal audit function. To this end, a series of meetings have been held in-house with senior officials, as well as with the Chairperson of the Executive Committee (ExCom) and with the Geneva Audit Service of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Two meetings have also been held with the "Friends of the IGO", a group of Geneva-based ExCom members, to provide regular updates on the activities of the IGO and to solicit advice and support on issues of mutual concern.

I. Inspection Service

- The work carried out between October 2011 and January 2012 by the Inspection Service included the following: two standard inspections and one compliance mission were undertaken; three inspection reports and one compliance mission report were issued; of the remaining mission reports for 2011, five were either being prepared or passing through the clearance process; and reports on two inspection missions undertaken in November were finalized in 2012.
- Work on compliance monitoring during the period under review resulted in closure memoranda being issued for 12 inspection cycles from 2008-2009. It is anticipated that all the remaining cycles from those years will be closed in 2012. Progress in this area will yield more accurate statistical data on compliance, coinciding with ongoing efforts to improve the Service's database. This will also assist with analysing the different issues and categories of recommendations generated by the inspection function.
- The 2012 Inspection Plan was established following consultations with the Bureaux, the Policy Development and Evaluation Service and the OIOS' Geneva Audit Section, and endorsement by the High Commissioner on 21 December. The selection of operations to be inspected took into account both different types of risk factors and management challenges, as well as previous inspections undertaken.
- An advanced inspection training workshop held in Geneva was attended by 21 middle and senior managers from Geneva and six from the field. The purpose of the workshop was two-fold: to provide the participants with advanced professional skills and knowledge for potential participation in inspection missions, and to provide the IGO with a reserve of trained staff for future inspection missions.
- The Inspection Service, in close collaboration with the Global Learning Centre (GLC) in Budapest, completed the first version of an online introductory course on the inspection function. Its primary purpose is to provide field staff with information about the scope and working methods of the inspection function.
- The IGO continued to respond to a significant number of requests received by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and coordinated UNHCR's responses to the JIU's recommendations from 2008 to 2010.

II. Investigation Service

- Thanks to the introduction in May 2011 of the **Investigation Service's "I-Sight"** case management software, the IGO is now able to handle the registration, management and tracking of cases more efficiently. Between October 2011 and January 2012, the Investigation Service dealt with 359 complaints which were assessed for possible misconduct. Over 83 per cent of complaints were linked to protection and assistance activities, and were thus referred to the Bureaux with whom the IGO is working closely to determine how to best respond to beneficiaries in a prompt and meaningful manner.

- During this same period, the Investigation Service opened 22 investigations relating to alleged staff misconduct; closed 36 investigation cases which were either unfounded or lacking a sufficient degree of evidence to substantiate the case; and forwarded 7 preliminary investigation reports to the Director of the Division of Human Resources Management.
- Two investigation missions were undertaken during the reporting period: one in Asia and one in Africa. On both occasions, the IGO senior investigation was assisted by colleagues, based in the respective regions, who had been trained at an Investigation Learning Programme (ILP) session in 2010.
- An ILP training held in Latin America in 2011 was attended by 16 field-based staff serving in the region. The purpose of this training was to increase the scope and number of UNHCR staff able to assist locally with investigations conducted by the IGO.
- Other training events for IGO staff included a specialized forensics course related to information technology which the newly appointed Senior Investigation Officer attended in December.
- Staffing was reinforced with the arrival of a new Senior Investigation Specialist experienced in criminal and administrative justice investigative work. A second position of Senior Investigation Officer has been reclassified to Senior Investigation Specialist and will be advertised shortly. Both actions are in line with recommendations made by the Independent Panel Review of the IGO carried out in 2008 by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

Third party investigations

- Given the lack of capacity within the IGO to address all allegations of misconduct relating to third parties, it has been decided to limit such investigations to cases of serious fraud, sexual exploitation and abuse, and criminal activities.
- In order to address all other allegations, the IGO has worked closely with the Division of Programme Support and Management and the Legal Affairs Service (LAS) in order to include a standard clause on investigations in all sub-agreements with implementing partners. This clause underlines the need to properly investigate all allegations of misconduct; to systematically inform the IGO of all such allegations; and to be guided/advised by the latter, where necessary, in carrying out this task. It also obliges the partner to share all findings of the cases with the IGO.

Conflict management

- The IGO continues to work closely with the Office of the Ombudsperson, LAS, the Director of Ethics and the Staff Welfare Section in addressing issues relating to conflict management in UNHCR. A jointly drafted note on conflict management and resolution was presented to senior management in December 2011. The paper underlined the systemic issues leading to conflict in the workplace, and provided recommendations in order to address these issues, including adopting a corporate approach to conflict resolution, training and re-affirming the responsibilities of managers..

III. *Ad Hoc inquiries*

An *ad hoc* inquiry team was deployed to Afghanistan in December to look into the violent attack on UNHCR's office in Kandahar on 31 October 2011. A report on the findings was submitted to the High Commissioner in January 2012.

UNHCR
21 February 2012