

INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES IN THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

Statement by Mr. Mika Tapio Chief, UNHCR Audit Service, Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

Mr. Vice Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to introduce the report providing an overview of the internal audit activities OIOS has undertaken at UNHCR during the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

OIOS completed 24 audit engagements during the reporting period. One of these audits was assigned a satisfactory rating and five were rated unsatisfactory. Seventeen audits (or 71 per cent) were assessed as partially satisfactory. One report pertained to a review of recurrent issues observed in prior audit engagements and was not rated. Audit engagements related to UNHCR operations in the field comprised 75 per cent of the engagements and 25 per cent dealt with headquarters operations and thematic activities, including information and communications technology. The reports are available on the OIOS website, in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/253, adopted on 29 December 2014.

In the 12-month period under review, 186 audit recommendations were closed in the OIOS recommendations database. As at 30 June 2015, 128 recommendations remained open. For eight critical recommendations the implementation was overdue. OIOS liaised actively with the UNHCR Independent Audit and Oversight Committee (IAOC) and the UNHCR Internal Compliance and Accountability Committee (ICAC) on their important role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations, especially those considered critical and outstanding for longer than two years.

OIOS issued 16 critical recommendations during the period under review. By 30 June 2015, UNHCR had implemented 11 of them and was in the process of implementing the remaining five critical recommendations.

With respect to audit arrangements and the audit process in general, I wanted to highlight the following:

- UNHCR Audit Service currently has 25 posts, all of which are filled. Based on a risk assessment carried out by OIOS to determine the resources required to implement its annual work plan, the High Commissioner in June 2015 approved one new P-3 auditor post effective 1 January 2016.
- OIOS attended all three meetings of the IAOC that were held during the reporting period to discuss work plan implementation and audit process matters. In addition, OIOS attended all four meetings of the ICAC. We value the governance role that these bodies play in strengthening oversight at UNHCR and look forward to continuing cooperation with them.

- Throughout the reporting period, OIOS met with directors of regional bureaux and divisions, as well as field representatives, to discuss the timing, scope and objectives, and results of audit engagements as well as other audit related matters. OIOS also held regular meetings with senior management to discuss and resolve issues arising from audits. In addition, OIOS has actively explored synergies and improved coordination and information sharing with the UNHCR Inspector General's Office, including in terms of joint audit-inspection missions and referral of matters of investigative nature arising from audits to IGO Investigation Service. OIOS also held periodic meetings with the other UNHCR oversight bodies, namely the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Board of Auditors and the UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service.
- OIOS has started reporting on the status of its audit engagements to UNHCR management on a quarterly basis. These reports were also discussed with the IAOC during their meetings.
- The Memorandum of Understanding that defines the responsibilities for the internal audit services that OIOS provides to UNHCR was signed on 17 December 2014 by the High Commissioner and the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS. It provides a useful roadmap, with key performance indicators, for effective provision of internal audit services to UNHCR.

Mr. Vice Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, with this overview, I present the report for the consideration of the Standing Committee and am ready to provide any additional information or clarification as may be required.

Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair