

# **JIU Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the function**

**Meeting of Investigatory Bodies on Protection from  
Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment on  
26 November 2018 in Geneva**

**Organized by IASC and UN CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual  
Harassment in the Organizations of the UN System**

**Briefing by the Joint Inspection Unit | [www.unjiu.org](http://www.unjiu.org)  
(Participating in the meeting as an observer)**



**Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System**

Independent system-wide oversight for efficiency, effectiveness and coordination

- The review is part of the 2018 JIU programme of work, and is a component of the cluster of JIU reports addressing oversight, integrity and accountability.
- **The review will assess the current state of the investigation function in the United Nations system and progress made in the last years. It will examine the ability of organizations' investigation function to address new challenges and demands.**
- It is a follow-up on the 2011 JIU Review of the investigation function (JIU/REP/2011/7), and will take into account relevant findings of other JIU reports (e.g. on fraud, the audit function, and whistle-blower protection) as well as reports of other bodies (e.g. OIOS; BoA; IAAC).
- The review is in its early stage of desk review and data collection. Next steps will include interviews with representatives from JIU participating organizations and other experts and stakeholders.
- The final report is expected for Fall 2019 and will include recommendations to organizations' governing bodies and executive heads as necessary.



- **The review takes place in the context of calls for strengthening accountability and integrity within the United Nations system, including ensuring robust mechanisms for investigations.**
- Institutions are expected to be accountable and act with transparency and integrity. Today, there is zero tolerance for misconduct; swift and adequate response is expected.
- In his reports on reform of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has stressed the need for robust mechanisms for investigations against, notably, sexual harassment (SH) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and fraud, among others.
- A strong and effective investigation function is key in combatting misconduct and wrongdoing, and the related risks (e.g. reputational and financial).

- The 2011 JIU review identified a number of shortcomings, resulting in key **policy** and **operational** recommendations, which addressed issues of independence, capacity, procedures, internal control and system-wide cooperation.
- Since the issuance of the 2011 report, organizations have made progress in strengthening the function.
- Most organizations have enhanced the independence of their investigation function, reviewed resource deficits, addressed function fragmentation and hired professional investigation staff. Some organizations have begun conducting proactive investigations, and have undergone peer reviews/quality assessments of the function.
- To address system-wide coordination and cooperation, the Representatives of Investigation Services of the United Nations (UN-RIS) was established in 2014.



- However, shortcomings persist. Subsequent JIU reviews, other oversight reports and external quality assessments have identified further issues and challenges, and pointed to the need for further improvement.
- Such issues and challenges include:
  - Increasingly complex cases;
  - Investigations of allegations of a sensitive nature, in particular, SH and SEA;
  - Timelines for concluding investigations;
  - Investigations of complaints against third-party actors;
  - Perceptions of impunity in the United Nations system.

The **objectives** of the review are:

- To assess the adequacy of organizational arrangements for the investigation function, focusing on:
  - Regulatory frameworks and independence,
  - Resources and capacity (human and financial),
  - Procedures (intake mechanisms, conduct of investigations, case management, follow-up)
  - Internal control and prevention
  - System-wide cooperation and coordination
- To identify gaps and challenges and make recommendations as necessary, taking into account the emerging trends, demands and projected landscape for investigations.
- To explore opportunities for improved cooperation and coherence of organizations' investigation function across the United Nations system.



- The review is expected to support organizations in validating and, where necessary, strengthening their investigation function, through actions to be initiated by the respective governing bodies and/or executive heads.
- In the context of the objectives of today's meeting, the findings of the JIU review could **contribute to the strengthening of the investigative capacity and, as a result, the quality of investigations**, by:
  - Identifying opportunities for improved investigation practices and procedures, to facilitate more effective, efficient and timely investigations;
  - Setting forth best practices and lessons learned from within and beyond the United Nations system;
  - Identifying opportunities for harmonized investigation approaches and further cooperation across the United Nations system, to enhance coordinated action.



# Thank You

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