



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS KAREN LINGENFELDER, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 138: REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT FOR 2014 AND PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2015, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNGENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 2 March 2015)

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 138, entitled Joint Inspection Unit.
2. The Group welcomes the report and wishes to thank the Chairman, Mr Jorge Flores Callejas, for introducing the Unit's Annual Report for 2014 and programme of work for 2015 as contained in document A/69/34. We would also like to thank the Senior Adviser on Information Management Policy Coordination of the Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, Mr Kenneth Herman, for introducing the relevant note of the Secretary-General.
3. The Group attaches great importance to the work of the Joint Inspection Unit as the sole independent, external oversight body of the United Nations system. Over the years, the Unit has presented valuable reports on systemic issues that are relevant and beneficial to the participating organizations and Member States. We also believe that the Fifth Committee can and should continue to benefit from the quality input provided by the Unit. The Group thus congratulates the Joint Inspection Unit for making continuous improvements in areas under its direct purview such as improving strategic planning, professionalizing its staff, upgrading its working methods and procedures and improving coordination, with an emphasis on quality control and knowledge management and sharing.

Mr Chairman,

4. The Group of 77 and China appreciates the efforts of and progress made by the Unit in carrying out its programme of work for 2014. We note with encouragement that of the nine (9) reports and one note addressed to its participating organizations, seven (7) reports were of a system-wide nature, addressing policies of coherence, management and risk issues in area of resources mobilization; capital refurbishment; and construction; environmental governance; the evaluation function, the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities; contract management; and the use of retirees. We believe that the legislative organs of all participating organizations should fully consider and discuss JIU reports and their Secretariat entities should fully implement the accepted recommendations.
5. The Group commends the reports of the JIU, in particular the report on the Review of Management and Administration of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which represents the first full-scope review of the Office by JIU in more than a decade in order to identify areas for improvement in its management and administration. We look forward to the consideration of the report by the Human Rights Council, so as to deliberate subsequently the possibility of considering the report by the Third and Fifth Committees.

6. The Group notes with serious concern that the Joint Inspection Unit has been working with a very restricted budget to meet the increasing demand of its stakeholders for system-wide reviews and evaluations. The Group also notes with great concern the information provided by the Chair of the Unit that the current budget submission process of the Unit is not in full conformity with article 20 of the Unit's statute. The Group would thus like to emphasize the need for ensuring the full operational independence of the Unit and the allocation of the appropriate amount of resources for the full implementation of the Unit's mandate.

Mr Chairman,

7. The Group commends the ongoing reform of the Joint Inspection Unit in order to address the needs of Member States and other stakeholder, including by redesigning the programme of work, enhancing outreach to Member States and to participating organization; improving relationships with other oversight and coordinating bodies. We wish to reiterate our full support for the Unit's efforts in further improving its working methods.

8. In this regard, the Group notes with interest the adoption of a longer-term planning approach for the work of Unit. In addition to the Unit's programme of work for 2015, which include eleven new projects, a two-year rolling roster of projects was approved. We commend the contribution of the participating organizations which submitted suggestions for the Unit's programme of work.

9. The Group is pleased to note that the Unit continues to share information on the programme of work, experiences and best practices with other oversight bodies including the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. We trust that, with such close coordination and collaboration, possible overlapping and duplication can be avoided while further synergy and cooperation can be achieved.

10. The Group regrets instances where Member States did not abide by General Assembly resolutions on the issuances of visas for the official travel of some Inspectors. The Group urges all Member States to extend, without any condition, the required facilitation to enable the individual Inspectors to undertake the tasks assigned to them.

11. In conclusion, the Group values the principle of an enhanced role for the Joint Inspection Unit and wish to reiterate our strong support for the continued relevance of the Unit and its mandate, as well as its important and unique role as the only external and independent system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigation body within the United Nations system.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.