



STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEM 136: REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT FOR 2012 AND PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2013, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 4 March 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 136, entitled Joint Inspection Unit.
2. The Group would like to express its deep appreciation to the outgoing Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, Mr. Mounir Zahran, for his outstanding work during his tenure. The Group welcomes and thanks the new Chairman, Mr. Istvan Posta, for introducing the Unit's Annual Report for 2012 and programme of work for 2013 as contained in document A/67/34. We also 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 highly values 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 improvement 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 appreciates the efforts and progress made by the Unit in carrying out its programme of work for 2012. We note with encouragement that of the 17 reports and one note addressed to its participating organizations, seven reports and notes were of a system-wide nature, which will help promote greater coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system. 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 progress made by the JIU regarding the implementation of its reform-oriented strategic framework for 2010-2019. We also note with satisfaction that, while keeping up a solid level of outputs, the Unit has successfully launched in October 2012 the web-based recommendation tracking system which allows the strengthening of the follow-up of the JIU recommendations. We commend those participating organizations accounting for 73 per cent, by early 2013, which have provided their inputs to the Unit, most of them online and expect the rest to do the same expeditiously.

6. However, the Group notes with concern that, at the current rate of systematic review of the management and administration review of participating organizations, the Unit will cover each organization only once every 14 years. It will be useful to provide the minimum standard duration needed to ensure an appropriate coverage of organizations of this nature.

7. The Group further notes with serious concern that the Joint Inspection Unit budget has not been increased in the past 20 years, while the Unit is striving to meet the increasing demand for system-wide reviews and evaluations. The Group further 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 Joint Inspection Unit statute. The Group would thus like to receive, during this First resumed session, an in-depth analysis, both from the ACABQ and from the Secretariat, of the Joint Inspection Unit actual budget submission process to ensure 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,

8. The Group notes with interest the Unit's programme of work for 2013 which includes twelve new projects, of which 10 are of a system-wide nature and 2 are single organization reports. We commend the contribution of the participating organizations which submitted suggestions for the Unit's programme of work.

9. The Group commends the efforts and progress made by the Unit in continuously improving its work, including by updating its internal working procedures and striving to harmonize its established practices with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. We wish to reiterate our full-fledged support for the Unit's efforts in further improving its working methods.

10. The Group is encouraged to note that the Unit continues to share information of 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.

11. In that regard, the Group notes that an interim coordination mechanism for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations System has been established by General Assembly resolution 67/226. This interim coordination mechanism should develop in the course of this year 2013 a policy for independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations System. At the beginning of this year and under this agenda item, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate the unique and system-wide mandate of the Joint Inspection Unit and invite all the stakeholders of this process to bear in mind that the Unit is and remain by its statutes the only independent external oversight body of the United Nations System mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations system-wide. The statutes of the Unit have not changed and should be fully respected.

12. In conclusion, the Group values the principle of an enhanced role for the Joint Inspection Unit and wish to reiterate our strong support to 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.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.