

*Please check against delivery*

**Statement of the Inspector General to the  
61<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee  
4 – 8 October 2010  
Arnauld Akodjenou**

*Thank you, Mr. Chairman.*

*Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Since addressing you last year at the 60th Session of the Executive Committee, I have had the opportunity to meet with many of you on several occasions, notably in February when I briefed you on the role, responsibilities and work of the IGO; in March at the Standing Committee; and, more informally, in November 2009 and in September of this year, when I convened meetings with “The Friends of the IGO”. With your support, I intend, in the coming months, to expand this group to include more Geneva-based ExCom Members.

You will have read in the “Report on the Activities of the Inspector General’s Office” that the commitments which I made to you last year have, with the High Commissioner’s support, borne fruit, notably: through the Road Map, a clearer definition of the responsibilities for activities required to meet the IGO’s objectives and a strengthening of results-based management in the work of IGO colleagues have been achieved; my office has increased its efforts to improve efficient and effective management of operations, as well as to strive for integrity, transparency and justice in human resources management in order to ensure the highest possible ethical standards of UNHCR’s staff.

I would now like to provide you with some additional information about the IGO’s recent inspection, investigation and *ad hoc* activities, before turning to the “Impact of the Work of the IGO” and to our “Challenges”.

The Inspection Review Board activities, which started this summer, have already included members of this Board providing valuable advice on the standard inspections of Kenya, Mauritania, the Russian Federation, and Argentina and Chile.

I take this opportunity to welcome the recent initiative of the UK's Inspectorate for Borders and Immigration to develop collaboration with the IGO concerning inspection strategies, methodologies, tools and skills.

One recent investigation case involved the immediate deployment to the field of an investigation team to address serious allegations of misconduct affecting UNHCR beneficiaries. The team included a witness protection expert who helped the mission develop an innovative approach to protect witnesses during and after the investigation.

At the request of the High Commissioner, an *ad hoc* inquiry team was dispatched to the field in late August to look into possible financial mismanagement. My report on the findings of the team was submitted to the High Commissioner in September.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me now highlight some of

## **IMPACT OF THE WORK OF THE IGO**

I am pleased to report that compliance with inspection recommendations remains high - approximately 90% - and I wish to express my appreciation to the High Commissioner and the Senior Management for their continuous support. I also note with satisfaction that recommendations contained in both Inspection Reports and Management Implication Reports have had many positive impacts. Some examples of these positive impacts are:

- UNHCR staff conduct more frequent field visits to strengthen UNHCR's dialogue with, and accountability to, persons of concern;
- More UNHCR offices have an established mechanism for the systematic recording and tracking of individual protection incidents;
- The development of a more complete set of Standard Operating Procedures in a large number of operations has, in many cases, resulted in a reduction of irregularities in the areas of RSD, resettlement, and SGBV;

- There is more consistency in the exercise of delegated authority for human resources management;
- With the creation of the Global Learning Centre there is now an increased training mechanism for the effective discharge of the Office's mandate to maintain a learning culture throughout the Organization.

Another area of work of the IGO is that of distilling “good management practices” and “recurrent findings” from its work both in inspections and investigations in an effort to contribute to durable improvements in the management of UNHCR operations in the Field and at Headquarters. In September, I finalized a document containing Good Practices and Recurrent Findings from inspections and investigations conducted during 2008 and 2009. Among the good practices which were identified are:

- The encouragement of partners to use their own funds and other resources to implement UNHCR programmes in the United States of America;
- The creation of an Anti-Fraud Committee in Kenya;
- In Algeria, a partnership was entered into with *SOS Femmes en Détresse*, a well-established local NGO. Through this partnership, female refugees and asylum-seekers received psycho-social and material support, as well as participated in activities aimed at enhancing their integration into Algerian society;
- The introduction by Programme Budget Service at Headquarters of a budget consultation process with the Regional Bureaux and other Directors, chaired by the AHC (Operations), to review baseline information and priority needs related to budgetary submissions.

Management weaknesses are also identified and recorded as recurrent findings. Among the areas of work where I have suggested that senior managers should focus their attention in the future are:

- The need to ensure that where security precautions hinder access by UNHCR's persons of concern to staff members, or vice versa, alternative and creative means of providing or obtaining access are put in place;
- The need for a review of existing Standard Operating Procedures as well as for additional training in the use of proGres for key protection staff as recurrent gaps have been identified with regard

to the effective maintenance and management of physical and electronic individual case files;

- The need to accord more importance to the implementation of UNHCR's 2007 policy on Minimum Working and Living Conditions;
- The need for more training in effective communication and leadership skills for managers as a consistent number of instances of improper behaviour by managers towards supervisees - both at Headquarters and in the field - have been observed;
- The need to monitor, and provide support to implementing partners, including the use, in a consistent and sustained manner, of UNHCR's standards and indicators;
- And, finally, senior managers should take necessary measures to ensure that the irregular use of the Affiliate Workforce, *inter alia*, in project control and supervisory functions, ceases.

Mr. Chairman, let me now turn to

## **IGO'S CURRENT CHALLENGES**

One of my main challenges is to ensure the full implementation of the outstanding recommendations contained in the OLAF report.

With regard to the creation of an External Advisory Committee that could provide the High Commissioner and the Inspector General with the impartial guidance they need on inspections, investigations and *ad hoc* inquiries as recommended in the OLAF report, it is important to bear in mind that the IGO is only one of the oversight actors within UNHCR, but forms a key part of the infrastructure. The oversight infrastructure continues to evolve with ongoing reforms being proposed, which include the establishment of an Independent Advisory Committee, as mentioned by the DHC earlier this morning. I look forward to the IGO playing a central role in the development and implementation of these further reforms.

While I may, on a case-by-case basis, and, if requested by the High Commissioner, investigate alleged misconduct by non UNHCR personnel, an extension of the IGO investigative mandate to third parties - in particular to implementing partners - would require substantial additional resources.

Since taking up my functions, I am satisfied that there has been considerable improvement in ensuring the quality, timeliness and impact

of our inspection reports. However, there is always room for further improvement - which requires a complex balancing of resources, skills and prioritization - and this remains high on my agenda.

The main challenge facing the Investigation Service is one of capacity. The five professional and two support staff of this Service are required, *inter alia*, to assess approximately 1,000 complaints per year, send a considered response to all complainants, and ensure that 100 new cases are investigated each year. Some of these investigations may be particularly time-consuming and complex, notably those relating to workplace harassment and abuse of authority.

### **As regards THE WAY FORWARD and**

In order to sustain progress, the IGO aims at strengthening cooperation within UNHCR - particularly with the Director of DHRM, the Ombudsperson, Director of Ethics and the Bureau Directors - and also with our partners outside the IGO who have relevant expertise. In this regard, I would like to express my willingness to cooperate with Member States on training opportunities in the field of administrative investigations and to explore how the existing investigation capacity can best be mobilized. I will also look into ways of increasing this capacity, where required, particularly at the sensitive initial assessment stage of an investigation.

The results-based management activities contained in the IGO's Road Map set out my vision for the way ahead, and include not only how I wish to see the impact of IGO inspections continue to improve the management of the delivery of UNHCR's protection and assistance activities, but also how I hope to improve the independence of, as well as the trust and confidence in, our inspections and investigation activities.

To conclude, I wish to express my deep and sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee Members for the interest that they continue to show in the work of my office, as well as for their on-going support, guidance and advice. I would also like to reiterate my deep and unfailing commitment to the work of the IGO.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.