



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 July 2011
English
Original: English

Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

Sixty-second session

Geneva, 3-7 October 2011

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Reports relating to programme and administrative
oversight and evaluation**

Report on activities of the Inspector General's Office

Report by the Inspector General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in conformity with the decision of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme to receive a report on the activities of the Inspector General's Office at its annual plenary session under item (vi) of the agenda: Reports relating to programme and administrative oversight and evaluation (A/AC.96/1003, para. 1 (f)(vi)). Also relevant is the decision of the Executive Committee to regularly make available to the Committee summary reports covering inquiries and the main categories of investigations, the number of such types of investigation, the average time taken to complete investigations and a description of related disciplinary action (A/AC.96/1021, para. 24 (e)). The report covers the period from mid-2010 to mid-2011.

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I. Introduction

1. The Inspector General's Office (IGO) within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees currently has three core functions: inspections of the quality of management of UNHCR operations; investigations of allegations of misconduct by UNHCR personnel; and *ad hoc* inquiries into violent attacks on UNHCR personnel and operations, as well as into other incidents causing major losses or damage to UNHCR's integrity, credibility or assets.
2. This report outlines activities undertaken by the IGO between July 2010 and the end of June 2011.

A. Management

3. The current Inspector General has been nominated by the Secretary-General as his Deputy Special Representative in Côte d'Ivoire, and will take up his new functions on 16 July 2011. The High Commissioner will shortly announce the appointment of a new Inspector General.
4. On 1 June 2011, the new Heads of the IGO's Investigation and Inspection Services took up their respective functions.

B. Recent developments

5. Bilateral cooperation between UNHCR's various oversight entities: the IGO, the Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) and the Office of the Controller, as well as enhanced cooperation with United Nations system-wide entities, such as the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), have progressed in the past year. The IGO is close to completing the implementation of all recommendations of the November 2008 report of the Independent Panel Review of the IGO by the Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) of the European Union, and continues to put into practice the related IGO Road Map. New structures, policies and tools, such as the creation of an Intake Unit within the Investigation Service; investigation of wrongdoing by third parties; and the introduction of *I-Sight*, a new case-management software, are making the work of the IGO more efficient and responsive, including with regard to complaints from persons of concern to UNHCR and queries from Executive Committee Member States and other partners. The establishment of a Compliance Monitoring Unit will result in more effective implementation of recommendations, not just from inspections, but also from Management Implications Reports. The IGO has finalized its communications strategy, covering communications both within the IGO and with individuals and entities outside the IGO, whether within UNHCR or with external interlocutors or persons of concern.

II. Inspections

A. Inspections missions and reports

6. The early finalization of the 2011 inspection schedule, prepared using the strengthened risk-based approach adopted in 2010, allowed for inspection missions to be scheduled throughout the year, starting in January.

7. Since its report to the 61st session of the Executive Committee, the IGO has conducted a total of 10 standard inspections. One of these was of a Headquarters unit, namely the Infrastructure and Telecommunications Systems User Services Section of the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST). Nine were to the following field locations (in sequential order): Argentina and Chile; South Africa and selected countries covered by Regional Office Pretoria (part 2 - as completion of this inspection was delayed owing to flight disruption related to volcanic activity in April 2010); Belgium and selected countries covered by the Regional Representation for Western Europe; Burundi; Cambodia and Viet Nam; Costa Rica; Israel; Turkey; and Uganda. In addition, two *ad hoc* inspections were carried out: one to look into reported management concerns in an operation in Africa and the other to Iraq. Given the current situation in the country and the prevailing security and operational constraints, the latter required specific terms of reference.

8. The Inspection Review Board (IRB) mechanism was extended and expanded in 2011 to comprise 11 members. The advice of IRB members has continued to improve the quality of inspection reports, which are available to Executive Committee members on UNHCR's public web site. However, some initial challenges, such as the need to improve the consistency of the IRB activity throughout the inspection process and coordination between the team leader/mission coordinator and the IRB members, still need to be addressed.

B. Inspection: new methodology and approaches

9. A review of lessons learned from inspections in 2010 was undertaken, which resulting in an action plan to adjust the "Conduct of Inspections" methodology in 2011, including further revisions to the Inspection Handbook.

10. A Basic Inspection Training Workshop was held for Headquarters-based middle managers with backgrounds in protection, programme and human resources/administration with a view to further expanding the roster of potential non-IGO participants in inspection missions. A Basic Inspection Distance Learning Programme is currently being developed in close collaboration with the Global Learning Centre (GLC) in Budapest.

11. Five good practices papers - one for each continent - have been developed and included in learning programmes developed by the GLC, thus increasing significantly the dissemination of these documents.

12. A revised inspection database, including a notification feature to track the inspection report-producing process, has been developed and tested with technical support from DIST.

13. A concept note on the use of *ad hoc* inspections has been prepared to provide clarification on this oversight function and to ensure that it remains an effective and credible tool within the oversight structure of the Office which has evolved over the years.

III. Investigations

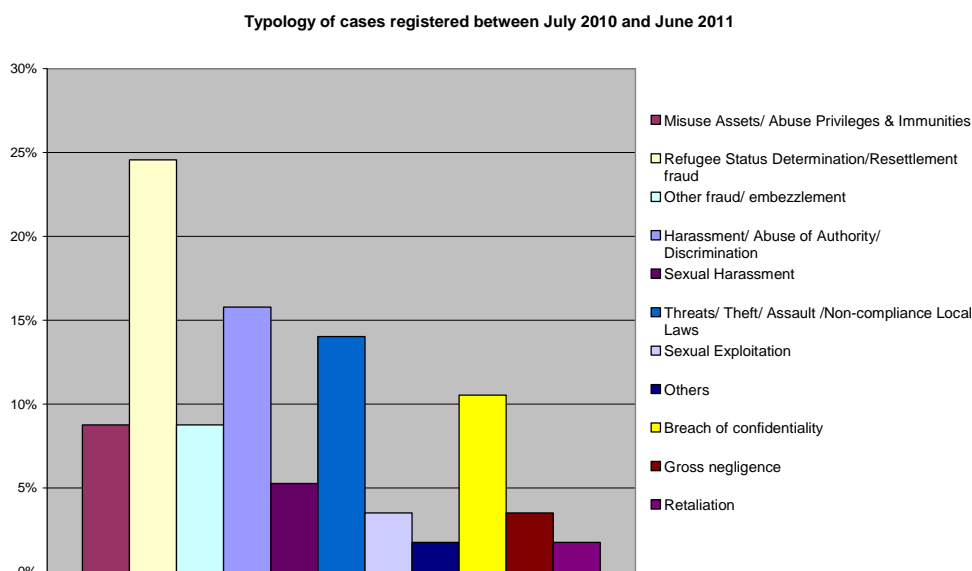
A. Caseload and reporting

14. During the reporting period, the IGO registered a total of 1,261 complaints, which represented a 54 per cent increase in the number registered the previous year. Some 90 per cent of complaints are now lodged through electronic means, and complaints generated by web (Facebook) campaigns are beginning to be received.

15. An analysis of registered complaints shows that UNHCR has developed a mechanism that is accessible to persons of concern, albeit primarily to those who are literate in one of the United Nations languages and have access to electronic media. Eighty-two per cent of complaints were lodged by persons of concern, and 70 per cent of all complaints related to protection and/or assistance matters, in particular to refugee status determination (25 per cent of all complaints) or resettlement (20 per cent of all complaints). These complaints are dealt with in coordination with relevant Bureaux and the Field, and are handled sensitively so that each case is treated with dignity and decency. A few complaints had to do with emergency situations, such as potential *refoulement*, and were dealt with expeditiously by the Bureaux.

16. Fifteen per cent (187) of all complaints alleged staff or third party misconduct, and thus fell squarely within the ambit of the IGO. Each of these complaints was reviewed carefully and a decision made as to whether the allegations were of a serious and substantiated nature. In the reporting period, these assessments led to the opening of 57 new investigations. This is 42 per cent less than in the previous reporting period. There were several reasons for this decrease, notably a more careful selection of cases to be opened, as well as the current capacity of the Investigation Service to handle limited numbers of investigations. Priority was given to cases that directly affected beneficiaries and those that involved serious fraud. The IGO has held substantial discussions with the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM), the Staff Welfare Section, the Ombudsperson and the Ethics Office to determine how best allegations of harassment, abuse of authority and other negative workplace behaviour can be resolved. Experience has shown, not just in UNHCR but also in other sister agencies, that using investigation methodology alone may not be the best way of dealing with such cases which often involve two individual and conflicting testimonies.

17. A typology of the nature of the 57 investigation cases opened in the reporting period is illustrated in the chart below:



18. A total of 49 investigations were completed, which is consistent with the previous reporting period. Five investigations resulted in a preliminary investigation report being transmitted to the Director of DHRM for appropriate action. The remaining 44 investigations resulted in a closure report, as the allegation of staff misconduct was either unfounded or could not be sufficiently substantiated. To date, there are 116 investigations pending: 43 cases from 2009, 52 from 2010 and 21 from 2011.

B. Third party investigations

19. As recommended in the 2008 OLAF report, the IGO has been examining methods for working with implementing partners to investigate allegations of wrongdoing by third parties. As UNHCR worked with some 538 implementing partners in 2010, both international and national, involving expenditure of over US\$ 676 million, certain parameters have to be set to contain the number and type of investigations mounted. The IGO has therefore recommended that, until sufficient capacity is built up, its investigations be limited to allegations involving major financial loss, criminal misconduct, and/or those that could seriously undermine UNHCR's reputation, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Joint missions, conducted with implementing partners who have relevant investigation expertise, will serve to use existing investigation capacity and further build capacity, as well as to improve communication and information sharing with these partners.

C. Introduction of *I-Sight*

20. The computerized case management database, *I-Sight*, went live in May 2011, and is scheduled to be fully operational by the end of July 2011. *I-Sight* has already facilitated the registration of complaints lodged with the IGO and has proved its worth in the tracking of the progress of complaints and in facilitating the analysis of complaints.

D. Establishment of an Intake Unit

21. Preparations are under way to establish an Intake Unit in 2012. Preparatory tasks include the introduction and refining of the *I-Sight* case management database and the determination of procedures for handling complaints registered, including appropriate and effective referral of those complaints that lie outside IGO competence. The Intake Unit will not only screen and register all incoming complaints but will also do a preliminary assessment of complaints that are associated with misconduct.

E. Investigation training

22. The relaunching of the Investigation Learning Programme (ILP) in 2010, funded by the Canadian Consultancy Management Initiative, was designed to build a roster of UNHCR staff members around the world to assist the IGO in investigating alleged staff misconduct. The ILP used a three-phase approach: an independent study module; a three-day workshop (one in Geneva and one in Nairobi); and continuous learning to enhance the knowledge and skills of the 46 participants chosen from over 300 applicants.

23. Two senior investigation officers took part in the inaugural training course offered by the Anti-Fraud Academy in Vienna, Austria.

F. Missions

24. Considerable resources were dedicated to one high priority, high profile, investigation case, on sexual exploitation and abuse. Two staff members worked on the case for six months, and four missions were undertaken to the country concerned, plus two missions to resettlement countries where witnesses had been resettled. The investigation team included experts on sexual and gender-based violence, community services and resettlement, as well as an external witness-protection expert who helped the mission develop an innovative approach to protect witnesses during and after the investigation.

25. Two investigation missions were undertaken in the first half of 2011. For both missions, a senior investigation officer was supported by UNHCR staff trained through the ILP. One mission focused on resettlement fraud and the other investigated a number of cases involving allegations of refugee status determination (RSD) and resettlement fraud, and sexual exploitation/abuse of refugees.

IV. *Ad hoc* inquiries

26. The Inspector General's report on the *ad hoc* inquiry carried out in August 2010 into possible financial mismanagement in a Country Representation was submitted to the High Commissioner in September 2010. Recommendations pertaining to the appointment and training of senior staff, as well as to increased support from Headquarters to field offices on a specific administrative management issue, were formulated in this report.

V. Compliance

27. In early 2011, the IGO established an internal Monitoring and Compliance Unit to build upon the existing risk-based mechanism and to follow up on recommendations from standard and *ad hoc* inspection reports, management implications reports and *ad hoc* inquiries. This initiative is expected to ensure greater engagement by inspected offices and headquarters units, as well as by senior managers, thereby increasing the impact of inspection recommendations on the effective delivery of UNHCR operations.

28. During the reporting period, the Inspector General led a compliance mission to the Representation in Ethiopia as a follow-up to the standard inspection, which was conducted in May 2008. The mission found that the office's management of protection and assistance activities for the benefit of persons of concern had improved since the standard inspection, that its relations with the Government of Ethiopia were good and strategic, and that the donor community remained supportive of UNHCR.
