

## 62<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee

3-5 March 2015

### Agenda item 4(b)

#### Oral update on the work of the Inspector General's Office

This update covers the period since the Inspector General's statement to the 65<sup>th</sup> session of UNHCR's Executive Committee in October 2014.

#### I. Management strategy

- In line with the strategy to strengthen UNHCR's oversight capacity by bringing the investigation function closer to the field, the Inspector General's Office (IGO) continued efforts to fill positions in its out-posted locations. An investigation position in Bangkok had already been filled during the first half of 2014, and it is expected that the four newly-created positions in the IGO's Oversight Unit in Nairobi will be filled in the second quarter of 2015.

#### II. Internal audit services

- In December 2014, the High Commissioner and the Under-Secretary-General for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) signed a *Memorandum of understanding on the provision of internal audit services by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (MOU). The MOU will be reviewed in two years' time. It provides that the OIOS work plan will be developed in consultation with UNHCR and will be endorsed by the High Commissioner. Moreover, OIOS's activities shall be coordinated with the IGO, as well as the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit, to facilitate a comprehensive approach and minimize duplication of efforts.

#### III. Inspection

- The Inspection Service issued six reports during the reporting period. Four related to inspections carried out in Italy, Lebanon, Nigeria and Pakistan in 2014, while the remaining two concerned inspections carried out at the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi and in Yemen in 2013.
- The High Commissioner endorsed the 2015 inspection plan, which was developed following consultations between the IGO and the bureaux/divisions concerned. Ten inspections are planned in 2015, including 4 field inspections (to Ethiopia, Iraq (north), Sri Lanka and Ukraine); 2 inspections at Headquarters (1 on the Private Sector Fund Raising Service and 1 on the desk function in the regional bureaux, which provides programmatic support to the field); 2 joint oversight missions (to South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic) with the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS); a joint mission to Kenya with the World Food Programme (WFP) to look at biometrics/registration; and a joint compliance mission to Mauritania, also with WFP.
- With regard to compliance with recommendations, feedback has been provided on a regular basis to inspected operations. By the end of January 2015, of the 266 recommendations from outstanding inspection cycles (2010-2013), 63 per cent had been fully implemented, 30 per cent were in progress, and 5 per cent were closed without implementation due to a change of circumstances. Implementation of the rest of the recommendations (2 per cent) has not yet started. These statistics do not include the 315 recommendations issued in 2014, for which implementation reporting has not yet been received. The IGO has recommended the establishment of a corporate, online follow-up mechanism for all oversight functions in UNHCR, and has raised the issue to the attention of the Internal Compliance and Accountability Committee (ICAC).

- The Service commented on the draft report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) relating to contract management and administration, and responded to a questionnaire on the JIU's review of public information policies within the United Nations system. It contributed to the preparation of the 2015-2017 JIU programme of work and participated in the third biennial meeting of focal points from UN agencies, sharing UNHCR's overall experience collaborating with the JIU.
- Furthermore, the IGO reported on 103 outstanding recommendations from JIU reports issued between 2006 and 2013. UNHCR's acceptance rate increased from 75.6 per cent at the end of 2013 to 86.7 per cent at the end of 2014. The rate of fully-implemented recommendations rose from 61 per cent at the end of 2013 to 85.6 per cent at the end of 2014, while implementation is ongoing for 12.7 per cent and not yet started for 1.7 per cent of the accepted recommendations. Overall, UNHCR's rate of compliance remains above average in the United Nations system.

### **III. Investigation**

- During the reporting period, the Investigation Service registered 618 complaints, 119 of which related to possible staff misconduct. Eighty-one per cent of the complaints were linked to protection and assistance activities. These complaints were referred to the relevant regional bureaux and divisions within UNHCR with which the Investigation Service works closely to determine how best to respond in a prompt and appropriate manner.
- The Service opened 25 investigations relating to alleged staff misconduct; closed 14 investigation cases that were either unfounded or lacking a sufficient degree of evidence to substantiate the case; and forwarded 5 investigation reports to the Director of the Division of Human Resources Management for action.
- A regional investigation workshop for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on the Syria situation took place in Amman in November 2014, with participants from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey. This is the fourth in a series of workshops that aim to build the capacity of partners to prevent and address misconduct.
- An induction training for 11 professional consultants on the investigation roster was held in Copenhagen in early December 2014. The IGO subsequently deployed two consultants to a country in Asia and Africa in the latter part of the month. The UNHCR-Danish Refugee Council investigation roster, established in November 2014, provides a standby capacity of experienced investigation consultants available to lead investigations for UNHCR's NGO partners.
- Investigation missions were carried out in two countries in Africa, two countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, and one country in South-East Asia.
- In conjunction with the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply, the IGO is developing a comprehensive vendor fraud policy, in response to recommendations from the United Nations Board of Auditors, UNHCR's Independent Audit and Oversight Committee and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).
- An information-sharing protocol on ongoing investigations was designed for Representatives and bureaux Directors, in response to concerns expressed by operations managers about the impact of investigations on their operations.