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**For information**

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### United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

### **Activities of the Joint Inspection Unit of relevance to UNICEF**

**Note by the secretariat**

#### *Summary*

This document provides information on reports finalized by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) during the period October 2005 through October 2006 that are of specific relevance to UNICEF and have not yet been considered by the Executive Board.

## **I. Overview**

1. Reports of the JIU are submitted to the executive heads of the organizations concerned, who then act upon them, as appropriate, and report to their relevant Executive Boards. The present document provides information on JIU reports finalized between October 2005 through October 2006 that are considered relevant to the administration and management of UNICEF; comments regarding the conclusions and recommendations contained therein; and a summary of actions undertaken.

2. Since the previous report (E/ICEF/2006/4) was presented to the Board, UNICEF has continued its dialogue with JIU on issues presented in the reports and on follow-up. This dialogue and interaction on issues of common interest have increased the relevance of the reports, improved implementation of recommendations and enhanced transparency. There is active coordination among members of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group,

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\* E/ICEF/2007/1.

and with the members of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination, to ensure consistency and coherence in the handling of JIU reports for maximum benefit.

## **II. Reports submitted by the JIU of direct interest to UNICEF**

3. Since the previous report was submitted to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2006, JIU has issued three reports of interest to UNICEF. In addition, discussion and review are under way for 12 other reports. The comments, observations and follow-up notes of UNICEF on the finalized reports are summarized below.

### **A. “Policies of United Nations system organizations towards the use of Open Source Software (OSS) for development” Part II (JIU/REP/2005/7)**

4. UNICEF concurs with the overall findings and recommendations of the JIU report on United Nations policies towards OSS for using information and communication technologies (ICT) for development, in particular to achieve specific objectives set out in the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, proper alignment of ICT strategies can help to alleviate poverty in developing countries. UNICEF agrees that the use of OSS, as opposed to proprietary software, may be in the best interest of Member States. UNICEF notes that JIU's study extensively documents a number of diverse success stories in several countries using OSS. Many of these implementations are of recent origin and have made a very good first impression. JIU is encouraged to undertake further monitoring of these initiatives to ascertain sustainability, scalability and total cost of ownership.

### **B. “Further measures to strengthen United Nations system support to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)” (JIU/REP/2005/8)**

5. This report examines the role of the Economic Commission for Africa in coordinating the activities of United Nations agencies working in Africa for the purpose of providing system-wide support for NEPAD at the regional and subregional levels.

6. The consolidated comments of the CEB have already been submitted to the General Assembly (A/61/69/Add.1). In general, CEB member organizations concurred with the recommendations in the report, which they found relevant to, and well aligned with, the issues and problems in the African region. The members furthermore noted that the report captured the main hindrances to the effective collaboration of United Nations agencies in their support to NEPAD.

7. Also noted was the observation that the report could have more critically examined the existing institutional arrangements for deepening collaboration and coordination among United Nations agencies working in Africa and could have more directly highlighted the issues affecting the effectiveness of the existing United Nations regional coordination arrangements, as stated in the objective of the

report. Members further argued that the report would have benefited from specific JIU recommendations on improving inter-agency cooperation and collaboration in support to NEPAD.

8. UNICEF has no additional comments to add to these consolidated comments.

### **C. “Oversight lacunae in the United Nations system” (JIU/REP/2006/2)**

9. This report examines the oversight structures throughout the United Nations system, and the coordinating mechanisms that exist between them. UNICEF replied in detail to the extensive questionnaire distributed by JIU.

10. The consolidated comments of the CEB on this report have already been submitted to the General Assembly (A/60/860/Add.1). While concluding that no major deficiencies exist in the oversight arrangements, the report notes that important issues in many areas remain, and the recommendations look towards strengthening the existing mechanisms. Member organizations noted that this report came at a time when the United Nations system was engaged in reviews and analyses regarding oversight mechanisms. These efforts included an external review of governance and oversight, which had been expected to cover much of the same territory as this JIU report. Because of this, many agencies felt it inappropriate to make extensive comments until the conclusions of the external report were published and discussed. In addition, the Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment has now been issued, and it touches on issues of governance as well.

11. UNICEF has no additions to make to these consolidated comments.

## **III. Ongoing/forthcoming reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNICEF**

12. At the Board’s first regular session of 2008, UNICEF looks forward to presenting its comments, as appropriate, on some or all of the reviews and reports scheduled for completion in the next year that have potential relevance to UNICEF work. The preliminary list of potential reports for 2006 and beyond, with expected relevance for UNICEF, includes:

- (a) Role of the United Nations system in disaster reduction and response;
- (b) Review of Goodwill Ambassadors programmes in the United Nations system;
- (c) Ageing of Human Resources in organizations of the United Nations system;
- (d) Use of voice video-conferencing over the internet in organizations of the United Nations system;
- (e) Review of the management of the United Nations Laissez-Passer;

- (f) Second review of the implementation of headquarters agreements concluded by United Nations system organizations: provision of headquarters premises and other facilities by host countries;
  - (g) Study on knowledge management;
  - (h) Liaison offices in United Nations organizations;
  - (i) Review of Environmental Governance within the United Nations system;
  - (j) Review of the progress made by United Nations organizations in achieving the Millennium Development Goals to combat HIV/AIDS;
  - (k) Review of selected telecommunications services and use of VOIP technologies in the organizations of the United Nations system;
  - (l) Voluntary contributions in United Nations system organizations.
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