



Check Against Delivery

United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session

Fifth Committee

Introduction of the Note of the Secretary-General on the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit “Capital/refurbishment/construction projects across the United Nations system organizations”

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the note of the Secretary-General, found in document A/70/368/Add.1, conveying his comments and those of CEB members on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit “Capital/refurbishment/construction projects across the United Nations system organizations”.

Organizations of the UN system welcome this report, finding it informative and thorough. They value the report’s comprehensive nature and appreciate the best practices for capital, refurbishment and construction projects that it presents.

Mr. Chairman, while organizations agree with the report’s content, as you can see from the note of the Secretary-General, organizations expressed the need to clarify several concepts expressed in the JIU report. For example, on the topic of local construction codes, found in paragraph 54 of the JIU report, organizations note that, regarding their extraterritorial status, it would be more appropriate to state that it is a common practice to take into account the local building codes in light of this status, rather than despite this status. This is a small, but very important distinction. In addition, in response to a statement in paragraph 106 of the JIU report regarding the lack of guidance provided by the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), organizations point out that OLA provides legal assistance in many areas that affect the operation and activities

that involve construction operations. They do this on a case-by-case basis that takes into account the specific details of each project, which is a more constructive approach than trying to offer more generic guidance.

In other comments organizations agreed with the JIU but felt that additional information would have strengthened the report.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, as you can see from the note of the Secretary-General, organizations generally welcome and accept the recommendations presented in the report, with a strong endorsement of the suggestion within recommendation 4 regarding the implementation of the best practices. However they expressed concern regarding recommendation 3, suggesting that a new inter-agency mechanism that emphasizes issues related to construction projects was not necessary as existing structures already address the issues presented in the report.

In closing, Mr Chairman, on behalf of the organizations of the UN system, I would like to thank the JIU for this report, which covered a topic of interest to CEB members and importance to the entire UN system. I reiterate that organizations of the system found much value in the report.

Of course, I stand ready to answer any questions you or the committee may have.

Thank you