



JOINT INSPECTION UNIT
of the United Nations System

CORPS COMMUN d'INSPECTION
du Système des Nations Unies

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifth Committee 70TH Session
4 March 2016

Agenda Item 139, A/70/685; Add. 1

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to introduce today the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled “Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations”, contained in document A/70/685.

The review assessed, from a system-wide perspective, the use of non-staff personnel, including relevant policies, regulations, contractual practices and associated managerial processes in United Nations system organizations.

The review shows that around 45 per cent of the total workforce in United Nations system organizations is working under non-staff contracts. Of these, many are working for extended periods under a de facto employment relationship, performing administrative, technical, and in particular, project-related work; furthermore, they also frequently perform managerial functions.

Non-staff contracts provide relative administrative flexibility and lower cost implications when compared to staff contracts, and thus indirectly encourage their widespread use. However, one of the consequences of their recurrent use is the creation of a dual workforce within the same organization: one with full rights and entitlements, and another with little or limited entitlements. Nevertheless, the Inspectors wish to remind United Nations system organizations that they should not assume that the need for practical solutions overrides their respective obligations to put into practice the values that the United Nations system organizations defend, represent and embody. They should also not deviate substantially from what good labour practices require.

The absence of overarching criteria and of a system-wide framework for the use of non-staff personnel has led to individual organizations developing their policies and contractual modalities in a fragmented manner. This is compounded by the fact that many of these organizations do not have detailed analytical data on the use of non-staff, and in particular, on the profile and final cost of the non-staff workforce. As such, there is a lack of effective decision-making and monitoring, weak internal controls, and insufficient support and oversight provided by relevant headquarters departments/units.

The review therefore found that organizations faced reputational risks, high turnover, lack of stable and motivated personnel, and a potential increase in legal challenges owing to the inappropriate use of non-staff personnel. While contractual modalities and staff entitlements are harmonized through the International Civil Service Commission, the same does not apply to non-staff personnel, and thus the Inspectors have recommended that a working group under the High-level Committee on Management should consider the harmonization of non-staff policies and practices across the system.

The report further advises each organization to undertake an analysis of their respective situations concerning the long-term use of non-staff and prepare a plan (short- to medium-term) to terminate this practice. Such plans should provide an assessment of the financial resources required for their implementation. It should also include provisions to allow existing long-serving non-staff to apply for vacant staff positions as internal candidates. These plans should be presented to the legislative/governing bodies for endorsement and provision of the necessary financial support, and once approved, should be followed by changes in rules and regulations to enable these decisions to be implemented.

The Inspectors are concerned about the administrative confusion and inefficiencies observed due to the development and use of multiple types of non-staff contracts intended to regulate different types of work, and have thus recommended that updated and consolidated practical guidelines on the use of non-staff personnel are in place to guide managers involved in decision-making on the use of non-staff contractual modalities. Furthermore, their view is that the number of different types of non-staff contracts used should be reduced following the example of the International Labour Organization, which only uses one type of contract for non-staff personnel. Executive heads of United Nations system organizations should also ensure that individuals working for the organization under third party/outsourcing contracts have decent working conditions.

Mr. Chairman, to paraphrase the words of a former Secretary-General of the United Nations: *“The staff of the United Nations is its greatest asset and they should be treated as such.”* We believe that this statement is applicable to non-staff personnel as well. They should also have access to appropriate internal justice mechanisms, including mediation, the ethics office, the office of the Ombudsman, and other informal conflict-resolution mechanisms. Additionally, they should also have recourse to the policies on the prevention of harassment and whistleblowing as a minimum recognition of their contribution, as well as a proof of coherence between the values defended and the subsequent actions taken.

I believe that the endorsement of the recommendations contained in the report will greatly facilitate their implementation across the system.

I look forward to your comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman