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Statement to the Fifth Committee  
by Jeremiah Kramer, Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit

Item 140: Joint Inspection Unit  
A/71/34: Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2016 and programme of work for 2017  
(March 6, 2017)

**Chairperson King, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,**

On behalf of the Joint Inspection Unit, I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the annual report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2016 and its programme of work for 2017, which are contained in document A/71/34.

The report before you draws attention to three main points, to which I will speak today. Most important is our effort, applying the Unit's unique system-wide lens, to deliver results that respond to the contemporary needs of participating organizations, not least their legislative bodies. This necessarily involves a diverse portfolio of reviews given the range of organizations concerned. What should be evident from the work carried out last year and envisaged for 2017 is sustained work to strengthen the framework for integrity, a greater balance between traditional management issues and programmatic ones, especially in support of development objectives and the 2030 agenda going forward, while retaining requisite space for detailed examination of individual organizations.

Last year, the Unit produced eleven reports - ten system-wide and one on a single organization. These included reports on United Nations system support for small island developing States which was requested by the General Assembly; a report on fraud prevention, detection and response that offered a specific and actionable framework to support integrity and accountability in United Nations systems organizations; a review of the audit function; the Unit's work in carrying out independent system-wide evaluations of aspects of the operational activities for development, that required the Unit to draw on new forms of collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, enabled by innovative funding arrangements; and a review of knowledge management in the UN system. We hope that a recently submitted report on administrative support services and the role of service centres will be found germane to this committee's further consideration of a global service delivery model.

In this reporting period, the Unit also engaged in fruitful dialogue with participating organizations and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the acceptance and implementation of its recommendations. This interaction, which was reflected in a series of management letters, resulted in the JIU addressing the high number of recommendations made by the Unit and action by participating organizations to increase the related rate of acceptance and implementation.

For 2017, our programme of work envisages five new system-wide studies, that, inter alia, continue to project support for integrity and accountability, as well as in support of the 2030 agenda. In addition to the projects listed, the Unit has subsequent to the submission of this report, added a review of whistleblower protection policies to its 2017 programme of work. Two system-wide reviews initiated in 2016—on travel and on donor-led reviews, will also be completed.

A second theme that we highlight is that the JIU knows that the horizontal cooperation in the UN system demanded by the 2030 agenda – and by common sense – provides an excellent opportunity for the JIU to make contributions that draw on our comparative advantages of a system-wide perspective and independence. With this in mind, we continue efforts to enable complex projects to be carried out, to develop a forward looking programme of work that addresses current challenges, and to apply working procedures that support quality requirements at each stage of the project cycle.

The final theme touches on the support we require from the General Assembly in two respects. One is the need to turn the page on the long standing issue of resourcing for the maintenance of the web-based tracking system and the website. The development of these key tools was funded by budgetary resources, but maintenance has not been provided for. The amount may be small, but the problem for us is magnified because rigidities in the composition of our budget leave very little for non-staff costs. Our proposal is that the General Assembly bring this matter to a close either by asking the Secretary-General to provide the services, or to include the requirements in the proposed programme budget for 2018-19.

The other issue relates to the consideration of JIU reports and recommendations. The Unit is highly cognizant of the support and encouragement provided by the General Assembly over time, and the general interest in its work. At the same time, we observe that due to a number of factors, specific consideration of our reports has weakened in recent years. There is not a single explanation or solution we can offer, but we hope the General Assembly would initiate a review of what the experience has been. We are gratified that this session of the 5<sup>th</sup> Committee plans to take up two JIU reports.

**Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,**

In 2016, the Joint Inspection Unit commemorated 50 years since its establishment. This milestone was an opportunity to reflect on past achievements but more importantly it helped us focus on the path forward. That path is –as it must be -- ongoing work-in-progress. We look forward to dialogue with you as that path is charted, as well as to any guidance the General Assembly wishes to provide.

Thank you for your attention.