



# General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

Distr.: General  
7 November 2012

Original: English

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## Fifth Committee

### Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 October 2012, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Berger. . . . . (Germany)  
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Kelapile

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 131: Programme planning** (A/67/6 (Part one and Progs. 1-28), A/67/16 and A/67/77)

1. **Mr. Saizonou** (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), introducing the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on its fifty-second session (A/67/16), held in June 2012, said that CPC had reviewed the Secretary-General's proposed strategic framework, paying particular attention to programme changes arising out of decisions adopted by intergovernmental organs or proposed by the Secretary-General. In that regard, the report contained the Committee's conclusions and recommendations concerning the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2010-2011, the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015 and reports on evaluations issued by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). CPC had also supported the Economic and Social Council in the performance of its coordination functions by reviewing the annual reports of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and making recommendations in that respect.

2. Following its review of the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/67/77), the Committee for Programme and Coordination had recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to ensure that more in-depth enterprise risk management be undertaken prior to the introduction of new management tools; to include in future programme performance reports comprehensive information on the impact of the reduction in the number of printed documents on the intergovernmental decision-making process in United Nations conferences and meetings; and to fully explain in future programme performance reports the termination or postponement of outputs and activities owing to vacancies of posts funded under the regular budget.

3. With regard to the plan outline of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015 (A/67/16 (Part one)), although CPC recommended the approval of the eight priorities for the period 2014-2015 contained in paragraph 41, owing to differences between Member States on some aspects of the plan

outline, it also recommended that the General Assembly should review the document at its sixty-seventh session under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning". The Committee had expressed concern over the inclusion of concepts and terms that had not been approved by the relevant intergovernmental bodies and had reiterated its recommendation that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to ensure that proposed strategic frameworks took fully into account the guidelines provided by the Assembly in its relevant resolutions, so that future plan outlines reflected more accurately the longer-term objectives of the Organization, based on all mandates approved by Member States. The Committee had also stressed the need for coordinated efforts by the Secretariat to improve the formulation of suitable expected accomplishments and to further improve the qualitative aspects of indicators of achievements. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to present at its sixty-eighth session, through CPC, a report proposing revisions, based on changes approved by the Assembly in its various resolutions on programme planning, to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).

4. With regard to the individual programmes of the proposed strategic framework (A/67/6 (Progs. 1-28)), CPC recommended that the General Assembly approve 26 of the 28 programme plans, subject to some modifications. With regard to programme 11, Environment (A/67/6 (Prog. 11)), CPC recommended that the General Assembly should ensure that the respective programme narrative fully reflected the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Owing to lack of time, CPC also recommended that its Chair should transmit the conclusions on and proposed amendments to programme 20, Human rights (A/67/6 (Prog. 20)), to the Chair of the Third Committee and that the General Assembly should allocate the programme to the Third Committee for the latter's review and action during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning".

5. CPC had reviewed three OIOS reports on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its forty-

ninth session on the thematic evaluation of United Nations coordinating bodies; protocols and practices in respect of lessons learned; and United Nations support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa. Specifically, following its review of the report on lessons learned (E/AC.51/2012/3), CPC recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take further steps to develop a single, common definition of lessons learned and to explore means to capture, analyse and share the benefits of lessons learned.

6. Following its consideration of the annual overview report of CEB for 2011/12 (E/2012/67), CPC had recommended that the General Assembly should bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need for CEB to act in accordance with its mandate of enhancing system-wide coordination and in conformity with the intergovernmental mandates of its member organizations and the need to take actions aimed at fostering dialogue between CEB and Member States. Such actions should include improving the transparency of the report of CEB by including in the document a summary of the status of implementation of the recommendations approved by the Assembly.

7. The Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the General Assembly should endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 101 to 109 of the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for NEPAD (E/AC.51/2012/5) and had welcomed the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa. Furthermore, CPC had recommended that the General Assembly should request the organizations of the United Nations system to continue to promote greater coherence in its work in support of NEPAD and had called upon the United Nations system to continue to mainstream the special needs of Africa into all of its normative and operational activities. Lastly, CPC had recommended that the General Assembly should request the organizations of the United Nations system to continue to coordinate closely with the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, as the technical body of the African Union, and other structures of the African Union Commission and that the Assembly should emphasize the need for the organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental bodies to fully take into account the

views, comments and inputs of the African Union and other regional mechanisms in its policy formulation and decision-making.

8. **Mr. Huisman** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015 (A/67/6 (Part one and Progs. 1-28)), said that the strategic framework had been prepared in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269. By the same resolution, the General Assembly had affirmed that the strategic framework should constitute the principal policy directive of the United Nations. The strategic framework also took into account the guidance provided by the General Assembly in its resolutions 59/275, 61/235, 62/224, 63/247, 64/229, 65/244 and 66/8.

9. The proposed strategic framework, which was made up of the plan outline and 28 programme plans, was based on legislative mandates and would form the basis for the biennial programme budget proposals for 2014-2015. A list of key legislative mandates was provided at the end of each programme section. The plan outline had been prepared under the leadership of the Secretary-General with the full involvement of senior management of the Secretariat and focused on the eight priority areas of work identified by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/262 and the vision set out by the Secretary-General for responding to those challenges.

10. The proposed strategic framework had been subject to intergovernmental review by relevant sectoral, functional and regional bodies. The outcomes of some of those reviews had already been incorporated into the document. In other instances, the intergovernmental review had occurred after the finalization of initial proposals, and modifications had been provided to CPC during its review of the proposed strategic framework at its fifty-second session. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269, programme plans would be updated as appropriate to reflect the impact of intergovernmental decisions taken subsequent to the preparation of the proposed framework. Such changes would be included in the introduction of the budget fascicles and submitted to CPC at its fifty-third session.

11. The application of a methodology that demonstrated the relationship between objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, introduced in 2002, had resulted in improvements to the proposed strategic framework. In addition, in line with recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, set out in the report on its fiftieth session (A/65/16), the Secretariat had engaged in coordinated efforts to improve the formulation of subprogramme logical frameworks so as to facilitate their use as a management tool and provide Member States with more information on planned results. The refinements made to the logical frameworks were intended to improve accountability in line with General Assembly resolution 64/259, by which accountability was defined as encompassing the achievement of objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner and the full implementation of all approved mandates, with a view to fostering a fully results-oriented Organization.

12. **Mr. Baez** (Chief, Policy and Oversight Coordination Service), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/67/77), said that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/245, responsibility for the preparation of the programme performance report had been transferred from OIOS to the Department of Management. The report contained information on the implementation of outputs — the traditional measure of performance — and provided an overall account of the results obtained by the Organization during the biennium 2010-2011. It also included a detailed accounting of the results achieved by each individual budget section, which covered a total of 856 expected accomplishments implemented under the 36 sections of the programme budget and more than 32,300 outputs.

13. Section II of the report highlighted the main results achieved by the Organization under its ten programme elements, offering Member States the opportunity to assess the Secretariat's performance at an aggregate level, while section III covered output implementation rate in the Secretariat, which had reached 90 per cent, up from 89 per cent in 2008-2009. Only three budget sections had implemented less than 80 per cent of their mandated outputs, namely, disarmament (70 per cent), safety and security (75 per cent) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality

and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (77 per cent). Section IV of the report highlighted the performance of the different budget sections at the programme and subprogramme levels and included information on some of the challenges faced by departments in meeting their goals. Several related recommendations of CPC, as set out in its report (A/67/16) were before the Fifth Committee for its consideration.

14. **Mr. Mihoubi** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council responsible for supporting the crucial task of translating intergovernmental mandates into workable programmes. CPC offered guidance to the Secretariat by interpreting legislative intents and developed evaluation procedures to improve programme design and avoid duplication of efforts. The Group fully endorsed the recommendations and conclusions contained in the report of CPC on its fifty-second session (A/67/16). Noting that the work of CPC depended on the participation of its membership, Member States were urged to engage with the body. The Group welcomed the recommendations provided by CPC on the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015, recalling that the task of setting the priorities of the United Nations was the exclusive prerogative of Member States.

15. The Group was fully committed to ensuring that the programme narrative under programme 11, Environment (A/67/6 (Prog. 11)), reflected the outcome document of Rio+20, which had been endorsed in General Assembly resolution 66/288. In addition, the Group expected that the recommendations and conclusions of CPC concerning evaluation processes in the Secretariat would be duly implemented by the managers concerned, and that, when preparing future plan outlines, the Secretariat would respect the fact that extensive prior consultation with Member States was required before any management reforms proposals were presented to the General Assembly.

16. The Group welcomed the efforts taken by the United Nations system to support NEPAD and the related discussions in CPC. The Group stood ready to support the recently appointed Under-Secretary-

General and Special Adviser on Africa in discharging his mandate.

17. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination should play an important role in improving coordination within the United Nations system. In that regard, the Group urged the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to take actions aimed at enhancing the Board's transparency and accountability to Member States, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 66/257. As noted by CPC, there was a need for CEB to act in accordance with its mandate of enhancing system-wide coordination and in conformity with the intergovernmental mandates of its member organizations. The Group welcomed the continued cooperation between CEB, the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit on matters of common interest.

18. **Mr. Onuma** (Japan) said that his delegation recognized the significant role the Committee for Programme and Coordination played in developing the regular budget of the United Nations and, for the first time since 2007, had participated in the body's annual session. The discussions at the fifty-second session had been fruitful and had deepened participants' understanding of each programme plan. Japan would continue to actively participate in the deliberations of CPC.

19. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) said that programme planning provided a critical opportunity to transform legislative mandates into concrete planned activities. In that regard, he emphasized the central role played by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in that process. It was regrettable that the Group of Western European and Other States had not fulfilled its responsibility of providing the Chair for the fifty-second session of CPC, during which a number of critical issues had been discussed. In that context, Mr. Saizonou had provided valuable leadership as Chair of CPC. Given that the seats allocated for the Group of Western European and Other States Group in CPC had been vacant for some time and the Group apparently did not intend to fill those vacancies, Member States could consider the possibility of redistributing those seats among the regional groups that supported the Committee's work.

20. His delegation remained concerned by the absence of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on the work of CPC, despite the recommendations of both CPC and the General Assembly on the need to improve cooperation between CPC and JIU.

21. Recalling that, at its fifty-second session, CPC had examined the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015, he stressed that the logical frameworks of United Nations entities should aim to help Member States to assess work completed and facilitate the allocation of resources for planned activities. The Secretariat should therefore develop strategic frameworks strictly on the basis of legislative mandates and the actions required to implement them. His delegation, together with other CPC members, had proposed a number of constructive amendments aimed at better aligning the proposed strategic framework with those principles.

22. His delegation shared the concerns expressed by CPC regarding the use of terms that had not been approved by the competent intergovernmental bodies and that, in many cases, reflected the views of only some States. That practice, which called into question the impartiality and neutrality of the Secretariat, had led to disagreement among CPC members concerning the plan outline for the strategic framework. The Secretariat was ultimately to be held responsible for the lack of consensus on the proposed strategic framework during the past several programme planning cycles, owing to its failure to adhere to the established mandates when drafting the document. In that regard, the Secretary-General should exercise his authority and hold those responsible accountable. Given that the plan outline did not correspond in any way with the approved mandates, his delegation questioned the validity of retaining the document as part of the strategic framework.

23. It was essential that the various entities of the Secretariat abide by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8); regulations 4.8 and 4.9 of that document clearly stipulated that intergovernmental bodies should review the proposed strategic framework prior to its review by CPC. His delegation therefore questioned why the Human Rights Council, an intergovernmental body, was prevented from reviewing the framework prepared by the Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights, given the Council's established functions. In addition, his delegation hoped, in line with the recommendation made by the General Committee of the General Assembly, as set out in paragraph 72 of its first report (A/67/250) and as endorsed by the Assembly, that the Main Committees would include in their work programmes opportunities to conduct an in-depth review of the proposed strategic framework. In that regard, his delegation expected that discussions in the Fifth Committee would not conclude until the other Main Committees had expressed their views.

24. His delegation supported the CPC recommendation that concrete measures and information on actions taken to promote a culture of accountability within the Secretariat should be presented in future strategic frameworks, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/257.

25. CPC had also noted that the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had taken a position on issues still under review by Member States, which in many cases, including the case of the "Delivering as One" initiative, had resulted in a dichotomy between intergovernmental mandates and the Board's actions. Efforts to strengthen the culture of accountability and transparency required measures aimed at fostering dialogue between CEB and Member States as a matter of priority. His delegation endorsed all of the CPC recommendations and conclusions and would help to promote the adoption of a balanced resolution on the item.

**Agenda item 140: Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services** (A/67/140 and Add.1, A/67/297 (Part 1) and Add.1)

**Agenda item 129: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations** (A/67/140 and Add.1, A/67/259 and Corr.1)

26. **Mr. Kanja** (Assistant Secretary-General, Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 (A/67/297 (Part I) and Add.1), said that OIOS had continued to make progress on various change management initiatives aimed at increasing its efficiency and effectiveness. Those initiatives included the commissioning of quality reviews of the Office's

three divisions; the review of the Internal Audit Division had been concluded in 2011 and the reviews of the Investigations Division and the Inspection and Evaluation Division were nearly complete. During the reporting period, the Office had developed a vision based on stakeholder expectations and had begun to devise strategies to pool resources and centralize administrative functions. OIOS was also revising its communication tools and activities to ensure effective outreach. The Office had successfully decreased its vacancy rate from 23 per cent in August 2010 and to 11 per cent in September 2012 and would continue to make efforts to fill vacancies.

27. OIOS had introduced the use of audit ratings and audit recommendation categories, which had helped to ensure better follow-up based on the importance or criticality of deficiencies. Internal audit reports were rated as "satisfactory", "partially satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory", while audit recommendations were placed into the risk categories of "critical" or "important" or defined as an opportunity for improvement. As a result, the Office had issued a much lower number of recommendations as compared with the previous reporting period: 323 reports containing 1,702 recommendations, of which 398 were critical, had been issued during the 2010-2011 period, while a total of 284 reports containing 807 recommendations, of which 65 were critical, had been issued in the 2011-2012 reporting period. The use of ratings and categories had also strengthened the overall audit review process, improved client relations and benefited OIOS clients by reducing the total volume of recommendations, thus allowing them to focus on important and critical issues.

28. In response to a request by Member States, OIOS had conducted an internal audit risk trend analysis, which had revealed that in general, the highest risk areas in 2011 spanned all of the Organization's operational activities, including programme and project management, safety and security, procurement and contract administration, human resources management, and strategic management and governance. In addition, owing to the development of the Inspira and Umoja systems, information technology management was among the higher risk profiles in 2011. The report also covered a wide range of subjects concerning the work of the Internal Audit Division, the Inspection and Evaluation Division, and the Investigations Division.

29. **Mr. Strachan** (Vice-Chairman, Independent Audit Advisory Committee), introducing the report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) on its activities for the period 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012 (A/67/259 and Corr.1), said that the report had been prepared in accordance with the IAAC terms of reference, which were set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 61/275. Although most IAAC members held full-time jobs in addition to of their work with the United Nations, they were committed to fulfilling their responsibilities as members and maintained a record of 100 per cent attendance at all IAAC sessions.

30. During the reporting period, IAAC had continued its practice of meeting with a range of key United Nations stakeholders, including representatives of Member States, the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Board of Auditors. Representatives of OIOS and the Department of Management also attended every IAAC session. IAAC had received adequate access to the individuals, documents and reports it had identified as necessary to conducting its work.

31. The report contained the IAAC preliminary workplan for 2013, which was based on the Independent Audit Advisory Committee's responsibilities, the United Nations budget cycle and the schedule of sessions of the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Board of Auditors. Of the 103 recommendations that had been made since the inception of IAAC, as at 30 June 2012, 57 had been implemented, 10 had been reiterated, 22 were in the process of being implemented or pending consideration and 14 had been deferred for consideration to subsequent sessions by the General Assembly. IAAC would continue to monitor implementation of its recommendations.

32. The IAAC terms of reference required it to advise the General Assembly on measures to ensure the compliance of management with oversight body recommendations so as to foster accountability. In that regard, IAAC had noted an improvement in the rate of implementation of oversight body recommendations. It would continue to study the new OIOS approach to recommendations issued to management to ensure that recommendations were of high quality, added value and were implemented in a timely manner. IAAC had been pleased to note an improvement in the rate of

implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and, in that regard, welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Management Committee to follow up on the implementation of oversight body recommendations. However, more needed to be done to ensure acceptance and implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. In that regard, IAAC expected that JIU would establish an appropriate administrative structure for the web-based tracking system under development, which was intended to assist both management and the Unit in taking prompt action in response to recommendations.

33. The size, complexity and importance of the Organization made the outstanding task of establishing an enterprise risk management system at the Secretariat particularly pressing. In that regard, IAAC welcomed the designation of the Management Committee to serve as the enterprise risk management committee, which would ensure that all departments of the Secretariat were implementing enterprise risk management in accordance with the established policy framework. The many departments and offices of the Secretariat were at different stages of embedding risk management processes in their operations, while several large departments, such as OIOS and the Department of Management, had yet to establish any risk management system. In that regard, IAAC called on those departments to make efforts to incorporate risk management into their operations and reiterated the need for a Chief Risk Officer vested with appropriate authority to manage implementation of enterprise risk management Secretariat-wide, in line with benchmark 6 set out in the review of enterprise risk management in the United Nations system conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/65/788).

34. With regard to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, given that the high number of vacancies at OIOS was a long-standing, IAAC had been pleased to note the decline in the overall vacancy rate. However, the vacancy rate in the Investigations Division remained high, which could have implications for the recently concluded pilot project on investigations in peacekeeping operations. IAAC was assessing the ways in which the quality of the Office's work would be affected by its new approach to drafting and ranking audit reports and its efforts to decrease in the number of recommendations issued.

35. While some areas still needed to be addressed, OIOS continued to make progress with regard to the quality of its work. In that regard, the Institute of Internal Auditors had concluded a peer review of OIOS; similar independent reviews of the Office's three divisions were under way, which IAAC would be considering at its December 2012 meeting.

36. With regard to changes to and risks associated with accounting policies and disclosure practices, IAAC had reviewed and provided comments on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) policy framework and continued to engage with management on other reform initiatives.

37. **The Chair** drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "The investigations function in the United Nations system" (A/67/140); the statement by Ms. Deborah Wynes and Mr. Mounir Zahran, Joint Inspection Unit inspectors, introducing that report; the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) on the Joint Inspection Unit report (A/67/140/Add.1); and the statement by Mr. Ken Herman, Senior Adviser on Information Management Policy Coordination of the CEB Secretariat introducing the note by the Secretary-General.

38. **Mr. Mihoubi** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that OIOS had an essential role to play in improving internal controls, accountability mechanisms and organizational efficiency and effectiveness, in accordance with the mandate it was given by the General Assembly. The Group also noted the various assignments conducted and recommendations issued by the Office during the reporting period, relating to cost savings, recovery of overpayments, efficiency gains and other improvements to ensure that risks were managed consistently and systematically through control processes across the Organization.

39. Recalling the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, he reiterated the Group's support for the operational independence of OIOS and the Office's role in assisting the Secretary-General with his internal oversight responsibilities, in respect of the resources and staff of the Organization. The Group also reaffirmed the separate and distinct roles of internal and external oversight mechanisms, and, in that regard,

welcomed the Office's efforts to regularly coordinate with other oversight entities, in particular the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit.

40. The Group welcomed the initiatives aimed at strengthening OIOS work processes and systems and cultivating a professional workforce to carry out its inspection and evaluation, internal audit and investigations functions and encouraged the Office to complete the process of compiling key oversight terms related to its work in a timely manner. The progress made in resolving the long-standing vacancy issues at OIOS and the appointment of an Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services were also welcome developments. While noting the improvement of staff recruitment at the senior level, the Group remained concerned about the high vacancy rates and encouraged the Secretary-General to make every effort to fill vacancies in strict conformity with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including provisions relating to gender balance and equitable geographical distribution.

41. The Group of 77 and China had taken note of the financial implications of the 807 recommendations issued by the Office, 65 of which had been classified as critical, aimed at improving internal controls, accountability mechanisms and organizational efficiency and effectiveness. OIOS should continue to focus on improving the quality of its recommendations. The Group had also taken note of other OIOS initiatives, including those aimed at assigning ratings to the findings, conducting efficient monitoring of the recommendations and improving the internal analysis of the risks and trends. In that regard, it emphasized that the Office should involve clients when introducing new initiatives or approaches. The Group looked forward to engaging in discussions of the oversight activities concerning the capital master plan, the United Nations Compensation Commission and the construction of the additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

42. IAAC had presented concrete suggestions to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the oversight functions, including the audit activities of OIOS. The Group had carefully examined a number of comments, observations and recommendations submitted by IAAC, including those that had been deferred, and looked forward to a comprehensive discussion on those matters.



43. **Mr. Van Den Akker** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that he welcomed the risk-assessment approach adopted by OIOS in determining its priorities as well as the Office's continuing efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of its work. Noting that only 35 per cent of critical recommendations due for implementation in the first quarter of 2012 had been implemented, he called on all programme managers to increase their efforts to remedy that situation. In addition, efforts to quantify the results achieved from the implementation of recommendations, where possible, would be appreciated. OIOS measures to disseminate and distribute audit reports, including its plans for the public dissemination of the reports, were appreciated. He stressed the importance of the continued close coordination between the various oversight bodies in order to avoid duplication and facilitate discussions on issues of mutual interest.

44. He supported the recommendation made by the Independent Audit Advisory Committee that OIOS should further accelerate its efforts to attain a fully risk-based workplan. He commended the Office's efforts to reduce the number of vacant posts and endorsed the IAAC recommendation that the Secretary-General should finalize the long-awaited proposed terms of reference on the comprehensive review of investigations in the United Nations.

45. **Mr. Dettling** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, commended the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services for reducing the vacancy rate at OIOS; developing strategies to centralize certain administrative functions; and proposing the assessment of the Office's three divisions by an external agency. The results of that assessment would be of great interest.

46. While OIOS audit reports and recommendations should continue to be looked at individually, it was also important to identify the patterns and trends of audit results. In that regard, the internal audit risk trend analysis was a step in the right direction. OIOS should further refine its methods with a view to providing Member States relevant information concerning areas

of high risk. At the same time, the analysis should provide OIOS with strategic information that could help it to identify areas to be audited as a matter of priority.

47. Switzerland and Liechtenstein supported the Independent Audit Advisory Committee's repeated recommendations concerning the need to strengthen enterprise risk management in the Secretariat. Many problems, including some having serious financial consequences, could have been avoided or mitigated if a more systematic approach to risk had been in place. He encouraged the Secretary-General to accelerate implementation of the risk management framework across the entire Secretariat and to dedicate the necessary support capacity to that important endeavour.

48. In respect of the United Nations oversight function as a whole, he suggested that IAAC was in a position to assess the evolving relationship between OIOS and managers, given the change that had taken place in the Office's institutional culture over the past few years. In addition, it was expected, in line with General Assembly resolution 66/232 B, that the Board of Auditors would place increasing emphasis on performance audits, a function that generally formed part of the internal oversight function. With the Joint Inspection Unit carrying out more evaluations that were directly related to the work of the Secretariat, enhanced coordination among the three oversight bodies was needed more than ever. In that regard, the views of IAAC on the means of ensuring optimal coordination would be appreciated.

49. **Ms. Shum** (Singapore) said that her delegation welcomed the appointment of the Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services as well as the progress made by OIOS in reducing its vacancy rate. It was hoped that a better staffed Office would help to ensure the timely implementation of workplans, and in that regard, the Secretary-General was urged to make every effort to fill remaining vacant posts. Her delegation supported the innovative OIOS initiatives to improve its work processes as well as its various recommendations aimed at achieving cost savings, efficiency gains and other process improvements across the Organization. She encouraged OIOS and the Management Committee to continue to cooperate to ensure the full and expeditious implementation of OIOS recommendations.

50. She commended the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for its valuable insights on ways to improve the work of OIOS. Her delegation attached importance to the operational independence of OIOS as well as the distinct roles of the various internal and external United Nations oversight mechanisms, which together formed a mutually reinforcing framework to support a more efficient Organization.

51. **Ms. Norman** (United States of America) said that the JIU report on the investigations function in the United Nations system (A/67/140) presented several key recommendations on ways to enhance professional standards and capacity across the United Nations system. In the interest of improved transparency, her delegation urged Member States to support the proposal by OIOS to publicly disclose the audit reports of the Secretariat.

52. While her delegation welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services to improve the capacity and functions of OIOS in the areas of audit, investigation and inspection, and evaluation, it remained concerned at the state of investigations capacity within OIOS, in particular its ability to investigate complex financial and procurement cases. In that regard, it hoped that the external review of the Investigations Division would lead to tangible improvements. While efforts to build a culture of ethical conduct had certainly contributed to a decrease in the number of OIOS investigations, the low number of investigations carried out during the reporting period was not commensurate with the vast size of the Organization. OIOS must increase its efforts to pursue cases, detect fraud and corruption, and increase its forensic audit capacity.

53. She commended the Under-Secretary-General's efforts to decrease the vacancy rate and the work carried out by OIOS to improve audit ratings and monitor critical recommendations more efficiently. She encouraged OIOS to develop fully risk-based workplans for both its Internal Audit Division and Investigations Division, as recommended by IAAC.

54. **Mr. Kanja** (Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) said he looked forward to discussing further with delegations in the informal consultations the issues that had been raised.

*The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.*