

**59<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

**4-6 March 2014**

**Speech of the Inspector General**

**Item 4 (d)**

*Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I would like to draw your attention to the document entitled: “Oral Update on the Work of the Inspector General’s Office” which was made available to you prior to this meeting. In my presentation to you today, I wish to highlight some elements of this Update as well as provide you with additional information on the recent activities of the IGO.

Over the last two years, in my statements to both the Standing Committee and the Executive Committee, I have repeatedly emphasized my strong conviction that “in-housing” the internal audit function within UNHCR would not only strengthen the Organization’s oversight capacity, but also improve and strengthen risk management, governance coordination, synergy and control processes. I have also strived to keep Executive Committee Members fully apprised - both on formal and informal occasions - of achievements made, as well as set-backs encountered, in this complex process.

When I addressed the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee five months ago, I informed that UNHCR would conclude a modified Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for a transitional period to ensure that OIOS’ services and expertise are retained until UNHCR’s own internal audit capacities are well established. While high level discussions between the two organizations on a revised MoU are on-going, the in-housing process has been put on hold pending solutions to some legal concerns that have arisen.

In the meantime, and parallel to the work on the MoU, the IGO is working on reinforcing its inspection function, without losing sight of the ultimate goal of the merging of the internal audit and inspection functions, as recommended by the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee. The actions that I intend to take and which are aimed at reinforcing the inspection function in the short term include:

- Reviewing inspection methodology to incorporate relevant aspects of internationally-agreed audit standards and methodology;
- Increasing the capacity of the inspection staff through audit-related external training and a partnership with the World Food Programme's Inspector General's Office which will include staff exchanges and other forms of on-the-job training; and
- The establishment of an integrated on-line compliance mechanism.

*Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,* I would now like to turn to the topic of resources. The resourcing of the IGO, and notably of the Investigation Service, both human and financial, remains grossly inadequate. I thus look forward to receiving the recommendations of the recent review by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) of UNHCR's investigations function for advice and guidance as to its right-sizing, both in human and financial terms.

In the meantime and pending receiving the afore-mentioned recommendations, the IGO has taken the initiative to have an out-posted IGO position of Senior Investigation Specialist created in Bangkok, which will shortly be filled. I strongly believe that the out-posting of some investigative functions will serve to enhance the IGO's focus and response to investigations in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, as well as, in the long run, be a cost-saving measure. The position in Bangkok will be a very useful pilot in this regard.

Despite the critical resource situation, and an ever-increasing number of complaints received in the IGO - 1,154 complaints were received in 2012 and 1,383 in 2013 - all of which, including those relating to protection and assistance issues, require assessment and follow-up within the IGO, I am pleased to share with you some very positive statistics which demonstrate the hard work and commitment of the staff of the Investigation Service:

Over the past two to three years, there has been an increase in the number of cases opened (71 in 2012, and 82 in 2013), and a very significant increase in the number of cases closed (81 in 2012 and 106 in 2013). The number of Investigation

Reports had also increased considerably (18 in 2012 and 33 in 2013), as have Closure Reports (57 in 2012 and 71 in 2013).

Partnership with NGOs on building their investigative capacity is also proceeding very satisfactorily, as evidences by the trainings and the tools already in place. The Investigation Service will focus its efforts on the grass-roots or national NGOs in 2014.

*Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,* in closing, I would like to express my deep appreciation to you all for the interest you continue to show in the work of my office, and impress on you the importance I place on your continued guidance, advice and support.