In 2004, the implementation of the Secretary-General’s reform proposals to further improve the work of the Organization was largely completed. Notable achievements included the alignment of the Organization’s activities with the priorities agreed upon at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and at the global conferences of the 1990s, a major reorganization of two large Departments—the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Department of Public Information—as well as reforms at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Regarding planning and budgeting, a two-year strategic framework replaced the four-year medium-term plan, with good results. The processes for programme planning and resource allocation became better aligned, and the intergovernmental review process streamlined.

In June, a 12-member panel of eminent persons established by the Secretary-General to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society within the context of UN reform made recommendations for enhancing the Organization’s capacity to engage relevant actors in tackling global problems. In December, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed in 2003 to evaluate how the UN addressed current threats, also recommended measures to strengthen the Organization, including the establishment of an additional Deputy Secretary-General position to assist the Secretary-General.

The Assembly decided to convene in 2005 a high-level plenary meeting to undertake a comprehensive review of progress made in fulfilling the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration. It also adopted a text regarding further measures to revitalize its own work. It urged the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council to make progress in considering all issues relevant to the question. While stressing the importance of the evaluation work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Assembly decided to review at its sixty-fourth (2009) session the functions and reporting procedures of that Office.

Programme of reform

General aspects

In his annual report on the work of the Organization (see p. 3), the Secretary-General stated that the implementation of his reform proposals, initiated in 2002 [YUN 2002, p. 1352], to further improve the work of the Organization was largely complete. Notable achievements included the alignment of the Organization’s activities with the priorities agreed upon at the 2000 Millennium Summit [YUN 2000, p. 45] and at the global conferences of the 1990s, the reorganization of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) [YUN 2003, p. 1486] and the Department of Public Information (DPI) [YUN 2002, p. 585], and reforms in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (see p. 1195). Other positive developments included the discontinuation of a large number of reports, meetings and activities of marginal utility, the reallocation of over $100 million within or between programmes and the approval of significant increases in funds for improving information and communication technology services and related staff training. With regard to planning and budgeting, a two-year strategic framework replaced the four-year medium-term plan (see p. 1400), while the processes for programme planning and resource allocation had become better aligned and the intergovernmental review process streamlined. The implementation of the integrated human resources management reform programme (see p. 1416) continued with the further refinement of practices and procedures, and progress in implementing the Organization’s human resources strategy. The administration of justice had also become more efficient. Improvements were made in client servicing, and efforts continued to implement the capital master plan (see p. 1473), improve financial management and enhance the Organization’s accountability and oversight functions. In view of increasing threats to the Organization and its staff, measures were taken to enhance security at Headquarters and in field offices.
UN system funds and programmes continued to strengthen their presence at the country level and to address the issues of joint programming and management of resources.

**Agenda for change**

**Strengthening of the UN system**

**Panel of eminent persons**

By a June note [A/58/87 & Corr.1], the Secretary-General transmitted the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations entitled “We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance”. First proposed in his 2002 report on strengthening the UN system and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 57/300 [ibid., p. 1353], the Secretary-General asked the Panel, among other things, to review guidelines, decisions and practices that affected civil society organizations’ access to and participation in UN deliberations and processes, to identify new and better ways to interact with them, especially those from developing countries, and to review the Secretariat’s organizational structure for facilitating, managing and evaluating UN relationships with civil society.

The Panel, chaired by Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil), recognized that civil society organizations, through their global networks of activists, websites and other channels, were creating a new phenomenon, the global public opinion, which was shaping the political agenda and generating a set of norms and citizen demands that transcended national boundaries and had contributed to the opening of a global public space for debate. Over the years, the United Nations had consistently promoted the participation of civil society in its deliberative processes, leading to the emergence of values and norms, especially in the areas of human rights, gender relations, governance and the environment. However, the Panel questioned whether the United Nations had been full enough in articulating its case for enhancing such engagement. The Panel found that civil societies and other constituencies were important to the United Nations because of their experience and social connections that could help the Organization work better, improve its legitimacy, identify priorities and connect it with public opinion. They could also raise new issues, focus attention on the moral and ethical dimensions of decisions in the public sphere, expand resources and skills, challenge basic assumptions and priorities and protest unfair decisions. Enhanced engagement, carefully planned, would make the United Nations more effective in its actions and contributions to global governance, empower it, and increase its relevance to the issues of our times. The Panel established four paradigm shifts to guide the United Nations in strengthening its relations with civil society and other constituencies: becoming an outward-looking organization; embracing a plurality of constituencies; connecting the local with the global; and helping to reshape democracy for the twenty-first century.

The Panel made 30 proposals for reform in several areas. It proposed the creation of global policy networks of Government and others sharing specific concerns to promote global debate and/or pilot activities to combat problems directly, and that the United Nations be more proactive in bringing together all constituencies relevant to global issues and galvanize appropriate networks for effective results. In that regard, the Assembly should include civil society more regularly in its affairs, and public hearings involving a full range of relevant constituencies could be used for reviving progress on agreed global goals. Other proposed reforms concerned the need to invest more in partnerships, including the establishment by the Secretary-General of a Partnership Development Unit and the identification of partnership focal points throughout all UN organs and agencies. At the country level, the United Nations Development Group should ensure that all constituencies contributed to the goals of the United Nations by, among other actions, enhancing the capacity of UN resident coordinators’ offices to identify, convene and broker partnerships to meet the main challenges and build consensus on country-specific goals. The Security Council should be enabled to draw from the experience of civil society organizations, and discuss with elected representatives issues of emerging importance, and convene independent commissions of inquiry after Council-mandated operations. The United Nations should encourage national parliaments to debate major matters on its agendas, and the Secretary-General should form an Elected Representatives Liaison Unit to provide information to parliaments and help create more effective opportunities for parliamentarians to take part in UN forums. The United Nations should streamline and depoliticize accreditation and access issues, including widening the access of civil society organizations beyond Economic and Social Council forums, and create a single UN accreditation process. The review of applications for accreditation should be shifted to the Secretariat and an accreditation unit established within DGACM to advise an Assembly Com-
mittee, which would decide on accreditation. The Secretary-General should initiate a review on UN accreditation, based on which proposals would be made to the Assembly for revising accreditation categories. The Secretary-General should appoint an Under-Secretary-General in charge of the new Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships, which would be responsible for formulating and implementing the UN strategy for engagement with constituencies. It would comprise a Civil Society Unit, which would absorb the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships; the Elected Representative Liaison Service; a Partnership Development Unit to absorb the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships; the Elected Representative Liaison Unit; the Global Compact Office; and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues. The Secretary-General should appoint 30 to 40 constituency engagement specialists in the offices of resident coordinators, and make redressing North-South imbalances a priority in enhancing UN-civil society relations. The United Nations should establish a fund to enhance the capacity of civil society in developing countries to engage in UN processes and partnerships.

Report of Secretary-General. In a September report [A/59/354], the Secretary-General commended the Panel’s recommendations to the General Assembly for consideration. He welcomed the majority of those recommendations, which he supplemented with several of his own. In terms of increasing the participation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in intergovernmental bodies, the Secretary-General proposed the convening of a two-day, informal, interactive hearing with them prior to the opening of the Assembly each year, beginning on a trial basis at the Assembly’s sixtieth (2005) session, to coincide with the 10-year review of the MDGs [YUN 2000, p. 51]. The Security Council could adopt the practice of conducting an assessment, with NGO participation, following completion of each peace mission, while reserving the Panel’s proposal for an independent commission of inquiry after Council-mandated operations for special cases. The Assembly could recommend, organize or support meetings of parliamentarians at the national, regional or global levels in 2006 to provide input to the meeting to review the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (see p. 1216). The Secretary-General said that he would create a single trust fund to support NGO participation in intergovernmental meetings, subsuming existing funds into it, and develop a detailed cost plan for administering it. He encouraged Member States to contribute to the fund. The Secretary-General said that there was not much merit in consolidating the various UN accreditation processes or the structures for handling them. However, the Assembly could assume responsibility for a single accreditation system, with the General Committee being charged with that responsibility. The Secretary-General promised to review Secretariat experiences with NGOs in tandem with the Panel’s proposals, with a view to determining how best to intensify dialogue with them. He would also establish a trust fund to enhance NGO capacity at the country level and to finance additional capacity in the office of the resident coordinator.

The Secretary-General did not agree with the Panel’s proposal to incorporate the secretariat of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues into the new Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships.

By decision 59/552 of 23 December, the Assembly decided that the item on strengthening of the UN system would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session.

High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change

The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, in its report transmitted by the Secretary-General in December [A/59/565 & Corr.1] (see p. 54), discussed, among other proposals for strengthening the Organization, institutional reform for a more effective United Nations in the twenty-first century. The Panel looked at the institutional weaknesses in current responses to threats in the functioning of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the arrangements for addressing countries under stress, as well as the economic and social threats to international security, and to a legitimacy deficit regarding the functioning of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Panel recommended reform initiatives for addressing those weaknesses. It proposed that Member States renew efforts to enable the Assembly to function as the main deliberative organ, including better conceptionalization and shortening of its agenda, smaller and more tightly focused committees to sharpen and improve resolutions, and the establishment of a better mechanism to enable systematic engagement with civil society. A decision on the enlargement of the Council was a necessity based on the membership models proposed: model A provided for six new permanent seats with no new veto and three new two-year term non-permanent seats, divided among regional areas; while model B provided for no new permanent seats, but created a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year non-permanent (non-renewable seat), divided among major re-
regional areas. The Panel also recommended that the composition of the Council should be reviewed in 2020, there should be no expansion of the veto, and introduction of a system of “indicative voting” (public indication of positions on a proposed action) should be introduced. Proposals were also made for strengthening the Council’s relations with regional organizations. The Panel recommended that the Economic and Social Council establish a Committee on the Social and Economic Aspects of Security Threats and provide a regular venue for engaging the development community at the highest level by transforming itself into a “development cooperation forum”. To that end, it should create an executive committee to provide orientation and direction.

Regarding reform of the Secretariat, the Panel recommended strengthening support for the Secretary-General, primarily through the establishment of an additional Deputy Secretary-General position responsible for peace and security. The Secretary-General should also be provided with the requisite resources to do his job effectively. In that regard, Member States should commit themselves to articles 100 and 101 of the Charter relating to the duties of the Secretary-General and increase his flexibility in managing the staff, subject to his accountability to the Assembly. The Secretary-General’s 1997 [YUN 1997, p.1389] and 2002 [YUN 2002, p.1352] reform proposals should be fully implemented, and there should be a one-time review and replacement of personnel, including through early retirement, to ensure that the Secretariat was staffed with the right people to undertake the task at hand. In addition, the Secretary-General should be provided with 60 posts for the purpose of increasing the Secretariat’s capacity as proposed in the report. In addition to any amendment of Article 23 of the UN Charter required by the proposed reform of the Security Council, the Panel suggested that articles 53 and 107 referring to “enemy States” should be revised; and Chapter XIII (the Trusteehip Council) should be deleted, as well as article 47 (the Military Staff Committee) and all references to it in Articles 26, 45 and 46.

Implementation of the Millennium Declaration

Report of Secretary-General. In his August report [A/59/292 & Corr.1] on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration [YUN 2000, p. 49], the Secretary-General reviewed progress made and the results achieved by the UN system and by Member States in peace and security, especially in the areas of peacekeeping and curbing transnational crime, meeting the MDGs and protecting the vulnerable.

In the area of security, the Secretary-General reported that, since his last report, UN peace operations had achieved significant success in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Georgia, the Kosovo province of Serbia and Montenegro and Sierra Leone. However, 2004 saw the establishment of new missions in Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire and Haiti in the space of six months and planning for new or expanded operations in Iraq and the Sudan. That surge in demand for peacekeeping went beyond the needs envisaged in the reforms and the capacities that had been built. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was addressing the new challenges, but critical gaps remained and further reforms were required. Careful political management and coordination were called for since each new or planned mission was complex and multidimensional.

Across the globe, the growth of transnational criminal activity was having a significant impact on peace and development, prospects for economic growth, human rights, democracy and good governance. The nature of criminal organizations involved in such activities, with the associated problems of corruption and linkages to terrorism, constituted one of the key security challenges facing the global community. The increasingly global nature of organized crime required a global response, of which the key instrument was the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocols, which came into force in 2003 [YUN 2003, p. 1125]. Similarly, the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 58/4 [ibid., p. 1127], was a significant achievement. In April 2004, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination endorsed immediate and medium-term measures to ensure more effective action against organized crime in sectors where UN agencies were active.

In the area of development, in the four years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the eight MDGs derived from it had transformed global development cooperation, generating unprecedented, coordinated action within the UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund), the wider donor community and developing countries themselves. The commitment of Governments to the MDGs and their integration into national and international development strategies, policies and actions were expected to produce improved development results. Data available as at 2002 suggested that
developing countries fell into three broad groups in terms of their progress towards meeting the MDGs: those in Asia and Northern Africa, which were largely on track to meeting the targets of halving extreme poverty by 2015 and achieving many of the social targets; those, mainly in West Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, which were making good progress towards some individual goals, such as universal primary education, but were less successful in reducing poverty; and those, largely comprising countries in sub-Saharan Africa and least developed countries in other regions, which were far from making adequate progress on most of the goals.

In protecting the vulnerable, the report noted that the consequences of disasters resulting from environmental hazards continued to fall disproportionately on the world’s poor, and trends suggested that the frequency of and vulnerability to such hazards would only get worse, with significant implications for humanitarian and development actors. Vulnerability to conflict continued to be widespread also, as prolonged violence significantly altered political, social and economic relations, with immediate and long-term implications. Some progress was made in strengthening support and protecting the internally displaced and ensuring more focused planning and funding of post-crisis transition, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, much more needed to be done by the international community to harmonize transition planning and fundraising, bring coherence to needs assessment and build local institutions.

The Secretary-General observed that, in order to succeed, the United Nations required a range of key inputs, including vision and political support, adequate financing, staff of the highest calibre, adequate security and institutional agility to adapt to changing circumstances in the world. The institutional arrangements required to achieve the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration also had to be agile. As the primary actors and stakeholders in the international system, Member States would have to be flexible in their own approaches. While major headway had been made on reform and revitalization in recent years, adaptation was a constant process as new realities called for new solutions in terms of mechanisms and processes.

Review of the Millennium Declaration (2005)

High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly

On 6 May [meeting 86], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/291 [draft: A/58/L.8/Rev.1] without vote [agenda items 50 & 60].

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

The General Assembly,
Recalling its resolutions 57/144 of 16 December 2002 on follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and 57/270 A of 20 December 2002 and 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields,

1. Decides to convene in New York in 2005, at the commencement of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, a high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly with the participation of heads of State and Government, on dates to be decided by the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

2. Also decides that this major event will undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnership required for their achievement, and of the progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, on the basis of a comprehensive report to be submitted by the Secretary-General;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on suggested modalities, format and organization of this major event for consideration and a final decision by the Assembly, taking into account the open-ended consultations to be carried out by the President of the Assembly.

CEB consideration. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB), at its second regular session (New York, 29-30 October) [CEB/2004/2], discussed the 2005 comprehensive review of follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, particularly the UN system response. CEB discussed the themes and messages that should be given prominence in the Secretary-General’s report for the high-level meeting scheduled for 2005, focusing on the progress made in implementing the Millennium Declaration, the key conditions to be highlighted for future progress and how the report might best convey UN system contributions in implementing the Declaration.

CEB also considered the reports of its High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) on its seventh (Beirut, Lebanon, 26-27 February) [CEB/2004/4], inter-sessional (Frascati, Italy, 31 May-1 June) [CEB/2004/5] and eighth (Florence, Italy, 15-17 September) [CEB/2004/7] sessions regarding its preparatory work for the 2005 comprehensive review. HLCP focused on articulating UN system contributions in implementing the Declaration, to be presented as an “accountability report”. a
draft of which was annexed to the report of its eighth session. CEB invited the Committee to continue its work on the report and to pursue a related proposal by the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization for renewing the role of the UN in the field of economic development as a means of advancing the achievement of the MDGs.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 58/291 (see above), the Secretary-General submitted a November report [A/59/545] on the modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly—a summit—to be held at the commencement of its sixtieth (2005) session. The report made suggestions regarding the duration, participation and preparatory process for the meeting, which the Secretary-General observed would be an event of decisive importance, given that the decisions taken there might determine the Organization’s future. He urged Member States to take an active and positive interest in the issues before the summit, and to prepare for it at the highest level.

In a 16 December statement on programme budget implications [A/C.5/59/25], the Secretary-General informed the Assembly that the planned high-level plenary meeting would give rise to additional requirements estimated at $1,060,700 under the 2004-2005 programme budget, to be charged against the contingency fund and, as such, would require a related increase in appropriations for that biennium. Efforts would be made to absorb the $317,100 for the change in venue of the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council from Geneva to New York.

Report of ACABQ. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in its report of the same date, [A/59/631], recommended that every effort be made to absorb the amount requested and that the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee inform the Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution [A/59/L.53], no additional appropriation would arise at that time, pending the submission of the second performance report on the 2004-2005 programme budget.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 73], the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/145 [draft: A/59/L.53] without vote [agenda items 44 & 55].

Modalities, format and organization of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly

The General Assembly

Recalling its resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004 by which it decided to convene in New York in 2005, at the commencement of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, a high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly with the participation of Heads of State and Government, on dates to be decided by the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session,

Recalling that in its resolution 58/291 it also decided that the High-level Plenary Meeting would undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnership required for their achievement, and of the progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, on the basis of a comprehensive report to be submitted by the Secretary-General,

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly” requested in its resolution 58/291 and following informal consultations convened by the President of the General Assembly,

Convincing that the High-level Plenary Meeting will constitute a significant event,

1. Decides that the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly shall be held from 14 to 16 September 2005 in New York;

2. Reiterates that the High-level Plenary Meeting will be held with the participation of Heads of State and Government, and encourages all Member States to be represented at that level;

3. Decides that the High-level Plenary Meeting will be composed of six plenary meetings, on the basis of two meetings a day, and four interactive round-table sessions, and also that each round-table session will cover the entire agenda of the High-level Plenary Meeting and will be held in concurrence with a plenary meeting;

4. Decides also to hold the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development on 27 and 28 June 2005 in New York immediately prior to the high-level segment of the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in order for the recommendations of the High-level Dialogue to be considered in the preparatory process for the High-level Plenary Meeting and also decides to hold a separate meeting on Financing for Development within the framework of the High-level Plenary Meeting;

5. Decides further to change the venue of the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council from Geneva to New York on an exceptional basis and that the venue for the 2006 and 2007 substantive sessions of the Council shall be Geneva in order to resume the alternation in 2008, as established by the General Assembly;

6. Decides to hold the general debate at its sixtieth session from Saturday, 17 September, to Friday, 23 September, and from Monday, 26 September, to Wednesday, 28 September 2005, on the understanding that these arrangements shall in no way create a precedent for the general debate at future sessions;

7. Notes that, prior to the High-level Plenary Meeting, the second World Conference of Speakers of Par-
lament will be convened from 7 to 9 September 2005 at United Nations Headquarters;

8. Requests the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with representatives of non-governmental organizations, to organize informal interactive hearings in June 2005 in New York with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, as an input to the preparatory process of the High-level Plenary Meeting;

9. Looks forward to the comprehensive report requested in its resolution 58/291, which the Secretary-General will submit in March 2005 and which will serve as the basis for the consultations leading to the High-level Plenary Meeting;

10. Strongly urges all Member States to take a positive interest in the process of formal and informal consultations leading to the High-level Plenary Meeting and to engage actively, at the highest level of government, with a view to reaching a successful outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting;

11. Requests the President of the General Assembly to continue to hold consultations with all Member States in an open-ended manner, with a view to taking decisions on all process-related outstanding issues of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

On 23 December, the Assembly decided that the item on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session (Decision 59/552).

Managerial reform and oversight

Procurement

JIU report. During the year, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reviewed procurement practices within the UN system [JIU/REP/2004/9 & Corr.1] to identify opportunities for increasing procurement efficiency in the common system, through productivity enhancement, improved cooperation and coordination and technological innovations. The review, which focused on the cost-effectiveness of common system organizations’ procurement services, provided an overview of procurement operations in 2002, particularly the aggregate procurement value and trends, the distribution of procurement activities, procurement expenditures, geographic distribution, procurement from programme countries, common and specialized items, and major clients. Also examined were issues relating to the training of procurement staff; cooperation and coordination among common system organizations, including on the question of policy and related mechanisms; electronic procurement (e-procurement); and capacity-building in public procurement, particularly in recipient client countries.

JIU found that the procurement function had evolved over the previous ten years from a relatively obscure administrative activity to a financially high-profile and high-risk function, accounting in 2002 for about $4.6 billion or 37 per cent of the organizations’ combined regular and extrabudgetary resources. However, while procurement operations at Headquarters had been streamlined under a reform programme [YUN 1996, p. 1381] mandated and guided by the General Assembly in resolutions 49/216 C [YUN 1994, p. 1369] and 51/231 [YUN 1997, p. 1395], such reform measures were yet to filter down to other major duty stations, including field offices and to the collective membership of the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group (IAPWG)—the only inter-agency procurement forum involving virtually all common system organizations. JIU concluded that IAPWG had not done enough to research and develop procurement performance benchmarks or efficiency and quality paradigms to guide performance of the procurement function within the UN system, with special attention on related facilities and practices at field level. In addition, there was a need for rationalization, particularly the procurement of common user items, and increased outsourcing of procurement tasks among organizations as a means for reducing overlap and competition within the procurement community. Other shortcomings included the inadequacy of financial resources devoted to the training of procurement staff; the lack of central policy guidance in procurement; and major constraints that undermined the potential benefits of e-procurement.

JIU recommended that the Secretary-General continue to evaluate the results achieved by the Procurement Working Group of the Task Force on Common Services at Headquarters and other locations, including its findings on procurement performance benchmarks and other best practices resulting from procurement reforms, and that the evaluation report be discussed by the High-level Committee on Management of CEB and by IAPWG, which should, in turn, adopt recommendations for the procurement community. IAPWG should adopt and implement the concept of lead agency and promote a division of labour among common system organizations and at the further rationalization of procurement practices by its members. Other recommendations advocated the establishment of a unified system of reporting and accountability for procurement services of the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Telecommunications Union and the Universal Postal Union; staff training in the legal aspects of procurement; increasing procurement training budgets and related training initiatives; expanding training in e-procurement; the development of e-procurement...
solutions; the provision of procurement manuals in the working languages of common system organizations and the development of a generic system-wide policy and procedures manual; and formalizing the mandate of the inter-agency cooperation and coordination role of IAPWG and requiring it to report annually and to make action-oriented proposals on continuous improvements in the management, performance measurement and coordination of procurement services. In addition, JIU recommended further strengthening the procurement reform at Headquarters, through the establishment of a central procurement facility by 2010 to provide a frame of reference for similar streamlining of procurement services at other duty stations; avoiding overlap between the United Nations Office for Project Services procurement service and the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office, including the option of merging the two entities; and capacity-building in public procurement agencies in recipient developing countries to strengthen their ability to participate in procurement.

**Report of Secretary-General.** In response to General Assembly resolution 57/270 [YUN 2002, p. 1358], the Secretary-General, in an August report (A/59/216), described the progress made since his 2002 report (YUN 2002, p. 1357) in procurement reform, in the areas of procurement opportunities for vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, harmonization of the procurement process, the operation of air transportation service, audit observations, field procurement, efficiency in procurement, procurement training, vendor management, contract award and the work of the Committee on Rules of Origin. Annexed to the report were procurement statistics covering 1999 to 2003 and country procurement value by procurement division and local peacekeeping mission in 2002 and 2003, respectively.

The Secretary-General reported that the Secretariat had strengthened its cooperation with other UN system organizations through IAPWG and the Common Services Procurement Working Group. A newly designed web-based vendor registration system, designated the United Nations Global Marketplace, was launched in February to help harmonize the procurement process by simplifying the registration component. In terms of vendor management, IAPWG agreed that in future, different organizations would take the lead in evaluating and pre-qualifying vendors: the United Nations would take the lead in air charter services, information technology and communication goods and services; the United Nations Population Fund, in reproductive health items; the United Nations Children’s Fund and the World Health Organization, in medical items and pharmaceuticals; and the World Food Programme and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in basic food commodities. That would eliminate administrative duplication and make the registration process more efficient and timely. The UN Secretariat and other system organizations created a standing working group to coordinate activities related to business seminars, including the development of guidelines, the prioritization of requests and the operation of representation in an effort to further promote procurement opportunities for vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Secretariat’s Procurement Division revised the Procurement Manual. In terms of developing a code of conduct for procurement staff, the Secretariat had developed ethical guidelines, which the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group agreed, in May, would be used by UN organizations to develop common guidelines for all. To improve the efficiency of the procurement decision-making process, the Secretariat further developed a system, known as the eHCC system, to process presentations to the Headquarters Committee on Contracts electronically. That would allow peacekeeping missions to submit local procurement cases to be reviewed by Headquarters directly to the Procurement Division for immediate review and processing. The Division also introduced electronic procurement data monitoring tools, a requisition tracking system and a workload monitoring system.

The Secretary-General concluded that the report demonstrated the Secretariat’s commitments and collaborative efforts to increase transparency, fairness and responsiveness in the procurement process, as well as to enlist the collaboration and support of other common system organizations in developing a harmonized approach for improving efficiency in the procurement practices of the entire UN system.

**ACABQ report.** ACABQ, in an October report (A/59/540), acknowledged the Secretariat’s efforts to promote procurement from developing countries, particularly through seminars. It encouraged the exploration of other avenues, including an analysis of the current approach to seminars, in order to make them more results-oriented, and recommended that follow-up mechanisms be considered. ACABQ welcomed initiatives developed to improve efficiency, including the review of vendor management and implementation of related recommendations. On the question of accountability, the Advisory Committee requested that related information be provided in the Secretary-General’s next report and rec-
ommended that weaknesses in the procurement process identified by the Board of Auditors be addressed. Concerning the training of field procurement staff, ACABQ was of the opinion that training programmes should focus on a train-the-trainers approach, through which large numbers of junior personnel could be trained in a more cost-effective and efficient way. It recalled that it had drawn attention in its 2003 report [YUN 2003, p. 82] to the need to monitor and evaluate training needs in that regard.

Oversight activities

Internal oversight

At its resumed fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly had before it the OIOS report on its activities for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 [YUN 2003, p. 1386]. By decision 58/564 B of 8 April, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the report until its fifty-ninth (2004) session.

The Assembly also had before it OIOS reports on the evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of DPKO (see p. 102); the follow-up review of the status of OIOS recommendations on mission liquidation activities at the United Nations [YUN 2003, p. 94]; the administration of Peacekeeping trust funds [ibid, p. 90]; and the investigation into the fraudulent diversion of $4.3 million by a senior staff member of the reconstruction pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo [ibid., p. 427].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 June [meeting 91], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee [A/58/582/Add.2], adopted resolution 58/299 without vote [agenda item 134].

Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

The General Assembly,


Having considered the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the follow-up review of the status of recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on mission liquidation activities at the United Nations, the administration of peacekeeping trust funds, and the investigation into the fraudulent diversion of 4.3 million United States dollars by a senior staff member of the reconstruction pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo,

1. Takes note of the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the follow-up review of the status of recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on mission liquidation activities at the United Nations, the administration of peacekeeping trust funds, and the investigation into the fraudulent diversion of 4.3 million dollars by a senior staff member of the reconstruction pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo;

2. Decides to revert to the consideration of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the policies and procedures for recruiting staff for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, during its fifty-ninth session, in the context of its consideration of the items entitled “Human resources management” and “Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations”;

3. Notes that the Board of Auditors will act upon General Assembly resolution 57/318 of 18 June 2003 once it has considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and assessed what additional evaluation it might provide, and also notes that the General Assembly may revert at that time to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

At its fifty-ninth session, the Assembly continued consideration of the reports of OIOS on its activities for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 [YUN 2003, p. 1386] and on the review of the structure and operations of the United Nations Information Centres [ibid., p. 636]. It also had before it the OIOS report on its audit of regional commissions (see p. 992).

OIOS activities. In October, the Secretary-General transmitted the tenth annual report of OIOS covering its activities from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 [A/59/339]. During the reporting period, OIOS issued several reports, which the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly. Those issued in 2004, in addition to its report on its own activities, were on: the review of the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia [A/58/677]; audit of the policies and procedures for recruiting DPKO staff [A/58/704]; strengthening the investigation functions in the United Nations [A/58/708]; evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of DPKO [A/58/746]; the implementation of the recommendations of OIOS on the Investment Management Service of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund [A/58/725]; audit of the regional commissions [A/58/785]; programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 2002-2003 [A/59/69]; strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives [A/59/70]; integration of global management of conference services [A/59/133 & Corr.1];

The report highlighted the oversight results for various high-risk areas, which were the outcome of audits, evaluation, inspection, investigation and management consulting activities undertaken to mitigate the risks identified. In that context, the report provided the definitions of risk and risk management and described the OIOS planning process. The caseload for investigation continued to rise during the reporting period, and the consequent backlog of cases in the Investigations Division presented a risk in terms of the ability of the Office to provide adequate professional investigative services to the Organization.

Between November 2003 and June 2004, OIOS conducted an Office-wide review of its activities to assist the General Assembly in its five-year evaluation and review of the Office, in accordance with resolution 54/244 [YUN 1999, p. 1274]. The review indicated that OIOS achievements and strengths derived from its operational independence, reporting procedures and functions (audit, monitoring/evaluation/consulting and investigations) and the risk mitigation component of its strategy for internal oversight. One of the most important findings of the review was the value that client departments placed on ongoing dialogue with OIOS on constructive teamwork in the common quest for good governance of the Organization. The review enabled OIOS to identify lessons learned and best practices aimed at improving its internal management, make proposals for enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness, and assist the Organization in addressing the opportunities and risks it faced.

### Appointment of Under-Secretary-General

The Assembly, by decision 59/552 of 23 December, decided that the item on the appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services remained for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 23 December [meeting 76], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/59/648], adopted two resolutions related to the activities of OIOS. The Assembly adopted resolution 59/270 without vote [agenda item 18].

### Reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and 54/284 of 23 December 1999,

Recalling also its resolutions 56/246 of 24 December 2001 and 58/101 B of 9 December 2003,
Having considered the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the period 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 and the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of the structure and operations of United Nations information centres,

1. Notes with appreciation the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services;
2. Takes note of the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office of Internal Oversight Services continues to provide internal oversight of the entire claims process of the United Nations Compensation Commission and to report regularly thereon in the context of the annual reports of the Office;
4. Recalls regulation 1.2 of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, and requests the Secretary-General to provide information to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session in the context of its consideration of matters relating to procurement reform on actions taken to prevent recurrence of incidents of possible conflict of interest and inappropriate procurement practices;
5. Notes the description of the mission of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as outlined in its annual report, and in this regard stresses that the mission of the Office should be in full conformity with its mandate, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/218 B;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees develops and utilizes comprehensive policy guidelines for the selection and management of consultants to ensure transparency and objectivity in their engagement, monitoring and evaluation as well as to make greater efforts to ensure a geographical balance in the use of qualified consultants, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-first session;
7. Endorses the relevant recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services regarding improvement of internal controls in management, accounting and reporting of assets of all United Nations field missions to establish reliable records, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure their full implementation and to report thereon to the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixtieth session;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to codify appropriate procedures for the purchase and utilization of vehicles and other equipment by United Nations field missions to ensure compliance by all missions with the procedures and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its second part of its resumed sixtieth session;
9. Notes with concern the contents of paragraph 97 of the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the management and control of United Nations laissez-passer, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure the development of appropriate Organization-wide rules, policies and procedures for managing laissez-passer and to report thereon to the General Assembly, as appropriate;

The Assembly adopted resolution 59/271 without vote [agenda item 118].

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

The General Assembly,
Recalling its resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and 54/244 of 23 December 1999,
Having considered the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004,

1. Notes with appreciation the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services;
2. Takes note of the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services;
3. Notes the description of the mission of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as outlined in its annual report, and in this regard stresses that the mission of the Office should be in full conformity with its mandate, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/218 B;
4. Notes also the information provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the economies and savings generated by its recommendations, and requests the Office to explain its guidelines for measuring the impact of such economies and/or savings and to report to the General Assembly thereon in its next annual report;
5. Requests the Secretary-General, with regard to paragraph 53 of the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, to ensure strict conformity with the highest standards of quality when recruiting staff to fill language posts, in accordance with legislative mandates;
6. Notes with concern the findings of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on investigations, as reflected in paragraphs 42 to 47 of its annual report, as well as the fact that some of them reflect serious managerial problems and lack of control;
7. Stresses, in this regard, the crucial importance of establishing an effective and efficient system of accountability throughout the Secretariat in order to prevent such problems and to make programme managers accountable;
8. Takes note of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on its audit of the regional commissions, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the actions taken by the legislative bodies of the regional commissions with regard to the recommendations of the report;
9. Takes note also of paragraph 65 of the annual report, relating to the audit of the non-governmental organization accreditation process;
10. Reiterates, in the context of paragraphs 8 and 9 above, paragraph 8 of its resolution 54/244, in which it emphasized that the approval, change and discontinuation of legislative mandates are the exclusive prerogatives of intergovernmental legislative bodies;
11. Concurs with the observation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in paragraph 55 of its annual report, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office continues to provide internal oversight of the entire claims process of the United Nations Compensation Commission and to report regularly thereon in the context of the annual reports of the Office.
On the same date, the Assembly decided that the item on the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session (decision 59/552).

OIOS reporting procedures

On 23 December [meeting 76], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/59/649], adopted resolution 59/272 without vote [agenda item 19].

Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B and 54/244

The General Assembly,
Recalling its resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and 54/244 of 23 December 1999,
1. Decides to maintain the reporting procedures for the Office of Internal Oversight Services in full compliance with its resolutions 48/218 B and 54/244, and in this context requests the Secretary-General to ensure that:
   (a) Annual reports submitted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the General Assembly contain the titles and brief summaries of all reports of the Office issued during the year;
   (b) Semi-annual reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services contain the titles and brief summaries of all other reports of the Office issued in the reporting period;
   (c) Original versions of the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services not submitted to the General Assembly are, upon request, made available to any Member State;
2. Also decides that when access to a report would be inappropriate for reasons of confidentiality or the risk of violating the due process rights of individuals involved in Office of Internal Oversight Services investigations, the report may be modified, or withheld in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, into the executive management committee of the Board of Auditors, into the executive management committee of the Joint Inspection Unit as external oversight bodies, and, in this regard, affirms that any external review, audit, inspection, monitoring, evaluation or investigation of the Office can be undertaken only by such bodies or those mandated to do so by the General Assembly;
3. Further decides that reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services shall be submitted directly to the General Assembly as submitted by the Office and that the comments of the Secretary-General may be submitted in a separate report;
4. Affirms its primary role in the consideration of and action taken on the reports submitted to it;
5. Notes that no mechanism has been established for the follow-up to Office of Internal Oversight Services recommendations, including those considered by the General Assembly;
6. Emphasizes the importance of establishing real, effective and efficient mechanisms for responsibility and accountability;
7. Regrets that despite previous information provided by the Secretary-General on the establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the accountability panel, such mechanisms are not in place, thereby affecting the efficient and effective functioning of the Organization;
8. Takes note of paragraph 129 (b) of the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and concurs with the view that a high-level follow-up mechanism under the authority of the Secretary-General should be established in the Organization to effectively feed findings and recommendations of the Office, as well as relevant findings of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Board of Auditors, into the executive management processes;
9. Requests the Secretary-General to submit annually to the General Assembly a report under the agenda item entitled “Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations” addressing the measures implemented with the aim of strengthening accountability in the Secretariat and the results achieved;
10. Also requests the Secretary-General to establish the aforementioned follow-up mechanism as soon as possible and to report to the General Assembly on the results achieved in the context of the mechanism referred to in paragraph 9 above, with specific reference to:
   (a) The composition of such a mechanism, including the seniority of the Chair and members;
   (b) Terms of reference of the mechanism and frequency of its meetings;
   (c) The inclusion in the mechanism of one or more participants with relevant expertise from United Nations-system oversight bodies;
   (d) Reporting procedures;
11. Reaffirms the role of the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit as external oversight bodies, and, in this regard, affirms that any external review, audit, inspection, monitoring, evaluation or investigation of the Office can be undertaken only by such bodies or those mandated to do so by the General Assembly;
12. Also reaffirms the importance of effective coordination, in the implementation of their respective mandates, between the Joint Inspection Unit, the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, in order to maximize the use of resources and share experiences, knowledge, best practices and lessons learned;
13. Stresses the vital importance of the evaluation function of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and requests the Secretary-General to better reflect the objectives, expected accomplishments and performance indicators related to this function in future biennial programmes and budgetary submissions of the Office;
14. Reaffirms its oversight role as well as the role of the Fifth Committee in administrative and budgetary matters;
15. Notes paragraph 129 (a) of the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and in this context requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, taking into account the views of external oversight bodies, on how to guarantee the full operational independence of the Office within the context of its resolution 48/218 B;
16. Decides to evaluate and review at its sixty-fourth session the functions and reporting procedures of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and any other matter which it deems appropriate, and to that end to include in the provisional agenda of that session an item entitled “Review of the implementation of Gen-
eral Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272.

Also on 23 December, the Assembly decided that the item on review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B [YUN 1994, p. 1362] and 54/244 [YUN 1999, p. 1274] would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session (decision 59/552).

Strengthening the investigations function

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/282 [YUN 2002, p. 1993], the Secretary-General, by a February note [A/58/708], transmitted a report of OIOS on strengthening the investigation function in the United Nations. OIOS reviewed 59 UN departments, offices, funds, programmes and missions to obtain information that would permit an assessment of the nature and extent of investigations conducted in 2002, the role played by management, whether guidelines existed and were followed, and the nature of any training. The review sought to determine whether programme managers involved in investigative processes retained the requisite independence in their administrative and managerial functions, had been given sufficient and proper investigative training and had used appropriate written procedures for investigations.

OIOS found, among other things, that: few investigations were done despite the yearly increase in serious matters reported by the offices reviewed; none of the offices reported having had any formal training programmes other than those provided by OIOS; and written procedures were not common, even though guidelines had been developed by OIOS and formally endorsed by UN system oversight offices. OIOS reaffirmed the importance of the 2001 JIU recommendations [ibid.] and 2002 [ibid. & A/58/345/Add/2] and the Secretary-General’s 2003 report on the status of implementation of JIU recommendations [ibid.].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 8 April [meeting 83], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/58/734], adopted resolution 58/286 without vote [agenda item 129].

Joint Inspection Unit

The General Assembly

Reaffirming its previous resolutions on the Joint Inspection Unit, in particular resolutions 50/233 of 7 June 1996, 54/16 of 29 October 1999, 55/290 of 25 December 2000, 56/245 of 24 December 2001 and 57/284 A and B of 20 December 2002,

Having considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2002, the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the programme of work of the Unit for 2003, the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the preliminary listing of reports for potential inclusion in the programme of work of the Unit for 2004 and beyond, the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit, the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Unit on the preliminary review of its statute and working methods and notes by the Secretary-General

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2002;
2. Takes note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the programme of work of the Unit for 2003;
3. Also takes note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the preliminary listing of reports for potential inclusion in the programme of work of the Unit for 2004 and beyond;
4. Further takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit;
5. Takes note with appreciation of the active contribution of the Joint Inspection Unit to the review of its statute and working methods;  
6. Welcomes the internal reform process undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit, including its strategic framework and its internal working procedures, and urges the Unit to continue these efforts;  
7. Requests the secretariats of the United Nations and all participating organizations to facilitate the work of the Unit, including in particular by offering full access to all information, as required by the Unit;  
8. Reiterates once again its request to the executive heads of the participating organizations that have not yet done so to take the steps necessary to facilitate the consideration of and action on the system of follow-up to the reports of the Unit, and invites the legislative organs concerned to consider the system and take action in that regard;  
9. Decides to revert to the issue of the reform of the Joint Inspection Unit at its fifty-ninth session.

JIU activities. In its annual report to the General Assembly [A/59/34], the Joint Inspection Unit [JIU] gave an overview of its activities in 2004, during which it issued reports on: multilingualism and access to information: case study on the International Civil Aviation Organization [JIU/REP/2004/1]; a review of Headquarters agreements concluded by UN system organizations: human resources issues affecting staff [JIU/REP/2004/2]; administration of justice: harmonization of the statutes of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal [JIU/REP/2004/3]; a review of management and administration in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [JIU/REP/2004/4]; an overview of the series of reports on managing for results in the UN system [JIU/REP/2004/5]; implementation of results-based management in UN organizations [JIU/REP/2004/6], delegation of authority and accountability [JIU/REP/2004/7], and managing performance and contracts [JIU/REP/2004/8]; procurement practices within the UN system [JIU/REP/2004/9]; harmonization of the conditions of travel throughout the UN system [JIU/REP/2004/10]; and knowledge management at the International Labour Organization [JIU/NOTE/2004/1].

During 2004, JIU continued to review its statute and working methods. The progress achieved in that regard was described in a February report [A/58/345/Add.2] to the Assembly. Pending an Assembly decision on some of the proposals outlined in its 2003 reports on the subject [YUN 2003, p. 1588], JIU continued to implement changes in other fields that did not require legislative approval or direction. Among those changes were the adoption of internal working procedures; the development of new mechanisms to implement the strategic framework adopted by JIU in 2003 [ibid.], particularly concerning risk assessment, selecting topics for reports and improving the quality of reports; pilot risk assessment exercises; and the initiation of the peer review process foreseen in the new internal working procedures, through which JIU would exercise collective responsibility for the preparation of reports, notes and confidential letters. The February report was complemented by a September conference room paper [A/C.5/59/CRP.1].

On 22 April [A/59/75], the Secretary-General transmitted to the Assembly the JIU work programme for 2004. On 10 September [A/59/349], he also transmitted information on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in JIU reports on: administration of justice at the United Nations [YUN 2000, p. 1539]; delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the UN Secretariat [ibid., 1550]; results-based budgeting: the experience of UN system organizations [YUN 1999, p. 1284]; and young professionals in selected organizations of the UN system: recruitment, management and retention [YUN 2001, p. 1532].

By a December note [A/59/67], the Secretary-General transmitted a JIU report entitled “Overview of the series of reports on managing for results in the United Nations system”.

Appointment of JIU members. By an April note [A/59/308], the Secretary-General noted that four persons would be needed to fill the vacancies on JIU that would arise as at 31 December 2005.

On 23 December, the Assembly, by decision 59/552, decided that the item on the appointment of members of JIU would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 23 December [meeting 76], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/59/466], adopted resolution 59/267 without vote [agenda item 115].

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

The General Assembly, 
Having considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2003, the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2004 and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit,
Noting with appreciation the recent adoption by the Joint Inspection Unit of internal working procedures
and mechanisms to complement its standards and guidelines, which are aimed at improving the quality and impact of the Unit’s activities.

Recognizes that in order for the Unit to further improve its effectiveness, the provisions of the statute of the Unit should be fully implemented,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2003;

2. Takes note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the programme of work of the Unit for 2004;

3. Also takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit;

4. Decides to discontinue the requirement for the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit;

5. Considers that the implementation in full of the provisions of the statute of the Unit should contribute to the enhancement of its role and an increase in the effectiveness of its activities;

6. Urges Member States requested to propose candidates for membership in the Unit to strictly adhere to the qualifications and experience outlined in article 2, paragraph 1, of the statute;

7. Stresses the importance of ensuring that candidates have experience in at least one of the fields illustrated as follows: oversight, audit, inspection, investigation, evaluation, finance, project evaluation, programme evaluation, human resources management, management, public administration, monitoring and/or programme performance, as well as knowledge of the United Nations system and its role in international relations;

8. Invites the President of the General Assembly to ensure the full implementation of the procedures and mechanisms for reviewing the qualifications of proposed candidates as outlined in article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Unit, including through joint consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as drawing, as appropriate, on relevant expertise from expert and intergovernmental bodies concerned with budgetary and human resources matters, and with consultations with the States concerned, after which the President of the Assembly submits the list of such candidates to the Assembly for appointment;

9. Also invites the President of the General Assembly to review the procedures followed by the Assembly for the appointment of inspectors, with a view to enhancing the efficiency of the application of article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute, bearing in mind the procedures followed for the selection of members of other expert bodies and to report to the Assembly at the first part of its resumed sixty-sixth session for its decision, as appropriate;

10. Reaffirms article 11, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Unit, and requests that the Unit, as a whole, also take responsibility in the exercise of its collective wisdom with regard to all its reports, notes and recommendations, in order to improve the effectiveness of the Unit;

11. Re-emphasizes paragraph 9 of its resolution 56/245;

12. Decides that the Unit shall perform its functions and responsibilities strictly in accordance with the provisions of its statute;

13. Also decides that the programme of work of the Unit shall be collectively approved, providing the rationale for choice as well as the relevance of the envisaged outcome to improving management and methods and promoting greater coordination between organizations;

14. Affirms that, in the implementation of article 18 of the statute of the Unit, the Chair shall be responsible for overseeing the Unit’s programme of work, including, in the event of disagreement, the division of assignments, and for enforcing the internal working procedures of the Unit to ensure, through collective responsibility, the quality of its reports;

15. Welcomes the peer review system established by the Unit, and decides that if, in the opinion of the majority of the inspectors, the report in question does not meet the established quality standards, the Chair shall reflect such views and the reasons therefor in the introduction to the report;

16. Emphasizes the desirability of continuity in the term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair, and calls upon the Unit to bear this in mind in implementing article 18 of the statute, so as to re-elect the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman for overlapping terms, thereby balancing the need for institutional memory and reasonable rotation;

17. Also emphasizes the need to assess resource management from a system-wide perspective, including the contribution of, and coordination between, organizations;

18. Decides that the Unit shall mainly focus on identifying means to improve management and to ensure that optimum use is made of available resources, as stipulated in article 5, paragraphs 1 to 3, of the statute, and to this end the Unit will set out management criteria and methods for assessment of management performance and effectiveness relevant to participating organizations;

19. Also decides that the Unit shall include, in its annual reports, information on implementation and the results achieved by organizations in respect of their follow-up to the recommendations of the Unit, as endorsed by their legislative bodies, and the arrangements put in place by participating organizations for reporting thereon;

20. Further decides that the Unit, as part of its focus on management issues, should assess the development and application in participating organizations of the principle of accountability in its relevant reports;

21. Decides that the Unit shall undertake inspections with a sharp focus on the areas stipulated in article 5, paragraphs 1 to 3, of the statute, bearing in mind paragraphs 18 and 20 above;

22. Invites the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in performing its programmatic, coordination, monitoring and evaluation functions, as contained in its mandate, to consider relevant reports of the Unit;

23. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the staff recruited according to article 19 of the statute fully meet the qualifications and have proven experience in specific areas required to assist the Unit in the
fulfilment of its functions, namely, inspection, investigation and evaluation;
24. \textit{Reaffirms} that the working languages of the General Assembly are those of the Unit, in application of article 51 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly; and also reaffirms that the working languages of the Secretariat of the United Nations are those of the secretariat of the Unit, in application of Assembly resolution 2(1) of 1 February 1946;
25. \textit{Decides} to continue providing translation in all official languages for the reports of the Unit and also to provide interpretation, as necessary, within existing resources;
26. \textit{Reaffirms its request} to the Secretariat and all participating organizations to facilitate the work of the Unit, including, in particular, through offering full access to all relevant information, as required by the Unit;
27. \textit{Also reaffirms its request} to the executive heads of the participating organizations that have not yet done so to take the steps necessary to facilitate the consideration of and action on the system of follow-up to the reports of the Unit, and invites the legislative organs concerned to consider the system and take action in that regard;
28. \textit{Emphasizes} the need to ensure respect for the separate and distinct roles and functions of external and internal oversight mechanisms and also to strengthen the external oversight mechanisms;
29. \textit{Decides} to consider the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution, which are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Unit, at its sixty-first session.

By \textit{decision 59/552} of 23 December, the Assembly decided that the item on the Joint Inspections Unit would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session.

The Assembly, in \textit{section VIII of resolution 59/276} of the same date (see p. 1385), approved the gross budget for JIU for 2005 in the amount of $5,385,700 and to appropriate the amount of $1,712,700 under section 31. Jointly financed administrative activities, for the financing of JIU in 2005.

Intergovernmental machinery

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

At its resumed fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted a text regarding further measures for the revitalization of its work. It also had before it Secretariat notes, submitted in response to resolution 58/216 [YUN 2003, p. 1388], on: options for the rescheduling of the Assembly’s main Committees [A/58/CRP.5]; an illustrative agenda of the Assembly [A/58/CRP.4] and an analysis of its agenda [A/58/CRP.6]; a historical and analytical note on the practices and working methods of the Main Committees [A/58/CRP.7]; and control and limitation of documentation [A/58/CRP.7].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 1 July [meeting 92], the General Assembly adopted \textit{resolution 58/316} [draft A/58/L.66] without vote [agenda item 55].

\textbf{Further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly}

\textbf{The General Assembly,}
Recalling its resolution 58/126 of 19 December 2003 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly,
Recalling also its previous resolutions relating to the revitalization of its work,
1. \textit{Decides to adopt the text contained in the annex to the present resolution;}
2. \textit{Determines to continue with efforts for the revitalization of its work;}
3. \textit{Requests the Secretary-General to report on all aspects of the implementation of resolution 58/126 and the present resolution to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.}

Annex

A. Reordering the work of the General Assembly

1. Recalling section B, paragraph 2, of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/126 of 19 December 2003, and having reviewed the note by the Secretariat entitled “Options for the rescheduling of the Main Committees of the General Assembly”, it is decided that:
   (a) The consideration of the implementation of paragraph 2 of section B of the annex to resolution 58/126 shall be deferred until its fifty-ninth session, taking into account the views expressed as well as the suggestions made by Member States in the context of the deliberations of the open-ended meetings of the General Committee during the fifty-eighth session;
   (b) With effect from the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the meetings of the plenary Assembly shall normally be held on Mondays and Thursdays.

B. Organization of the agenda of the General Assembly

2. Recalling section B, paragraph 4, of the annex to resolution 58/126, and having reviewed the note by the Secretariat entitled “Illustrative agenda of the General Assembly”, and taking into account the views expressed by Member States on the matter, it is decided that:
   (a) Pursuant to paragraph 4 of section B of the annex to resolution 58/126, the agenda of the General Assembly shall be organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the Organization, as contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (or in the strategic framework, as appropriate), with an additional heading for “Organizational, administrative and other matters” for the purpose of giving a sense of structure to the work of the Assembly, achieving a better presentation of the issues and challenges with which the Assembly deals and making the work of the Assembly more accessible, with the understanding that the new arrangement will not prejudice the way in which the work of the Assembly is organized and carried out;
(b) The headings of the agenda shall consequently be:
(i) Maintenance of international peace and security;
(ii) Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences;
(iii) Development of Africa;
(iv) Promotion of human rights;
(v) Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts;
(vi) Promotion of justice and international law;
(vii) Disarmament;
(viii) Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations;
(ix) Organizational, administrative and other matters;
(c) The General Committee shall make recommendations, after consultation with Member States, to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the placement of the agenda items for the fifty-ninth session under the headings set out above, with a view to making the new arrangement effective;
(d) The provisions of the present section shall be reviewed by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session with a view to making further improvements, as appropriate.

C. Practices and working methods of the Main Committees

3. Recalling section B, paragraph 8, of the annex to resolution 58/126, having reviewed the note by the Secretariat entitled “Analysis of the agenda of the General Assembly”, which provides factual information on the frequency of consideration, origin and history of action on the 333 items and sub-items on the agenda, taking into account the views expressed by Member States, and following consultations with concerned Member States, it is decided that:
(a) The items entitled “Launching of global negotiations on international economic cooperation for development” and “Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields” shall be eliminated from the agenda;
(b) The items entitled “Question of Cyprus”, “Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, “Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)”, “The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti”, “Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security”, “Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait”, and “Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986” shall remain on the agenda for consideration upon notification by a Member State;
(c) The item entitled “Report of the Economic and Social Council” shall be considered in its entirety in plenary;
(d) While remaining on the agenda of the plenary, the sub-item entitled “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” shall be considered every other year and the items entitled “Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin” and “Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion” shall be considered every three years;
(e) The item entitled “Information and communication technologies for development” and the sub-item entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions” shall be allocated for annual consideration in the Second Committee;
(f) The item entitled “Towards global partnerships” shall be allocated for consideration every other year in the Second Committee;

(g) The sub-item entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance; participation of volunteers, ‘White Helmets’, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development” shall be allocated for consideration every three years in the Second Committee;

(h) The item entitled “Global road safety crisis” shall be allocated for consideration every other year in the Third Committee;

(i) The item entitled “Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” shall be allocated for annual consideration in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee);

(j) The item entitled “Assistance in mine action” shall be allocated for consideration every year in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee);

(k) The item entitled “University for Peace” shall be allocated for consideration every three years in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee);

(l) Bearing in mind that the General Assembly decided in resolution 55/285 of 7 September 2001 to cluster all cooperation items under one item, to make individual cooperation items sub-items and to hold a joint debate for all sub-items, the Secretary-General shall submit a single consolidated report under the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations”;

(m) The adjustments outlined in the paragraphs above shall take effect beginning with the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

(n) The General Assembly shall monitor the effects of the adjustments outlined in the paragraphs above and continue to make efforts, as appropriate, to further streamline the agenda of the plenary.

E. General Committee

5. Recalling section B, paragraph 1, of the annex to resolution 58/126, having conducted a review of the work of the General Committee, and taking into account the views expressed by Member States on the matter, it is decided that:

(a) The work of the General Committee shall be carried out in accordance with section VI of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

(b) The General Committee shall continue to meet throughout the session and to play the leading role in advising the General Assembly on the efficient organization, coordination and management of its work;

(c) To ensure the effective implementation of rule 42 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the General Committee shall meet regularly throughout the session with the bureaux of the Main Committees to review the progress of the work of the Main Committees and to make recommendations for furthering such progress;

(d) In July of each year, the General Committee shall conduct a review of the proposed programme of work for the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, on the basis of a report to be submitted by the Secretary-General, and submit recommendations on the matter to the forthcoming Assembly. The report of the Secretary-General shall include information on the status of documentation to be issued during the forthcoming session;

(e) The General Committee, meeting in open-ended consultations, shall continue to consider the further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the customary agenda of the General Assembly and make recommendations thereon to the Assembly during its fifty-ninth session;

(f) On the basis of proposals from the President of the General Assembly, and in the light of the positive experience during the fifty-eighth session, the General Committee shall be encouraged, as appropriate, to continue to schedule informal briefings on topical issues;

(g) At the beginning of each session, the General Committee, following recommendations from the President of the General Assembly, shall recommend to the Assembly a programme of, and format for, interactive debates on the items on its agenda;

(h) The General Committee shall continue to consider ways and means to further improve its working methods to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects, and make recommendations on the matter to the General Assembly for its decision by 1 April 2005.

F. Documentation

6. In the light of its decision in section B, paragraph 7, of the annex to resolution 58/126 that the heavy volume of documentation that is submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration should be reduced, the Secretary-General is requested:

(a) To update the note by the Secretariat entitled “Control and limitation of documentation”, in the light of the provisions of the present resolution;

(b) To submit the updated version of the note by the Secretariat for the consideration of the General Committee, meeting in open-ended consultations, so that it may make recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

(c) To take the necessary action to initiate the implementation of the provisions of paragraph 20 of resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to start, on a trial basis, a consultative process with the President of the General Assembly and the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the Assembly at the end of the main part of each session of the Assembly, with a view to consolidating reports on related subjects, if decided by the Main Committees.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 58/316 (see above), the Secretary-General submitted a 30 July report [A/58/864] containing the provisional agenda of the Assembly’s fifty-ninth (2004) session [A/59/150]; the provisional agenda of the same session organized under headings corresponding to the priorities of the 2002–2005 medium-term plan; the draft programme of work of the Assembly
discussed in the First Committee, on a voluntary basis, on an en-annualization or triennialization of the agenda items on peace and security, the General Assembly in promoting international peace and security, given consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session.

Improving the methods of work of the First Committee

In response to General Assembly resolution 58/41 [YUN 2003, p. 1950], the Secretary-General, in a July report with later addenda [A/59/132 & Add. 1, 2 & Corr.1, Add. 3-6], presented the views of 17 Member States and the Non-aligned Movement on appropriate options for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) Committee.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 3 December [meeting 66], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the First Committee [A/59/459 and Corr.1], adopted resolution 59/95 without vote [agenda item 65 (k)].

Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee

The General Assembly,
Affirming that its rules of procedure permit the Main Committees to undertake organizational refinements to improve the effectiveness of their methods of work, and noting with satisfaction that the First Committee already has done so,
Emphasizing that improved functioning of the First Committee should be considered in an integrated and comprehensive manner through the existing three stages, namely general debate, thematic/structured debate, and consideration of and action on draft resolutions,
Determining to continue its efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee, as a means to enhance the role of the General Assembly in promoting international peace and security,
1. Invites Member States to consider the biennialization or triennialization of the agenda items discussed in the First Committee, on a voluntary basis, and particularly when no specific action is required for the implementation of relevant resolutions;
2. Also invites Member States to continue to hold interactive debates based on a programme and format elaborated through informal consultations between the Bureau and Member States in advance of each First Committee session;
3. Further invites Member States to submit draft resolutions in a more concise, focused and action-oriented manner and, where practical, to consider the possibility of submitting draft decisions;
4. Recommends that the respective sponsors of draft resolutions hold informal consultations, both before and during First Committee meetings, with the participation of all interested Member States for furthering discussions on draft resolutions already submitted or yet to be submitted to the Committee;
5. Encourages Member States to introduce draft resolutions on related or complementary issues to find commonalities in the language and purpose of those draft resolutions, and invites Member States to consider pursuing mergers of such texts during consultations with all sponsors;
6. Also encourages Member States, in particular those that present any draft resolution, to follow up on the agreed resolution in order to contribute to the achievement of the objective of such resolution;
7. Encourages the First Committee to introduce presentations of, and focus discussions on, reports on the work of expert groups, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters initiated by the Committee;
8. Requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 154 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to undertake organizational refinements of the First Committee, in particular the increasing interconnectedness of issues before the General Assembly, to explore the forms of mutual cooperation with other Main Committees;
9. Requests the First Committee, in the light of the growing interconnection of issues before the General Assembly, to explore the forms of mutual cooperation with other Main Committees;
10. Decides to develop further, within existing resources, the electronic support for the work of the First Committee, in particular the existing web sites;
11. Decides also to review regularly the implementation of the present resolution.

Review of Security Council membership and related matters

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council submitted a report on its work during three substantive sessions and nine rounds of informal consultations held between 19 February and 21 July [A/58/47 & Corr.1]. In the light of the Chairman’s view that the Group should adopt an approach in its work that would create new opportunities for progress in the consideration of Council reform, the Group agreed to proceed with informal consultations, contrary to its approach in previous sessions when it considered proposals and/or position papers in two clusters on the questions of the increase in membership of the Council and related matters, its working methods and the transparency of its work. The Group also discussed separately in informal ses-
sions held between 26 March and 8 April, the five topics proposed by the Bureau: an enlarged Security Council; the question of regional representation; criteria for membership; on the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council; and accountability. On the proposal of the Chairman, a sixth topic on the use of the veto was discussed on 19 April. The Chairman’s summary of those discussions was annexed to the Group’s report. In addition, delegates raised issues related to the reform of the Council, including its meetings with troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, its annual report to the Assembly, further transparency of the Council vis-à-vis the wider membership of the United Nations, and the role of the Council in setting international legal norms. On 14 May, the Group held an informal exchange of views with the Council President and three other Council members on the topics discussed during the sessions. On 21 July, the Group considered and adopted its report to the Assembly.

By decision 58/572 of 13 September, the Assembly took note of the Working Group’s report and the six topics discussed by the Group; urged the Group to continue to work towards achieving progress in the consideration of all issues relevant to the question of equitable representation on and in increase in the Council’s membership and other related matters; and decided that the Group should continue its work, taking into account the progress achieved during the forty-eighth (1998) through the fifty-eighth (2003) Assembly sessions, and the views to be expressed on the question during the fifty-eighth (2004) session, and to report to the Assembly before the end of that session.

On 23 December, the Assembly decided that the item on the question of equitable representation on and in the membership of the Security Council and related matters would remain for consideration during its resumed fifty-ninth (2005) session (decision 59/552).

Revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Work of the functional commissions


Report of Secretary-General

The Secretary-General, responding to the Council’s agreed conclusions 2002/1, submitted a consolidated report [E/2004/81] in June on the work of the functional commissions of the Council in 2004. The report focused on the commissions’ contributions to the achievement of various aspects of the MDGs [YUN 2000, p. 51] relevant to their areas of activity, aimed at assisting the Council in providing policy guidance regarding the commission’s contributions to the high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly, scheduled for 2005. The report also examined the commissions’ contributions to the Council’s work and follow-up action by them to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2003, and reviewed key issues relating to coordination or procedural aspects of the Commission’s work in 2004.

The Secretary-General recommended that the Council request its functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to the Council’s High-level segment and other segments dealing with themes relating to the 2005 high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly; encourage the commissions to further promote synergies among themselves regarding their work towards the achievement of the MDGs; encourage the Commission on the Status of Women to continue its catalytic role and to contribute to the work of other functional commissions; request all international organizations to ensure coherence and collaboration with requests for data on conference indicators; and encourage further investment in sustainable statistical capacities. In other recommendations, the Council was encouraged to consider ways of promoting closer interaction between the functional commissions and governing bodies of UN funds and programmes; invite its commissions and their secretariats to clearly identify the operational implications of their work and bring them to the attention of the governing bodies of funds and programmes for their consideration and guidance on operational activities; continue to examine their methods of work in order to better implement the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits; and adhere to the guidelines regarding their reports to the Council. The Council should encourage its subsidiary bodies to present oral reports on issues that did not require extensive deliberations by the Council, consolidate reports that dealt with closely related topics and encourage the bureaux of the functional commissions to focus their joint meetings and meetings with the Bureau of the Council on cross-cutting issues in order to develop a common approach to work.

Promoting coordination and consolidation of the work of the functional commissions

The Economic and Social Council,
Recalling also its agreed conclusions 2002/1 of 26 July 2002 on strengthening further the role of the Economic and Social Council,
1. Takes note with appreciation of the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 2004;
2. Welcomes the contribution of the functional commissions to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 2004, and requests the functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to the substantive session of the Council of 2005 and, in accordance with the modalities to be set out by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, to contribute, through the Council, to the high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly;
3. Requests its functional commissions, in their review of conference implementation in 2005, to promote complementarity in their work and to follow the guidance of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;
4. Also requests its commissions, in their reports, to identify clearly the operational implications of their work for consideration and appropriate action by the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes;
5. Encourages greater cooperation between its functional commissions and the regional commissions;
6. Invites its Bureau to give due regard in its consultations with the bureaux of the functional commissions to their contributions to the various segments of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council;
7. Requests the Chairpersons of the functional commissions to communicate to the President of the Economic and Social Council the issues requiring special attention or action by the Council, as determined by the commissions;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council a consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions in 2005, focusing on the substantive aspects of their activities so as to complement the report on the role of the Council in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B.

Review of structure and functions of liaison offices

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 58/270 [YUN 2003, p. 1399], the Secretary-General, in an October report [A/59/395], reviewed the structure and functions of all liaison or representation offices in New York of organizations headquartered elsewhere but funded by the regular budget. Those organizations included UNCTAD, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), UNRWA, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the New York office of the regional commissions. The report also described the functions and level of staff resources of those offices.

The Secretary-General observed that it was evident from the review that representative offices in New York provided substantive contributions to the work programmes of their parent offices, while maintaining a much smaller portion of traditional liaison functions. Activities focused on matters requiring the representatives’ participation in meetings, both at the intergovernmental level and within the Secretariat. Those offices were operating with the benefit of current technology and were striving to be as effective as possible within the limited budgetary resources available to them.

ACABQ report. ACABQ, in a 3 November report [A/59/552], recommended that the Assembly take note of the Secretary-General’s report (see above). It intended to revert to the issue and examine the functions and levels of staff resources of the liaison offices in New York in the context of its examination of the proposed programme budget for the 2006-2007 biennium.