

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MUHAMMAD YUSSUF,
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, IN
THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 118: JOINT
INSPECTION UNIT

New York, 31 October 1997

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of the 77 and China would like, first of all, to thank Ambassador Khail Issa Othman, Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, for his detailed presentation of the documents before us under agenda item 118: Joint Inspection Unit.

The Group of the 77 and China has carefully examined the JIU annual reports for 1996 and 1997 (documents A/51/34 and A/52/34) and its programmes of work for 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 (documents A/51/559 and A/52/267) and would like to comment on some of the important issues under this agenda item.

The Group of the 77 and China welcomes the fact that this year's JIU thematic reports were listed under the relevant agenda items and not, as was the past practice, under the general JIU agenda item. We congratulate the Secretariat, in particular that of the Fifth Committee, in this regard.

As emphasized in the General Assembly resolution 50/233, "the impact of the Unit on the cost-effectiveness of activities within the United Nations system is a shared responsibility of Member States, the Unit and secretariats of the participating organizations."

These reports and work programmes represent, in our view, an acceptable account of concrete measures taken by the JIU to implement its share in this tripartite endeavour. We would like to commend the JIU for its achievements in this regard, in particular for the quality of the new generation of its reports and recommendations. In this regard the Group of the 77 and China renews its support to the JIU as the only independent system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigation body, as reaffirmed in the above-mentioned resolution.

The JIU work programmes have become more relevant to Member States' needs. We encourage the JIU to continue focusing its work " ...on important priority items, identifying concrete managerial, administrative programming questions aimed at providing the General Assembly and other legislative organs of participating organizations with practical and action-oriented recommendations on precisely defined issues" and taking full advantage of its system-wide competence in undertaking comparative analysis of trends and problems faced by various organizations, proposing harmonized, practical and concrete solutions.

The Group of 77 and China is pleased to note that the new procedures, adopted by the Unit, for allocating travel funds have resulted in substantial reductions in the travel component. As a result of that and other new directions the Unit was able to propose a negative growth budget for the 1998-1999 biennium. However, we still request the assurance that this decrease will not affect negatively the mandate of the JIU as provided for by the General Assembly.

In his introductory statement, the Chairman of the JIU referred to certain problems facing the Unit with regard to the mix of skills available to it. We would like the Chairman to further elaborate on these issues and share with the Committee any proposals in this regard to further enhance the effectiveness of the Unit.

The Group of the 77 and China commends the JIU efforts to strengthen its coordination with internal and

external oversight bodies with a view to improving the oversight services in the United Nations system and prevent duplication and overlapping.

The Group of 77 and China urges the Secretariat to ensure that the JIU receives promptly the relevant reports to enable it to comment on them.

The Group of the 77 and China would like also to thank the JIU for presenting its comments, as appropriate, on the OIOS reports and would like to recall that these comments are presented in accordance with paragraph 5(e)(iii) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B. The Group of the 77 and China requests the JIU to continue to discharge its duties in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

I turn now to a last but not less important point. In paragraph 16 of resolution 50/233, the General Assembly encouraged the JIU " to continue to take the necessary steps to achieve a punctual and systematic follow-up of its recommendations as approved by the legislative organs of participating organizations." However, it is clear that those recommendations only become binding when and as are approved by the legislative organs of the participating organizations, as rightly indicated by the Chairman of the JIU in his introductory statement. In this regard, serious consideration should be given to such recommendations and appropriate action taken by all concerned.

In this regard the JIU has forwarded for our consideration and action a follow-up system based on the principle of shared responsibility. The tripartite commitment proposed by the Unit is in principle directed at overcoming many of the shortfalls in the preparation and implementation of the JIU recommendations. The Group of the 77 and China invites the Fifth Committee to consider this proposal in all its aspects as contained in annex I of the JIU annual report for 1997.

Thank you.