



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

# AUDIT REPORT

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Communications, Information and Outreach Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

The Communications, Information and Outreach Section has improved UNCTAD's ability to carry out its outreach programme; however, weaknesses in planning, monitoring, funding and website operations need to be addressed to further improve effectiveness

17 June 2010  
Assignment No. AE2010/341/01

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United Nations  Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE  
INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

TO: Dr. Supachai Panichpakdi  
A: Secretary-General  
UNCTAD

DATE: 17 June 2010

REFERENCE: IAD: 10- **00497**

FROM: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Director  
DE: Internal Audit Division, OIOS



SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2010/341/01 - Audit of the Communications, Information and Outreach Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. Based on your response, all recommendations will remain open in the OIOS recommendations database. In order for us to close the recommendations, we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and also summarized in Annex 1.
3. Your response indicated that you did not accept recommendation 6. In OIOS' opinion however, this recommendation seeks to address a significant risk area. We are therefore reiterating it and requesting that you reconsider your initial response based on the additional information provided in the report.
4. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as high risk (i.e., recommendations 1, 2, 5, 7, 12 and 13), in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

cc: Mr. Petko Draganov, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD  
Mr. Vitali Rousak, OIC, Resource Management Service, UNCTAD  
Ms. Muriel Scibilia, Chief CIO, UNCTAD  
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors  
Ms. Susanne Frueh, Executive Secretary, Joint Inspection Unit  
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Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Special Assistant to the USG-OIOS  
Mr. Christopher F. Bagot, Chief, Geneva Audit Service, OIOS

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## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

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### FUNCTION

*“The Office shall, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations examine, review and appraise the use of financial resources of the United Nations in order to guarantee the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, ascertain compliance of programme managers with the financial and administrative regulations and rules, as well as with the approved recommendations of external oversight bodies, undertake management audits, reviews and surveys to improve the structure of the Organization and its responsiveness to the requirements of programmes and legislative mandates, and monitor the effectiveness of the systems of internal control of the Organization” (General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B).*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Audit of the Communications, Information and Outreach Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Communications, Information and Outreach (CIO) Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The overall objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the structure and arrangements for programme planning, monitoring, implementing and coordinating activities of CIO. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

In OIOS' opinion, the establishment of the CIO Section in 2008 has improved UNCTAD's effectiveness in carrying out its outreach programme. Although the arrangements for coordination and servicing of the CIO Section's activities were found to be adequate, OIOS identified the following weaknesses in the Section's structure, planning, monitoring and funding which need to be addressed to further improve effectiveness:

- The revised reporting structure of the CIO Section, which now reports to the Office of the UNCTAD Secretary-General, was not reflected in the 2010-2011 programme budget;
- The division of roles and responsibilities between CIO and other UNCTAD sections was not always clear. As a result, there were areas of unclear responsibility, which increased the risk of overlap, inadequate accountability and inefficiencies;
- Inadequate identification and documentation of required resources and lack of a fund raising strategy made it difficult for the CIO section to deliver on all aspects of the communication strategy;
- Lack of adequate arrangements for the planning, evaluation and monitoring of the Section's activities affected UNCTAD's ability to assess its performance;
- Process gaps were identified in the document management system as 20 to 25 per cent of its publications were not available and preserved electronically, resulting in the loss of its research and analysis work. UNCTAD needs to strengthen its processes and review the feasibility of creating a central repository for all its documents and publications; and
- Inadequate website governance resulted in the lack of web strategy and policy guidelines. Consequently, there was inconsistency, lack of common branding, layout and design among various websites, thereby affecting effectiveness and UNCTAD's compliance with relevant provisions of ST/AI/2001/5 on Internet publishing in the UN.

OIOS made a number of recommendations to address the weaknesses noted.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Paragraphs
I. INTRODUCTION	1-8
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES	9
III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	10-11
IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
A. Organization structure	12-18
B. Planning, budgeting and monitoring	19-30
C. Communications, information and outreach activities	31-40
D. Web management	41-49
V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	50
ANNEX 1 – Status of Audit Recommendations	

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Communications, Information and Outreach (CIO) Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

2. UNCTAD was established by General Assembly Resolution 1995 of 30 December 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body and a principal organ of the Assembly on Trade and Development, with a permanent secretariat in Geneva. The work of UNCTAD is focused around its three pillars, namely, research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation. The Organizational structure and functions of UNCTAD are outlined in Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/1998/1. According to the structure, UNCTAD is headed by a Secretary-General at the Under-Secretary-General level. UNCTAD is divided into six divisions: the Division of Management and five other substantive divisions.

3. The XII quadrennial session of UNCTAD held in Accra, Ghana resulted in the adoption of the Accra Accord on 25 April 2008. The Accra Accord identified areas for strengthening UNCTAD, which included developing a more effective communication strategy, targeting a wider audience in developing countries and greater use of electronic tools, including the UNCTAD website; an emphasis on producing timely translations in all the official languages of the United Nations; and streamlining its publication programme, taking into consideration the needs of developing countries and the requirements identified in the intergovernmental process with better dissemination methodologies.

4. The CIO Section was established in June 2008 under the Office of the Secretary-General by moving resources from the Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Service, a part of the Division of Management. The Chief of the CIO Section who was redeployed from another UNCTAD division in August 2008 left the office in October 2009. The present Chief of the CIO Section took over from the previous Chief who retired in April 2010. Though the section directly reports to the Deputy Secretary-General, it is administratively under the Division of Management.

5. The CIO Section comprises the following units:

### Office of the Chief of the CIO Section

- Advise management on communication strategies. Design communication plans and supervise their implementation;
  - Supervise the Communications and Information Unit, the Civil Society Outreach Unit, and the Web Unit;
  - Coordinate and oversee public information outputs, in order to ensure high quality standards and harmonization with UNCTAD's overall objectives and goals;
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- Liaise with appropriate intergovernmental bodies and UN mechanisms regarding the implementation of the communication strategy; and,
- Convene the communication editorial board meetings.

#### Communications and Information Unit

- Serve as an interface between the organization and outside world through regular contact with journalists, academics, general public;
- Liaise with press and media groups, organize press conferences and issue press releases, information notes, E-briefs;
- Promote UNCTAD's activities through various channels;
- Promote an in-house culture of communications; and,
- Ensure all media and web communication is edited and cleared by the Office of the Secretary-General before it is issued.

#### Web Unit

- Maintain and operationally monitor the multilingual UNCTAD website;
- Manage the implementation of UNCTAD's web strategy;
- Formulate web publishing policies and procedures;
- Modernize the web architecture and navigation design; and,
- Manage the web content management software.

#### Civil Society and Outreach Unit

- Promote a constructive engagement of civil society in the three pillars of UNCTAD;
- Organize annual Trade and Development Board hearings, Civil Society Forum and other events associated with the quadrennial conferences, Public Symposium and regular briefing, consultations and meetings for exchange of views and information;
- Process observer status and accreditation requests from civil society organizations for participating in above forums; and,
- Develop and undertake fundraising activities to increase participation of civil society organizations from developing countries.

6. The Chief of the CIO Section is a P-5 who is supported by nine Professional (P) and six General Service (GS) staff distributed among the Section's three units as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: The CIO Section staffing situation in 2009**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Staffing</b>
Chief CIO Office	1 P-5
Communications and Information Unit	1 P-4, 2P-3 and 3 GS
Web Unit	1 P-4, 1P-3, 2 P-2 and 2 GS
Civil Society and Outreach Unit	1 P-3, 1 P-2 and 1GS

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7. Eleven posts in the Section are financed by the United Nations regular budget, three posts are financed from the General Temporary Assistance (GTA) and the other two posts are financed from extra budgetary resources. The 2009 annual expenditures for the CIO Section was approximately \$2.25 million, majority of which related to staff costs (\$2.22 million) and a small portion was for non-post costs (\$0.03 million). UNCTAD expended approximately 2.4 per cent of its \$184 million budget for the biennium 2008-2009 on CIO operations.

8. Comments made by UNCTAD are shown in *italics*.

## II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

9. The main objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the structure and arrangements for programme planning, monitoring, implementing and coordinating activities of the CIO Section. This included reviewing the following:

- (a) Appropriateness of the Section's organizational structure and clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- (b) Adequacy of planning, budgeting and monitoring practices; and
- (c) Adequacy of mechanisms for implementing outreach and website activities, including support and coordination with other divisions.

## III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

10. The audit focused on activities for the period January 2008 to December 2009 and included initiatives taken between January and March 2010. The audit involved a review of reports, records and documentation, an analysis of data, interviews with the Deputy Secretary-General, Chef de cabinet, staff of the CIO Section and other UNCTAD divisions involved in the information and outreach process and who worked closely with the CIO Section.

11. The audit reviewed the division of roles and responsibilities and arrangements for coordination of CIO activities with other sections. However, it did not review outreach activities carried out by other UNCTAD divisions.

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## IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Organization structure

#### Lack of clarity in reporting lines and roles and responsibilities of the CIO Section

12. The CIO Section was established in July 2008 under the Office of the UNCTAD Secretary-General (OSG) to reflect the importance of communications in all UNCTAD work and in response to paragraph 187 of the Accra Accord, which required UNCTAD to develop a more effective communication strategy, targeting a wider audience in developing countries and to make greater use of electronic tools, including the UNCTAD website. However, the 2010-2011 programme budget showed the CIO Section as part of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Service (IAOS) under the Division of Management, where its component units had been in the past. This does not reflect the actual situation that the CIO Section now reports to the OSG.

13. The division of roles and responsibilities between the CIO and other sections was not clearly defined. Although the staff had an understanding of the broad division of roles and responsibilities, there were some grey areas and possible overlaps in the following operational areas:

- Responsibility for overall coordination and management of UNCTAD websites. There were instances when the requests for websites came directly to Information Technology Section (ITS) or to the Web Unit and sometimes the substantive units created their own websites and hosted them externally;
- Demarcation of web development and intranet responsibilities between ITS and the Web Unit. To optimize efficiency, the Intranet should be brought under the Web Unit's responsibility and ITS should take care of development functions;
- Responsibility for the security of external websites and web content management system;
- Direct communication of some UNCTAD substantive divisions with the press and media;
- The role and function of the New York Office with regard to outreach activities due to its presence near UNHQ and UNDPI; and
- Responsibilities for the archiving and preservation of UNCTAD substantive material, between the Library and Reference Unit, Intergovernmental Support Service (ISS) and the Web Unit.

14. A user guide on IAOS units and their functions, which also included the component units of CIO, was developed in 2005, before the creation of CIO.

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However, the user guide had not been updated subsequently based on the agreed division of roles and responsibilities between the CIO and other sections and communicated to all staff.

### **Recommendations 1 and 2**

#### **The UNCTAD Secretariat should:**

**(1) Ensure that the budget reflects the actual reporting lines of the Communications, Information and Outreach Section to the Office of the Secretary-General; and**

**(2) Review and document the role and responsibilities of all sections involved in communication and outreach and explain their interrelationship with the Communications, Information and Outreach Section.**

15. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the new structure and functions of the CIO Section will be reflected in the 2012-2013 programme budget fascicles. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of the 2012-2013 programme budget fascicles.*

16. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 2. Recommendation 2 remains open pending completion of the review of the roles and responsibilities of CIO and receipt of the revised documentation.*

#### Need to update Secretary-General's Bulletin on organization and functions of UNCTAD

17. The Secretary-General's Bulletin (SGB) on the organization and functions of UNCTAD had not been updated to reflect the introduction of the CIO Section. In fact, the SGB had not been updated since 1998 and the omission of the CIO Section was not the only thing that required updating. For example, the organization of the Technical Cooperation Service and the Resources Management Service were also not reflected in the SGB.

### **Recommendation 3**

**(3) The UNCTAD Secretariat should arrange for the revision of the 1998 Secretary-General's Bulletin so that it reflects the current UNCTAD organizational structure.**

18. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 3. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of the revised Secretary-General's Bulletin reflecting the current organization and functions of UNCTAD.*

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## B. Planning, budgeting and monitoring

### Need to identify and document all the resources needed to undertake mandated activities

19. A document bringing together an estimate of all the resources required to deliver the mandate was not present. This is required as a starting point to identify requirements that can be provided from within existing resources and those for which additional funding must be sought. For example, OIOS noted that the current budget for 2010 was missing a number of items, which the CIO Section had identified as critical to deliver its mandate: an improved search engine, web metrics software and tools, training for web content, technical staff like front-end developer to provide the required skills and sufficient resources for making the website multilingual.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**(4) The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should identify and document the staff and non-staff resources required to implement its mandated activities.**

20. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 4.* Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing all the resources required to implement CIO mandated activities.

### Need to prepare funding strategy to cover resource requirements that cannot be addressed through the regular budget

21. The Resources Management Service agreed with the CIO Section that the existing regular budget resources under programme support (Division of Management) would meet about 80 per cent of their 2010 requirements. However, the remaining requirements would need to be met by additional extra budgetary funding. At the time of the audit, the mechanism for handling extra budgetary funding was as follows:

- The Civil Society and Outreach Unit of the CIO Section managed four projects for its activities related to increasing civil society participation in UNCTAD hearings and meetings.
- Appeal letters for the 2010-2011 biennium activities were sent to potential donors in February 2010 to raise \$869,000. However, this effort was not supported by a formal funding strategy and consequently, very low commitments to the tune of 1.5 per cent of the amount appealed were received at the time of audit. There was also a delay in approaching donors for one activity (UNCTAD Public Symposium), scheduled in May 2010, which was included in the appeal letters. Lack of adequate resources and funding made it difficult for the CIO Section

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to deliver on all aspects of the communication strategy thereby limiting UNCTAD's visibility to the stakeholders.

22. The CIO Section needs a formal funding strategy, which should include the creation of a multi-donor, multiple use trust funds covering its entire extra budgetary requirements. This should be coordinated through the project review committee who could assist in finding suitable donors. At the time of the audit, the CIO Section had initiated the process of closing its four trust funds and had requested donors' approval to transfer the balance, around \$44,000, to a new trust fund being set up for consolidating the existing funds.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**(5) The UNCTAD Secretariat should ensure that the Communications, Information and Outreach Section develops a proper funding strategy, in coordination with the project review committee, to approach donors for raising its entire extra budgetary resources.**

23. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 5. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of documentation on the revised fund raising strategy for CIO to raise its extra budgetary resources.*

#### Need to apply Results-Based Budgeting (RBB) strategic framework to CIO Section activities

24. The CIO Section is presently part of the OSG and comes under the executive direction and management component of the budget. However, the RBB strategic framework was not applied to the CIO Section because it was not correctly shown in the budget as it was still reflected as part of IAOS under the Division of Management. Although the CIO Section's strategic objectives were developed after the communication strategy that was approved by the Trade and Development Board (TDB) in its 56th session (September-October 2009), the objectives had yet to be translated into expected accomplishments and performance indicators. *UNCTAD commented that the placement of the CIO Section under the OSG was a temporary reinforcement of its function. A decision on its final structure is still pending.*

#### **Recommendation 6**

**(6) The UNCTAD Secretariat should ensure that the results-based budgeting strategic framework is consistently applied to the Communications, Information and Outreach Section if it continues to be a part of the executive direction and management component of the budget.**

25. *The UNCTAD Secretariat stated that pending final decision on the structure of CIO, the recommendation may not be relevant and requested reformulation of recommendation 6 before accepting it. OIOS reformulated recommendation 6 as requested by UNCTAD and will leave it open pending*

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confirmation of the decision on the structure of the CIO Section and the application of the results-based budgeting strategic framework for the CIO Section.

Inadequate arrangements for evaluating and monitoring CIO Section activities

26. Rule 106.2 of ST/SGB/2000/8 on regulations and rules governing programme planning, budget, monitoring and evaluation requires heads of offices to establish internal monitoring procedures. UNCTAD emphasized this in paragraph 71 of its communication strategy that required the CIO Section to establish a system to measure, evaluate and report on performance. While the Civil Society and Outreach and the Communications and Information Units of the CIO Section did have some performance metrics in place, there was no overall plan or set of procedures in place for monitoring all activities of the CIO Section. Examples of indicators that were missing, which OIOS expected to find but did not were:

- Increase in the use of the websites in disseminating UNCTAD publications/materials;
- Use of appropriate software to gather web statistics for all UNCTAD websites to measure the use made of individual websites;
- Survey ratings for UNCTAD's non-intergovernmental publications;
- Increase in the level of participation of civil society from developing countries in public hearings/symposiums; and
- Increase in the number of workshops and seminars coordinated for launching publications.

**Recommendation 7**

**(7) The UNCTAD Secretariat should develop performance indicators, set baseline targets and establish a system to measure, evaluate, monitor and report on the performance of the Communications, Information and Outreach Section as emphasized in paragraph 71 of its communication strategy.**

27. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 7 and stated that the performance indicators and evaluation system for the CIO Section will be developed, taking into account the details of communication work and limited applicability of standard statistical methods.* Recommendation 7 remains open confirmation of the development of performance indicators and evaluation system for the CIO Section.

Lack of an overall CIO Section work plan

28. ST/AI/2002/3 on Performance Appraisal System requires that prior to the beginning of the performance cycle; heads of offices meet with the senior managers and develop an office work plan that will be the foundation for unit work plans.

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29. An overall CIO Section work plan was not prepared and therefore there was no clear basis for the unit work plans prepared by the Civil Society and Outreach and the Communications and Information Units. A review of the unit work plans also indicated the need for the following improvements:

- Uniformity in the period and format used;
- Documentation of the work plan review and approval by senior management;
- The linkage of the work plan with the expected accomplishments and outputs;
- Expected timelines for achieving the targets;
- Details of who would monitor the implementation of activities; and
- The work plan's link to funding requirements.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**(8) The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should develop its work plan in consultation with senior management and ensure that its units work plans are uniform and include all the relevant details.**

30. *The UNCTAD secretariat accepted recommendation 8.* Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of overall and unit work plans.

#### C. Communications, information and outreach activities

##### UNCTAD capacity and preparedness to undertake outreach activities had improved since 2008

31. The April 2008 Accra Accord highlighted the need to improve UNCTAD's outreach activities. As a result, the UNCTAD Secretary-General moved the CIO Section to report directly to his office and appointed a P-5 chief to head the Section. OIOS observed the following initiatives taken by CIO Section to improve its outreach efforts:

- Developing and getting the communication strategy approved by the TDB. It contained a number of recommendations to improve outreach and reach its target audiences;
- Creation of a Communications Editorial Board to strengthen outreach and enhance internal communications. It comprised of representatives from all substantive divisions and met once a week;
- Strategic messaging and targeting key audiences through intergovernmental conferences and expert meetings and their side events, publications, position papers like issues in brief for the general public

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and policy briefs for policymakers , press releases and information notes for the media, brochures, annual reports, public events and exhibitions;

- Improving delivery and dissemination of UNCTAD’s flagship publications by working closely with United Nations information centres and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and with government ministries, think tanks, universities, investment promotion agencies and other local and national partners;
- Incorporating UNCTAD’s technical cooperation work more closely into its outreach to policymakers by creating a technical cooperation portal on the website accessible to delegates and to the public at large, which provides information by subject matter and by country on each technical cooperation project; and
- Designating the Chief of the CIO Section well in time so that the momentum of the action to implement the recommendations contained in the communication strategy would not be affected. The Chief of the CIO Section at the time of the audit joined in January 2010 and retired in April 2010.

#### Need to amend TDB rules of procedures on engaging civil society

32. Paragraph 35 of the communication strategy requires UNCTAD to facilitate the involvement of national and grassroots organization into UNCTAD work and review TDB rules of procedures on engaging civil society. Consequently, the CIO Section started internal consultations with the legal advisor to initiate a review of the TDB rules of procedures. As of March 2010, the review process had not been completed and the proposed amendments to the TDB rules of procedures had not been submitted for approval by the intergovernmental bodies. The current rules of procedures only allow observer status to international organizations; as a result, UNCTAD had about 200 registered organizations with observer status, majority being from developed countries. Broadening the base would also improve representation of developing country civil society organizations into UNCTAD work.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**(9) The UNCTAD Secretariat should complete the review and propose amendments to the Trade and Development Board rules of procedures on engaging civil society to facilitate the involvement of national and grassroots organization into UNCTAD work, and submit the proposed amendments for approval by the intergovernmental bodies.**

33. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 9 and stated that the revision to the TDB rules of procedures has been initiated and the revised*

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*proposal will be submitted to the TDB for consideration.* Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of the revised proposal and its approval.

Need to develop a comprehensive action plan to implement the communication strategy

34. Section D of the communication strategy outlines the approach taken in developing the strategy and the need for a comprehensive action plan to implement it. However, an action plan comprising practical steps to implement the recommendations in the communication strategy had not been formulated. The TDB also raised this concern raised and requested UNCTAD to elaborate further on the details regarding how it would achieve the various goals stated in the communication strategy. The Chief of the CIO Section stated that since the Section was more focused on improving the outreach, the required action plan was not developed and documented.

**Recommendation 10**

**(10) The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should develop a comprehensive action plan specifying practical steps for implementing the communication strategy.**

35. *The UNCTAD secretariat accepted recommendation 10.* Recommendation 10 remains open pending receipt of a comprehensive action plan specifying practical steps for implementing the communication strategy.

Need to ensure accuracy and completeness of information provided to the Working Party

36. The TDB, while approving the communication strategy asked the UNCTAD Secretariat to provide them with regular updates on the status of implementation of the strategy. Consequently, the UNCTAD Secretariat presented its first update to the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget (called the Working Party) in February 2010. The report contained some of the initiatives taken by UNCTAD to improve their outreach; however, the Working Party members raised some concerns regarding the lack of adequate details and examples on the implementation activities. OIOS also noted some other inconsistencies that suggest the need to improve controls over ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information provided to the Working Party:

- Paragraph 13 of the report mentioned that a Journalists survey carried out in 2009 will help in fine-tuning the media products. However, this 2009 survey had to be re-launched in 2010 due to poor response and there has been no significant progress on the re-launched survey; and
- During the deliberations, it was clarified that the UNCTAD website received about 20,000 page views per day; however, the metrics data showed that 1,198,632 people visited the site during 23 February

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2009 to 22 February 2010, resulting in an average of 3,824 visitors per day.

### **Recommendation 11**

**(11) The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should ensure that the status update to the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget contains accurate and complete information.**

37. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 11.* Recommendation 11 remains open pending confirmation of the action taken to ensure that the status update contains accurate and complete information and receipt of the copy of status update to the Working Party.

#### Adequate arrangements in place for the document management process

38. An effective and efficient document management process is required to help UNCTAD improve its output delivery and synergize with the work of its other two pillars namely consensus building and technical cooperation. A review of the document management process showed that an adequate set of arrangements were in place, which included the following:

- Clearance was mandatory for all documents that appear in UNCTAD's name and was carried out by the OSG;
- The annual list of publications for 2010 was presented to the Working Party in February 2010 thereby improving the planning process;
- Improvement in the timeliness of the submission of parliamentary documents to UNOG for translation during 2009;
- Constant discussions with UNOG for improving translation resources; and
- Consolidation and updating the editorial and document preparation guidelines was under way to assist the whole UNCTAD Secretariat in preparing various documents.

#### Need to create a central repository of UNCTAD documents and publications

39. While a number of good initiatives were taken, OIOS' analysis of the list of 2008 and 2009 publications issued by UNCTAD showed that 20 to 25 per cent of the listed publications were not available on its website and preserved electronically. The Documents Management Section under the ISS coordinated the document management process and the Web Unit under the CIO Section uploaded the cleared/translated documents on the UNCTAD website. Gaps in the existing process resulted in the loss of UNCTAD's research and analysis work. UNCTAD had not reviewed the feasibility of implementing a workflow-based document management system to improve its existing process and to act as a central repository for all UNCTAD documents and publications. For its

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archiving and storage needs, UNCTAD relied on the UN Official Documents System (ODS), which covered only meeting-related documents.

### **Recommendation 12**

**(12) The UNCTAD Secretariat should review the feasibility of implementing a workflow-based document management system and create a central repository of UNCTAD documents and publications to address its archiving and storage needs.**

40. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 12 and stated that it will establish an integrated website supported by an Enterprise Content Management system, including related workflows using a central repository of documents and publications. Recommendation 12 remains open pending successful implementation of the project integrating the websites supported by the Enterprise Content Management system and OIOS' review of the project completion.*

#### D. Web management

##### Inadequate website governance resulted in lack of web strategy, policies and unsuccessful upgrading of websites

41. UNCTAD formed the Web Editorial Board in Dec 2006 to provide web governance. However, it focused more on operational aspects and did not take major policy decisions. The Web Editorial Board did not meet in 2009 to review and endorse the draft web strategy for the approval of the Secretary-General. Although, the Accra Accord mandated UNCTAD to make greater use of electronic tools including its websites, OIOS noted the following weaknesses in its website operations which need to be addressed:

- Absence of web strategy and policies resulted in growth of various UNCTAD sub-sites (more than 90) on different platforms, using different content management system. An administrative unit and a webmaster had not been designated for all the sites. Some sites were outsourced and located on outside servers, and not regularly updated and archived. This constitutes non-compliance with the relevant provisions of ST/AI/2001/5 on Internet publishing in the UN. There was a lack of common branding, layout, style and web content accessibility among various sites thereby relaying an unprofessional image of UNCTAD;
- The current UNCTAD website was constructed in 2002 using basic web elements and code. Its content management system (called GCM) was a custom-built, in-house solution that is technically outdated without any dynamic functionality and cannot be upgraded;
- There was inconsistency in the technical development and infrastructure of its various websites. Despite efforts since 2005 to upgrade the existing web platform, the project could not be implemented

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due to various reasons such as lack of project ownership, changing reporting lines for the Web Unit, lack of web strategy and policy guidelines; and

- A centrally organized team of two staff members in the Web Unit manually updates the main website content on a daily basis. Upgrading the existing platform including the GCM will also enable redeployment of these staff for other important web development and monitoring responsibilities.

### **Recommendations 13 to 15**

**To improve web governance and operations, the UNCTAD Secretariat should:**

**(13) Ensure that the Web Editorial Board provides adequate web governance to its web-related operations, and reviews and endorses the web strategy for the approval of the Secretary-General;**

**(14) Develop policy guidelines in compliance with common UN system-wide policies that, among other things, specify requirements related to functional and technical platform of the new website and standards relating to web layout, branding, style, web content accessibility and use of social media; and**

**(15) Ensure that the Web Unit efficiently implements the website upgrading project covering the main UNCTAD website and integrating all other sub-sites.**

42. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 13 and stated that the Web Editorial Board has been superseded by the Communications Editorial Board, which will provide web governance to the web-related operations. Recommendation 13 remains open pending receipt of the revised terms of reference of the Communications Editorial Board and minutes of its meetings endorsing the web strategy.*

43. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 14 and stated that ITS will take part in specifying requirements related to the functional and technical platform of the new website. Recommendation 14 remains open pending receipt of policy guidelines and the requirements related to functional and technical platform of the new website.*

44. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 15 and stated that the technical web development team has been consolidated under ITS, which will implement the web upgrading project. Recommendation 15 remains open pending successful implementation of the website upgrading project and OIOS' review of the project completion.*

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### Weaknesses in access control and web security

45. Access rights for the content management system were not adequately maintained since many of these belonged to interns, separated and transferred staff who no longer worked for UNCTAD. There were more than 150 users who had access to the system; however, a small group of only 10-15 staff actually updated the website content.

46. More than 20 websites were hosted on external servers. The Digital Information Security Policy did not address security concerns for websites hosted on third party servers. In the absence of necessary contractual framework, UNCTAD data on external web servers was exposed to the risk of being misused and mismanaged. External hosting also results in additional associated costs.

### **Recommendations 16 and 17**

#### **The UNCTAD Information Technology Section should:**

**(16) Remove access rights of separated staff to the content management system and ensure that periodic review is conducted, as specified in its Digital Information Security Policy; and**

**(17) Review the security risks for externally hosted websites and implement necessary mitigating measures to address them.**

47. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 16 and stated that appropriate action will be taken to remove unauthorized access. Recommendation 16 remains open pending confirmation of the removal of unauthorized access and receipt of the updated list of users having access rights to the content management system.*

48. *The UNCTAD Secretariat accepted recommendation 17 and stated that all externally hosted sites will be reviewed and appropriate security measures will be stipulated and applied. Recommendation 17 remains open pending confirmation that sufficient security measures are stipulated and applied for externally hosted sites.*

### Ongoing efforts to make the website multilingual

49. The Web Unit, in coordination with other units, translated the homepage of the main UNCTAD website in French and Spanish languages. The CIO Section had budgeted \$14,000 for outsourcing the translation of press/web materials in 2010. Although some initiatives are being taken, UNCTAD has not been able to make the site fully multilingual and reach out to its target audience due to the lack of adequate translation resources. OIOS acknowledges the efforts made by UNCTAD and suggests that it continue to translate the home pages and sub-sites in all official languages.

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## V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

50. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNCTAD for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

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## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O <sup>1</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>2</sup>
1	The UNCTAD Secretariat should ensure that the budget reflects the actual reporting lines of the Communications, Information and Outreach Section to the Office of the Secretary-General.	Governance	High	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with the 2012-2013 programme budget fascicles to confirm that the revised CIO structure is properly reflected in it.	June 2011
2	The UNCTAD Secretariat should review and document the role and responsibilities of all sections involved in communication and outreach and explain their interrelationship with the Communications, Information and Outreach Section.	Governance	High	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with revised documentation on the roles and responsibilities of CIO.	2011
3	The UNCTAD Secretariat should arrange for the revision of the 1998 Secretary-General's Bulletin so that it reflects the current UNCTAD organizational structure.	Governance	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with the revised Secretary-General's Bulletin reflecting the current organization and functions of UNCTAD.	2012
4	The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should identify and document the staff and non-staff resources required to implement its mandated activities.	Strategy	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with documentation showing all the resources required to implement CIO mandated activities.	2011
5	The UNCTAD Secretariat should ensure that the Communications, Information and Outreach Section develops a proper funding strategy, in coordination with the project review committee, to approach donors for raising its entire extra budgetary resources.	Strategy	High	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with documentation on the revised fund raising strategy to raise its extra budgetary resources.	2011
6	The UNCTAD Secretariat should ensure that the results-based budgeting strategic framework is consistently applied to the Communications, Information and Outreach Section if it continues to be a part of the executive direction and management	Governance	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with information containing the decision on the structure of the CIO Section and, if it continues to be a part of Executive direction, confirmation that a results-based budgeting strategic framework has been	Not provided.

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O <sup>1</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>2</sup>
	component of the budget.				applied to the Section.	
7	The UNCTAD secretariat should develop performance indicators, set baseline targets and establish a system to measure, evaluate, monitor and report on the performance of the Communications, Information and Outreach Section as emphasized in paragraph 71 of its communication strategy.	Governance	High	O	OIOS to review the performance indicators and evaluation system developed for the CIO Section.	Jan 2012
8	The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should develop its work plan in consultation with senior management and ensure that its units work plans are uniform and include all the relevant details.	Governance	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with the overall CIO Section and unit work plans.	2011
9	The UNCTAD Secretariat should complete the review and propose amendments to the Trade and Development Board rules of procedures on engaging civil society to facilitate the involvement of national and grassroots organization into UNCTAD work, and submit the proposed amendments for approval by the intergovernmental bodies.	Operations	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with the revised proposal for consideration/approval by TDB.	2011
10	The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should develop a comprehensive action plan specifying practical steps for implementing the communication strategy.	Operations	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with a comprehensive action plan specifying practical steps for implementing the communication strategy.	2011
11	The UNCTAD Communications, Information and Outreach Section should ensure that the status update to the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget contains accurate and complete information.	Information resources	Medium	O	UNCTAD to confirm action taken to ensure that the status update contains accurate and complete information and receipt of the copy of status update to the Working Party.	2011

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O <sup>1</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>2</sup>
12	The UNCTAD Secretariat should review the feasibility of implementing a workflow-based document management system and create a central repository of UNCTAD documents and publications to address its archiving and storage needs.	Operations	High	O	UNCTAD to confirm successful implementation of project integrating the websites supported by the Enterprise Content Management system and OIOS' review of the project completion.	Jan 2012
13	To improve web governance and operations, the UNCTAD secretariat should ensure that the Web Editorial Board provides adequate web governance to its web-related operations; and reviews and endorses the web strategy for approval of the Secretary-General	Governance	High	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with the revised terms of reference of the Communications Editorial Board and minutes of its meetings endorsing the web strategy.	2012
14	To improve web governance and operations, the UNCTAD secretariat should develop policy guidelines in compliance with common UN system-wide policies that, among other things specify requirements related to functional and technical platform of the new website and standards relating to web layout, branding, style, web content accessibility and use of social media.	Strategy	Medium	O	UNCTAD to provide OIOS with the policy guidelines and the requirements related to functional and technical platform of the new website.	2012
15	To improve web governance and operations, the UNCTAD secretariat should ensure that the Web Unit efficiently implements the website upgrading project covering the main UNCTAD website and integrating all other sub-sites.	Operations	Medium	O	UNCTAD to confirm successful implementation of the website upgrading project and OIOS' review of the project completion.	2012
16	The UNCTAD Information Technology Section should remove access rights of separated staff to the content management system and ensure that a periodic review is conducted, as specified in its Digital Information Security Policy.	Operations	Medium	O	UNCTAD to confirm the removal of unauthorized access and an updated list of users having access rights to the content management system.	2011

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<b>Recom. no.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Risk category</b>	<b>Risk rating</b>	<b>C/O<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Actions needed to close recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation date<sup>2</sup></b>
17	The UNCTAD Information Technology Section should review the security risks for externally hosted websites and implement necessary mitigating measures to address them.	Operations	Medium	O	UNCTAD to confirm that sufficient security measures are stipulated and applied for externally hosted sites.	2011

1. C = closed, O = open

2. Date provided by UNCTAD in response to recommendations.