



OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

AUDIT REPORT

Audit of staff welfare and counseling programmes in UNMIS

Minimum welfare and recreation facilities and counseling services are in place but more can be done to improve activities

16 September 2009

Assignment No. AP2009/632/06

United Nations  Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

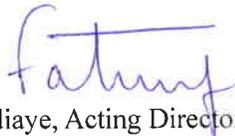
MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

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

TO: Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi,
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
United Nations Mission in Sudan

DATE: 16 September 2009

REFERENCE: IAD: 09- 02880


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

SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2009/632/06 - Audit of staff welfare and counseling programmes in UNMIS**
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. Based on your comments, and to enable us to close the recommendations, we request that you provide us with additional information as discussed in the text of the report and also summarized in Annex 1.
3. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

cc: Mr. Farid Zarif, Chief of Staff, UNMIS
Maj. General Paban Jung Thapa, Force Commander, UNMIS
Mr. Nicolas Von Ruben, Acting Director of Mission Support, UNMIS
Ms. Heather Landon, Chief of Administrative Services, UNMIS
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INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

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

Staff welfare and counseling programmes in UNMIS

OIOS conducted an audit of staff welfare and counseling programmes in United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The overall objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNMIS' welfare and recreational activities. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

The Mission has established adequate procedures and internal controls to oversee the implementation of welfare and recreational activities, and has made available the required minimum welfare and recreation facilities to staff. The Mission also provides counseling services to civilian staff, but no counseling services have been made available to the contingents. The audit also identified the following areas where improvements could be made:

- The welfare and recreation committees did not have guidelines and standard operating procedures for accounting and managing their funds; and
- There was no preventive maintenance programme in place for recreation facilities and equipment.

OIOS has made recommendations to address the conditions identified by the audit.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the staff welfare and counseling programmes in the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

2. The provision of welfare and recreation facilities is an essential part of ensuring a healthy working, living and recreational environment for all categories of staff serving in peacekeeping missions. Staff welfare is important for the successful implementation of the Mission's mandate and for promoting good conduct and discipline of peacekeeping personnel.

3. Welfare and recreation programmes are guided by:

- The Department of Field Support (DFS) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Policy on Welfare and Recreation; and
- The DFS/DPKO standard operating procedure (SOP) on welfare and recreation.

4. The 2008-2009 budget for the replacement of gym equipment was \$304,000. In addition, the Mission's staff welfare and recreation committees are provided with funds from the proceeds of the Post Exchange (PX) at the rate of two per cent of gross sales. Funds from PX sales during the nine months ended 30 April 2009 was \$119,700. The committees are also authorized to implement fund-raising activities such as raffles and the sale of souvenirs.

5. The UNMIS Staff Counseling and Welfare Section (SCWS), within the Administrative Services of the Office of Mission Support, is responsible for supporting welfare and counseling services for civilian staff. The Section has 18 approved posts.

6. Comments made by UNMIS are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

7. The main objectives of the audit were to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of counseling, welfare and recreational activities in UNMIS and more specifically to determine whether:

- (a) Welfare and recreation programmes provided by UNMIS were in compliance with the relevant policies and procedures; and
 - (b) Counseling services made available to Mission personnel met the minimum standards established by management.
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III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The audit examined records and reports pertaining to welfare, recreation and counseling programmes in UNMIS for the fiscal years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. It covered activities undertaken by the SCWS as well as the welfare-related activities performed by other sections/units. It also included visits to welfare, recreation and counseling facilities located in Juba, Malakal and Kadugli. Key personnel involved in welfare, recreation and counseling activities were interviewed and an on-line survey was conducted to seek the views on the services provided.

IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Internal controls and governance

9. As required, the Mission has established a SCWS, a Full Welfare and Recreation Committee and an Executive Welfare and Recreation Committee. Additionally, the Mission has established sector welfare and recreation committees to implement the work plan in the sectors, logistical base and at team sites.

Non-compliance with the relevant guidelines on the planning of welfare and counseling services

10. The SOPs on the preparation of welfare and recreation work plans require that the plans should specify the proposed activities, time frames and a detailed budget. OIOS noted that the existing annual work plans outline activities expected to be carried out, but it did not indicate the estimated cost for these activities. Without such information, it is difficult to monitor the programme of work and to evaluate the progress being made to complete the annual work plans.

Recommendation 1

(1) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should ensure that staff welfare and recreation work plans are prepared in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

11. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the work plans have been revised to include all measures listed in DPKO's SOPs. Recommendation one remains open pending receipt of a copy of the revised work plans that comply with DPKO's SOPs.*

Inadequate oversight of funds

12. The staff welfare and recreation committees have implemented fundraising activities as required. The SCWS managed the funds it generated, but there was no procedure to oversee the management of funds raised by staff

welfare and recreation committees at sector levels. Additionally, the welfare and recreation committees did not prepare and make available to all staff the annual reports of their activities and finances as required. There was thus the unmitigated risk of welfare and recreation funds being misused.

Recommendations 2 and 3

The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should:

(2) Establish procedures for the management of staff welfare and recreation funds in the Mission; and

(3) Ensure that staff welfare and recreation committees prepare annual reports and financial statements on their activities and publish such reports to enhance accountability and transparency and promote participation of staff members in welfare activities.

13. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 2 and stated that an SOP regarding the accountability of funds collected for staff welfare and recreation activities will be developed. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the SOP.*

14. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 3 and stated that annual activity reports and financial statements will be prepared and broadcast to all staff. Recommendation 3 remains open pending confirmation that annual activity reports and financial statements have been prepared and disseminated to staff.*

Lack of guidelines on the preparation of proposal for use of funds

15. All welfare and recreation committees are allocated a share of the revenues generated by the PX in Khartoum and Juba. To use the funds, welfare and recreation committees need to submit proposals to the HQ Executive Welfare and Recreation Committee for approval. During the financial year 2008/2009, the Mission allotted \$119,700 of the PX revenues to welfare and recreation committees, but only \$13,290 of this amount had been spent as at 30 April 2009.

16. There were no clear guidelines on the preparation of proposals for the use of funds allocated to the welfare and recreation activities. During OIOS' visit to Kadugli, a representative of the Sector Welfare and Recreation Committee mentioned that the Committee had not used its share of allocated funds because proposals submitted to the Executive Welfare and Recreation Committee was rejected. A further proposal submitted as at the time of the audit was still awaiting approval. The Juba Welfare and Recreation Committee noted that its members had been recently appointed and were not aware of the available funds. Moreover, not all members of the Malakal Welfare and Recreation Committee were aware of the availability of their share of PX funds.

Recommendation 4

(4) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should prepare guidelines for the use of funds allocated to staff welfare and recreation committees from Post Exchange revenue. It should also establish a mechanism to provide sector welfare and recreation committees with information on a regular basis on the utilization of their allocated funds and on available balances.

17. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 4 and stated that an SOP will be prepared on procedures to follow on the use of funds collected from the share of PX revenue. In addition, monthly reports will be provided to the chairpersons of sector welfare committees and team site welfare focal points. Recommendation 4 remains open pending OIOS' verification of the SOP and the monthly reports on the utilization of funds.*

B. Welfare and recreation programmes

Management and maintenance of recreation facilities and equipment

18. As at 31 May 2009, the total value of non-expendable and expendable items allocated for recreation were \$301,658 and \$20,049, respectively. These comprise heavy duty gymnasium and sports equipment that are subject to wear and tear and require routine maintenance.

19. At the time of OIOS' visit to Juba, parts of the gymnasium equipment were either unusable or worn out due to the lack of routine maintenance. There was no Mission-wide maintenance programme for the gym and sports equipment. In this regard, the Juba Welfare and Recreation Committee indicated that it did not have the capacity and resources to maintain and repair the equipment.

Recommendation 5

(5) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should ensure sports and gymnasium equipment are adequately maintained to reduce the risk of injury to staff and to ensure welfare and recreation facilities are available to staff.

20. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 5 and stated that a Mission-wide survey will be conducted to ensure that a regular maintenance programme is set up in each sector. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the Mission's sports and gymnasium equipment maintenance programme.*

Fee charged for use of gymnasium and sports facilities

21. There was no Mission-wide policy to provide guidance on the fees to be levied on staff for the use of gymnasiums and sports facilities. As a result, each sector used a different fee structure. For instance, in Juba no access fee was

charged whereas in Malakal and Kadugli staff were required to pay for access to the gymnasium. Membership fees also varied from sector to sector. In Malakal, the membership fee was 30 Sudanese pounds per month and in Khartoum membership fee was \$25 per month.

22. In February 2009, the HQ Executive Welfare and Recreation Committee resolved that a monthly fee of \$25 be levied Mission-wide for use of gymnasium, library and TV/game rooms. However, staff members residing in accommodation provided by the Mission are exempt. This decision is yet to be fully adopted by all sectors. Also, some of the welfare and recreation committees have opted to continue charging fees to all staff members including those residing in UN provided accommodation. This has been done so as to generate sufficient funds for the maintenance and replacement of gymnasium equipment.

Recommendation 6

(6) The UNMIS Headquarters Executive Welfare and Recreation Committee should establish a standard fee structure for use of Mission-subsidized recreation facilities.

23. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it has provided guidelines on fees to be charged to different users Mission-wide. The relevant SOPs will be distributed to staff members.* Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the SOP.

C. Counseling services

24. The SCWS had a total of 12 counselors who were responsible for providing counseling services to staff Mission-wide. About 84 per cent of respondents to the on-line survey who had attended counseling services rated the counseling services as satisfactory. Counseling was provided to staff for various reasons including alcohol/substance abuse, burnout, depression, stress and trauma debriefing, to name a few.

25. With the commissioning of the Welfare Building at the Mission's Headquarters in Khartoum, facilities for provision of counseling services have been enhanced. The building has a dedicated room for counseling services to ensure that sessions are held in private. At the sectors, counselors use their offices for the provision of counseling services, although in some instances, counseling sessions were held at separate locations away from offices allocated to the Counseling staff.

D. Client satisfaction survey on welfare and counseling

26. OIOS conducted a survey to assess the counseling programmes in the Mission. 298 staff (208 civilians, 78 military and 12 police) responded to the survey. The survey covered: (a) welfare and counseling services provided by the Staff Counseling and Welfare Section; and (b) other welfare related services provided by other sections/units relating to transport, banking facilities, medical

services, cafeterias etc. The results are summarized below, with further details attached in Annex 2:

- Eighty per cent of respondents noted that the Mission is providing the required minimum welfare and recreation programmes and facilities;
- Eighty-four per cent of respondents who had attended counseling services stated they were provided with satisfactory services;
- For other welfare-related services provided by other sections/units in the Mission, the survey respondents indicated satisfaction on office security, transport, medical and travel related services; and
- There was a low level of satisfaction on services provided by the PX and cafeterias. The services of the PX were not easily accessible to staff located in sectors other than Khartoum and Juba. Survey respondents also commented on the lack of variety in food offered by the cafeterias.

Recommendation 7

(7) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should evaluate and put in place measures to improve the services provided by cafeterias and the Post Exchange commissary to better meet the requirements of staff.

27. *The UNMIS Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 8 and stated that contracts for the PX services and catering have been re-tendered. The new contracts are expected to result in improvements to services provided. Recommendation 7 remains open pending OIOS' verification of the measures put in place to improve the services provided to staff.*

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

28. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNMIS, in particular the Staff Counselling and Welfare Section for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
1	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should ensure that staff welfare and recreation work plans are prepared in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.	Compliance	Medium	O	Submission of the revised work plans in compliance with DPKO Standard Operating Procedures for audit verification.	13 August 2007
2	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should establish procedures for the management of staff welfare and recreation funds in the Mission.	Financial	Medium	O	Submission of the SOP and reporting guidelines on the accountability for funds collected for audit verification.	30 October 2009
3	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should ensure that the staff welfare and recreation committees prepare annual reports and financial statements on their activities and publish such reports to enhance accountability and transparency and promote participation of staff members in welfare activities.	Compliance	Medium	O	Submission of documents related to the preparation and broadcast of annual reports and financial statements of the respective welfare and recreation committees.	26 May 2009
4	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should prepare guidelines for the use of funds allocated to staff welfare and recreation committees from Post Exchange revenue. It should also establish a mechanism to provide sector welfare and recreation committees with information on a regular basis on the utilization of their allocated funds and on available balances.	Financial	Medium	O	Verification the SOP and monthly reports on utilization of funds.	30 October 2009
5	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should ensure sports and gymnasium equipment are adequately maintained to reduce the risk of injury to staff and to ensure welfare and recreation facilities are available to staff.	Operational	Medium	O	Confirmation of the establishment of the sports and gymnasium equipment maintenance programmes.	30 September 2009
6	The UNMIS Headquarters Executive	Strategy	Medium	O	Submission of guidelines and SOP issued	30 September 2009

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
7	Welfare and Recreation Committee should establish a standard fee structure for use of Mission-subsidized recreation facilities. The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should evaluate and put in place measures to improve the services provided by cafeterias and the Post Exchange commissary to better meet the requirements of staff.	Operational	Medium	O	on access fees to gymnasiums. Verification on the new measures put in place to improve services.	15 September 2009

1. C = closed, O = open
2. Date provided by UNMIS in response to recommendations.

Results of the Client Satisfaction Survey on UNMIS welfare, recreation and counseling services

1. Survey participation: 298 respondents (208 civilians, 78 military personnel and 12 police personnel).

Welfare and counseling services provided by the Staff Counseling and Welfare Section (SCWS)

2. Quality of counseling services provided by the SCWS:
 - 18% of the 298 respondents acknowledged having received counseling services
 - 84% of these recipients were satisfied with the services provided
 - 87% indicated their willingness to visit a Staff Counselor in future if needed
3. Training and awareness programs provided by SCWS:
 - 57% of respondents had participated/ attended these training and awareness programmes
 - 86% of the respondents who had attended these programs acknowledged that the training and awareness programmes were relevant and useful
4. Welfare and recreation:
 - 61% of respondents who had used the equipment at fitness centers rated the quality as satisfactory
 - 58% of respondents who participated in sports activities rated them as satisfactory
 - 67% of the respondents were satisfied with social events, dinners and parties
5. Salient comments made by respondents:
 - "Need for maintenance of sports facilities and repair of gymnasium equipment";
 - "There are limited sports facilities in team sites";
 - "Require more sports tournaments to be organized"
 - "Lack of active participation by national staff"
 - "Libraries: need for more variety of books and magazines; DVDs in bad condition".
6. Welfare flights organized by SCWS:
 - Respondents mentioned that the reason for not participating was that welfare trips were expensive and destinations were not of their interests. Most said they are willing to participate if these two aspects are addressed.
7. Reasons for not lack of or low participation in the SC&WS activities:

Of the total respondents,

 - 49% experienced time constrains
 - 14% were unaware of the activities
 - 13% expressed other varied reasons

Other welfare related services provided by the other sections/units in the Mission

8. For other welfare related services provided by the mission, the rating as satisfactory for these categories was as follows:

- Security provided at work site – 65%
- Services provided by contracted travel agency – 54%
- Transport facilities – 52%
- Medical services – 51%
- Transit accommodation for Mission staff – 49%
- Banking facilities – 46%
- Commissary (PX) – 36%
- Cafeteria – 33%

9. Salient comments made by respondents:

Cafeterias/ restaurants:

- “Not enough variety of meals - little choice for European/western/eastern staff”
- Khartoum: “The variety of food is a bit tasteless and seems unhealthy”
- Wau: “Food is horrible in terms of quality, quantity, variety and hygiene”
- Malakal: “The sanitation around the cafeteria is far from acceptable standards. The air conditioners blow hot air”.

Travel agent:

- ‘From the Sector it is not possible most of the time to use this service’
- ‘Very rude if you phone asking for help from regions. Not at all helpful and expensive compared to having to visit the airlines offices. This is due to the exuberance of lack of competition.’
- ‘There should be min 3 Travel Agents in the campus for purpose of competition of service and price. Present arrangement is monopoly and not personal service.’

PX:

- Sectors: ‘None available’
- ‘There is not continuity and variety of stock’.
- ‘Increase inventory and reduce prices’.
- ‘Illegal activities in selling alcohol in Khartoum to specific staff. It does not reflect the overall income of the PX and subsequently this leads to no contribution to the welfare’.

Banking:

- Khartoum: Lack of respect to customers, long queues
- Bank branch in Torit – “Does not have money. Most of the times to get money staffs need to fly to Juba, which is not easy due to the changing of the flight schedule”.