

Office of Internal Oversight Services

## **INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

# **AUDIT REPORT**

## **Audit of the use of United Nations Volunteers in UNMIS**

**The UNV programme had not been evaluated to  
determine its effectiveness in supporting  
peacekeeping operations**

**15 May 2009**

**Assignment No. AP2008/632/14**

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: 15 May 2009

REFERENCE: IAD: 09- 02427

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



SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2008/632/14 - Audit of the use of United Nations Volunteers in UNMIS**  
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. Based on your comments, we are pleased to inform you that we will close recommendation 3 in the OIOS recommendations database as indicated in Annex 1. In order for us to close the remaining 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 recommendations 2 and 4. In OIOS' opinion however, these recommendations seek to address significant risk areas. We are therefore reiterating them and request 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 and 4, in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

cc: Mr. Nicolas Von Ruben, Acting Director of Mission Support, UNMIS  
Mr. Farid Zarif, Chief of Staff, UNMIS  
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors  
Ms. Maria Gomez Troncoso, Officer-in-Charge, Joint Inspection Unit Secretariat  
Mr. Moses Bamuwamye, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management  
Ms. Maria Elena Munoz, Programme Officer, OIOS

## **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**

### **Use of United Nations Volunteers in UNMIS**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the use of United Nations Volunteers in UNMIS. The overall objective of the audit was to assess whether the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was effective and managed according to the terms established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Exchange of Letters. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

The UNV programme had succeeded in providing qualified UN Volunteers to UNMIS and the respective programme managers interviewed have acknowledged its effectiveness in supporting the Mission's operations. However, the following weaknesses were noted:

- The UNV programme had not been evaluated to determine its effectiveness in supporting peacekeeping operations;
- A UNV Support Office was established within the Office of Mission Support, but its terms of reference had not been defined;
- Some UN Volunteers had been delegated administrative functions and supervisory responsibilities, contrary to the terms and conditions established in the MoU;
- The half yearly performance appraisals for UN Volunteers had not been consistently done to support the extension of their assignment.

OIOS made recommendations to address the weaknesses noted and to further improve the UNV programme at the Mission.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Paragraphs
I. INTRODUCTION	1 – 6
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES	7
III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	8 – 10
IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
A. Compliance with Memorandum of Understanding, Exchange of Letters and internal guidelines	11 – 20
B. Effectiveness of the UNV programme	21 – 23
C. UN volunteers responses to OIOS survey	24 – 25
V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	26
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 use of United Nations Volunteers in 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 United Nations Volunteers (UNV) was created by the UN General Assembly in 1971 role to recruit, place and administer the services of qualified volunteers, who provide professional support to UN agencies in various programmes and countries. Since 1992, this collaboration was extended to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). UNV is based in Bonn, Germany and is represented worldwide through the offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

3. The Note on Guiding Principles and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), both signed on 18 November 2003 between DPKO and UNV, provide the principles and operational framework relating to the use of UN Volunteers in support of missions. The Exchange of Letters (EOL), signed also by DPKO and UNV, defines the specific terms of collaboration between any particular mission and UNV, including budget allocation.

4. The UNV programme in UNMIS was established in March 2005 and is managed by the UNV Support Office headed by a UNDP appointed Programme Manager who reports to the Chief of Administrative Services (CAS). Table 1 shows the total budgetary provisions for the programme, allocated in the Exchange of Letters for the last three fiscal years.

**Table 1: UNV programme funding and amount spent**

Year	Budget (\$)	Expenditures (\$)
2005-06	5,228,920	4,002,286
2006-07	7,773,678	7,160,700
2007-08	7,347,164	9,938,963

5. The recruitment of international UN Volunteers is managed by the UNV office in Bonn, while the recruitment of national UNV Volunteers is administered by the Mission's UNV Support Office. As at 30 June 2008, a total of 249 national and international UN Volunteers were on board, as shown in Table 2. Chart 1 shows the sections where the UN Volunteers had been assigned.

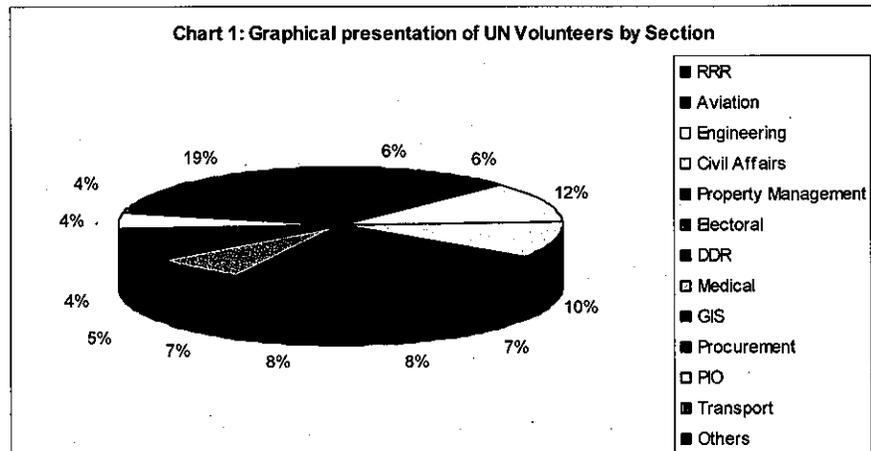
**Table 2: UNV Volunteers on-board as of 30 Jun 2008\***

UN Volunteers	Administrative	Substantive	Total	%
International	133	83	216	87%
National	0	33	33	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* This excludes five UN Volunteers appointed to the UNMIS UNV Support Office.

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Chart 1: Distribution of UN Volunteers by section



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

## II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

7. The main objectives of the audit were to:

- (a) Assess whether the UNV programme in UNMIS was managed according to the terms established in the MoU and EoL; and
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of UNV programme in supporting the substantive and administrative components of the Mission.

## III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The audit included the examination of the UNV programme in UNMIS for the last three fiscal years from 2005/06 to 2007/08. It did not cover the recruitment process of international UN Volunteers.

9. The audit methodology involved the review of relevant procedures in the management of the UNV programme, guidelines, budgets, UN Volunteers' allowance calculations, records supporting recruitment, and other human resource management related operations. It also included interviews of key personnel in the UNV Support Office; and two online surveys: (a) of programme managers with high percentage of UN Volunteers in their sections; and (b) UN Volunteers to evaluate the effectiveness of the UNV programme.

10. The MoU, handbook of Conditions of Service of International UN Volunteers, the EoLs and internal guidelines were used as audit criteria.

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## **IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Compliance with Memorandum of Understanding, Exchange of Letters and internal guidelines**

#### Delegation of supervisory functions to UN Volunteers

11. The established MoU states that UN Volunteers are not UN staff members and shall be under the overall direction and supervision of the Mission. This was emphasized in UNMIS Administrative Instruction 021/2008 dated 28 September 2008 which limits the role of UN Volunteers. Under this instruction, UN Volunteers may not be placed in functions involving significant administrative and financial responsibilities (requiring delegation of authority and approving/certifying functions) or the supervision of staff members. This instruction also established that any request to have volunteers acting as officer-in-charge (OIC) should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. However, the criteria and the procedures for such an evaluation to decide on the merit of allowing volunteers to act as an OIC and whether this has to be agreed to by UNDP have not been established.

12. The Mission has given functions and supervisory responsibilities to UN Volunteers, contrary to the terms and conditions of the MoU signed between UNV and DPKO. From an online survey sent to all the 249 UNV Volunteers in the Mission, 75 (30 per cent) responded. Of the 75 that responded, 35 (47 per cent) had acknowledged that they had at one point of time acted as OIC of their unit. In addition, 34 (45 per cent) of the 75 that responded stated that they have performed fiduciary functions and had been in custody of property and assets. Some volunteers have also mentioned that they had supervised national staff, mainly in sectors where there was no international staff in their units.

13. Lack of international staff in regions was mentioned by the Mission as the main reason for having UN Volunteers perform supervisory roles, with administrative or financial authority and/or in custody of assets. The Mission also explained that this issue had been addressed with the issuance of UNMIS Administrative Instruction 021/2008. The exception has been for the medical units in regions where the UNV medical officers are the only staff available to run the medical facilities. In other areas like team sites, those UN Volunteers with fiduciary duties are often under close supervision from the Sector Headquarters, and the OIC takes full responsibility for the duties delegated to the UN Volunteers.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**(1) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should establish criteria and procedures for requesting and evaluating the need for UN Volunteers to act as an officer-in-charge on an exceptional basis.**

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14. *UNMIS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission, in consultation with the UNV Support Office, will develop the required criteria and procedures for evaluating exceptional cases in which the UN Volunteers may act as an officer-in-charge. Recommendation 1 remains open pending the establishment of the recommended criteria and procedures.*

Roles and responsibilities of the UNV Support Office

15. The roles and responsibilities of the UNV Support Office have not yet been defined in EoLs, as prescribed in the MoU. Paragraph 3.4 of the MoU required that the UNV support unit's terms of references be determined in the applicable EoLs together with staffing and financial requirements. The UNMIS EoLs signed by DPKO and UNV programme management each fiscal year, did not specify these terms of reference. UNMIS management explained that because the UNV support unit established in each mission has a different degree of responsibilities and functions, it is not feasible for DPKO to develop common terms of references for all of them. While appreciating this, OIOS wishes to point out that the Mission has not identified the specific roles and responsibilities of its UNV Support Office and its functional relationship with other sections/units. Having such terms of reference for the UNV Support Office will assist in providing clarity and better understanding about the programme and its role in the Mission.

**Recommendation 2**

**(2) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should issue guidelines to programme managers explaining the specific roles and responsibilities of the UNV Support Office and its functional relationship with other sections/units in the administration of the UNV programme.**

16. *UNMIS did not accept recommendation, stating that the MoU and EoLs were between DPKO and UNV Headquarters and as such the Terms of Reference or roles and responsibilities should be determined as part of the MoU and with specific details included in the EoL. While OIOS understands that the MoU and EoL should establish the roles and responsibilities of the UNV Support Office, it is the Mission that is in the best capacity to define its functional relationship with other sections/units established within the Mission. OIOS believes that clarity of the functions and roles of the UNV Support Office and its relationship with Mission's sections/units will improve the management of the UNV programme and its coordination within the Mission. The Mission should raise this matter with the Department of Field Support for further action. Recommendation 1 remains open pending response from the Department of Field Support and the Mission's elaboration of the roles and responsibilities of its sections/units with the UNV Support Office.*

Performance evaluation on volunteers not done consistently

17. Most UN Volunteers have been engaged on six-month contracts. Performance evaluation at the end of each term is essential to enable

management to assess the capability of the UN Volunteer and the areas that need training to enhance skills. The UNV handbook on "Conditions of Service for international UN Volunteers" stipulates that the extension of assignment for a UN Volunteer is subject to the satisfactory performance of the UN Volunteer, confirmation of funds from the funding agency (the Mission) and agreement from all parties concerned. The current practice for the extension of assignment is based on confirmation of funds and agreement from the UNMIS programme manager (supervisor) who recommends the extension, the agreement of the concerned UN Volunteer to continue the current assignment and the confirmation from UNV Support Office that the post indicated by the supervisor is available. There is no endorsement from the supervisor that the recommendation for extension of assignment is also based on satisfactory performance, supported by a copy of the performance appraisal report.

18. From the review of a sample of 45 files of international UN Volunteers, OIOS found 12 cases of six-monthly performance appraisals that were not consistently done. For example, a UN Volunteer who had a six-month extension of assignment over a period of three years has undergone a performance evaluation only twice instead six times during the period. Table 3 shows more examples of similar cases.

**Table 3: International UN Volunteers Performance Appraisal Reports**

<b>ID number</b>	<b>EOD</b>	<b>In UNMIS as of 30 June 08</b>	<b>Total number of evaluations</b>
UNV00009	10.Mar.05	3.3 years	2
UNV00026	19. May.05	3.1 years	1
UNV00039	14.Jul.05	3 years	1
UNV00087	18.Jan.06	2.4 years	2
UNV00100	20.Feb.06	2.4 years	1
UNV00111	04.May.06	2.2 years	(*)
UNV00112	06.May.06	2.2 years	1
UNV00116	12.May.06	2.1 years	(*)
UNV00134	03.Jun.06	2.1 years	2
UNV00143	13.Jun.06	2 years	1
UNV00146	24.Jun.06	2 years	(*)
UNV00159	19.Aug.06	2 years	(*)

(\*) - no evaluation reports on file

19. Although paragraph 3.7 of the MoU requires assignment monitoring, performance reviews and evaluations of the UN Volunteers, discussions with the UNV Support Office showed that there was lack of compliance with this requirement because evaluations were not considered compulsory since the UN Volunteers contracts were not considered career contracts. The Mission faced the risk of extending contracts to UNV Volunteers with poor performance. Also, a systematic record of UN Volunteers performance is necessary if they are to be considered for employment within the UN.

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### **Recommendation 3**

**(3) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should enforce compliance with the periodic performance evaluation requirement and the use of the performance appraisal report in determining whether the contract of a UNV Volunteer should be extended.**

20. *UNMIS accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the covering memorandum, attached to the intention of extension of contracts sent to each section chief, has been amended to include the statement "It is mandatory that a Performance Appraisal Report be finalized and submitted with the memo indicating intention to extend".* Based on the action taken by UNMIS, recommendation 3 has been closed.

### **B. Effectiveness of the UNV programme**

21. Programme evaluation is important to assess the effectiveness and impact of a specific programme in terms of its objectives, with the aim to improve its performance. The Mission has not evaluated the effectiveness of the UNV programme since its inception in 2005. The UNV programme is misunderstood and viewed as another staff category in the Mission rather than a programme. The General Assembly's Draft Resolution A/C.5/60/L.60 dated 28 June 2006, requested the Secretary General to evaluate the contribution of UN Volunteers as a component of peacekeeping operations. As of the date of the audit, there had not been any evaluation of the UNV programme either by DPKO or the Mission. Without periodic evaluation of the UNV programme, the Mission is not in a position to provide feedback to DPKO as to the effectiveness and the impact of the programme in the peacekeeping operations environment.

22. OIOS solicited views from 15 programme managers who have been utilizing the majority of the UN Volunteers in their respective sections. Ten programme managers who responded expressed that the overall performance of the UN Volunteers within their sections has been consistently satisfactory. They praised the UNV programme as it assures them of quick recruitment and placement and also to get qualified, productive and motivated staff. However, they also pointed out the need to improve their working relationship with the UNV Support Office such as the need for clear terms of reference between their sections and the UNV Support Office that will explicitly allocate responsibilities and minimize any room for conflict.

### **Recommendations 4**

**(4) The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should evaluate the UNV programme to determine its effectiveness and impact in supporting peacekeeping operations and provide feedback to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.**

23. *UNMIS did not accept recommendation 4 and stated that the Mission's evaluation takes place in the form of annual budget requests for United Nations*

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*Volunteer.* OIOS is of the opinion that the Mission's request for annual budget does not adequately evaluate the effectiveness and impact of UNV programme in supporting peacekeeping operations. A comprehensive evaluation of the UNV programme will determine its impact and identify room for further improvements. OIOS is therefore reiterating this recommendation and requests that UNMIS reconsider its initial position on the matter. Recommendation 4 remains open pending the Mission's comprehensive evaluation of the UNV programme and the submission of feedback to Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

### **C. UN Volunteers responses to OIOS survey**

#### Concerns expressed by UN Volunteers

24. OIOS solicited views of the UN Volunteers to identify areas of concern and where improvement of the UNV programme in UNMIS is needed. From an online survey sent to all the 249 UN Volunteers in the Mission, 75 (30 per cent) responded. Following are some major points that emerged from the survey:

- Forty-six per cent mentioned volunteerism as their main motivation to join the Mission, while 40 per cent pointed out career opportunity as their main reason;
- Fifty-four per cent mentioned that allowances are not sufficient to meet their basic needs in the Mission (food, accommodation, etc); and
- Sixty-three per cent mentioned that support from the Mission/UNV Support Office has been satisfactory.

25. The survey also identified elements of dissatisfaction which may have a negative impact on volunteers' motivation and their contribution to the Mission's operations. A high degree of discontent with regard to allowance and hazard pay differences in comparison to UNMIS international civilian staff and contractors were considered discriminatory and insufficient to meet the volunteers' basic needs and travel costs to avail of the rest and recreation entitlement. The Mission explained that the main emphasis of the UNV programme is volunteerism and that the allowances paid to UN Volunteers is being periodically reviewed and revised based on the survey done by the UNV Programme Office in Bonn. A comprehensive evaluation of the UNV programme in supporting peacekeeping operations as recommended in paragraph 22 above will provide adequate information for managerial decision with regard to areas to improve the UNV programme and the welfare of the volunteers.

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## **V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

26. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of the UNV Support Office of UNMIS for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/ <sup>1</sup> O <sup>2</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>2</sup>
1	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should establish the criteria and procedures for requesting and evaluating the need for UNV Volunteers to act as officer-in-charge on an exceptional basis.	Compliance	Medium	O	The establishment of the criteria and procedures for evaluating exceptional cases in which the UN Volunteers may act as an officer-in-charge.	Not provided
2	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should issue out guidelines to programme managers explaining the specific roles and responsibilities of the UNV Support Office and its functional relationship with other sections/units in the administration of the UNV programme.	Human Resources	Medium	O	The issuance of guidelines to define the roles and functional relationship of the UNV Support Office with other sections/units of the Mission.	Not provided
3	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should enforce the compliance of periodic performance evaluations and the use of the Performance Appraisal Report in determining the extension of the UNV Volunteers' assignment in the Mission.	Human Resources	Medium	C	Action complete	Implemented
4	The UNMIS Office of Mission Support should evaluate the UNV programme to determine its effectiveness and impact in supporting peacekeeping operations and provide feedback to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.	Compliance	High	O	Comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the UNV programme in the Mission and the submission of its feedbacks to DPKO and DFS.	Not provided

<sup>1</sup> C = closed, O = open<sup>2</sup> Date provided by UNMIS in response to recommendations