



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

AUDIT REPORT

OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division's structure

There are opportunities for the Division to improve clarity of roles and responsibilities, efficiency of work flow processes and effectiveness of coordination arrangements

1 April 2011
Assignment No. AE2010/331/02

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: Ms Navanethem Pillay, High Commissioner
A: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

DATE: 1 April 2011

REFERENCE: IAD: 11- **00331**

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



SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AE2010/331/02 – Audit of OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division's structure**
OBJET: **Cooperation Division's structure**

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. 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. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as high risk (i.e., recommendations 2, 3 and 5), in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

cc: Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Deputy High Commissioner
Mr. Anders Kompass, Director, Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, OHCHR
Ms. Marianne Haugaard, Coordinator, Programme Support Unit, Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, OHCHR
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Mr. Rohan Wijeratne, Board of Auditors
Ms. Susanne Frueh, Executive Secretary, Joint Inspection Unit
Mr. Jonathan Childerley, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Special Assistant to the USG-OIOS
Mr. Christopher F. Bagot, Chief, Geneva Audit Service, OIOS
Ms. Amy Wong, Programme Officer, Internal Audit Division, 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).

CONTACT INFORMATION

DIRECTOR:

Fatoumata Ndiaye: Tel: +1.212.963.5648, Fax: +1.212.963.3388,
e-mail: ndiaye@un.org

DEPUTY DIRECTOR:

Gurpur Kumar: Tel: +1.212.963.5920, Fax: +1.212.963.3388,
e-mail: kumarg@un.org

CHIEF, GENEVA AUDIT SERVICE:

Christopher F. Bagot: Tel: +41.22.917.2731, Fax: +41.22.917.0011,
e-mail: cbagot@unog.ch

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Audit of OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division's structure

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division's (FOTCD) structure. The overall objective of the audit was to assess whether FOTCD's structure was appropriate for its mandated objectives and functions. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

The audit was undertaken at the request of the FOTCD Director as part of the Division's ongoing efforts to improve efficiency. FOTCD's main role is to spearhead the implementation of OHCHR's work at the country level. The Division's role and functions have expanded over the years particularly following the adoption of the 2005 plan of action that marked a shift at OHCHR towards greater country engagement. For the biennium 2010-2011, its total budget was \$155 million (41 per cent of the overall OHCHR budget). This budget does not include the costs relating to the human rights components in the 14 peacekeeping missions that are also supported by FOTCD on substantive issues.

The overall conclusion of the audit was that FOTCD's structure was appropriate for its mandated objectives but opportunities exist to improve clarity of roles and responsibilities, efficiency of work processes and effectiveness of coordination arrangements as discussed below:

- Review and clarify desk functions and assess the need to modify them and the related job descriptions.
- Review and document workflow processes and assess the extent to which approval of outputs could be delegated to branches and where layers of review could be removed in order to improve efficiency.
- Establish internal procedures for the orientation of new staff, and the handover and filing of substantive and administrative documents.
- Establish a system for monitoring the level of field offices' satisfaction with Headquarters support.

The audit also identified issues that needed to be considered at the office level to assist FOTCD:

- Put in place a plan of action to implement the recommendations raised by the Organizational Effective Programme Task Force on Recruitment.
- Establish guidelines for coordination arrangements between FOTCD, field presences and OHCHR New York.
- Establish procedures that make it mandatory for FOTCD to always be informed about all activities relating to specific countries.

All the recommendations were accepted and are in the process of being implemented.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division's (FOTCD) structure. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

2. The audit was undertaken at the request of the FOTCD Director as part of its ongoing efforts to improve efficiency in discharging its mandate.

3. FOTCD is the operational arm of OHCHR that spearheads the implementation of OHCHR's work at the country level. Its main functions are:

- Engagement with countries to improve the human rights situation on the ground. FOTCD leads and coordinates the provision of substantive and operational support to OHCHR's 53 field presences in collaboration with other OHCHR divisions. The field presences fall into four categories: 12 country and stand-alone offices; 12 Regional Offices or centres; 157 Human Rights Advisors; and 14 Human Rights components of field presences. FOTCD also provides substantive and operational support to the eight Special Procedures mandate holders with specific geographic mandates, and directly implements human rights initiatives in countries where OHCHR has no field presence.
- Provision of advice, guidance and information on the human rights situation of countries to various parties including the High Commissioner; Deputy High Commissioner; Human Rights Council, Treaty Bodies, OHCHR Divisions; OHCHR New York Office; and other United Nations officials including the Secretary-General. This involves, inter alia, preparing briefing notes or talking points for meetings, participation in meetings and providing inputs to reports.

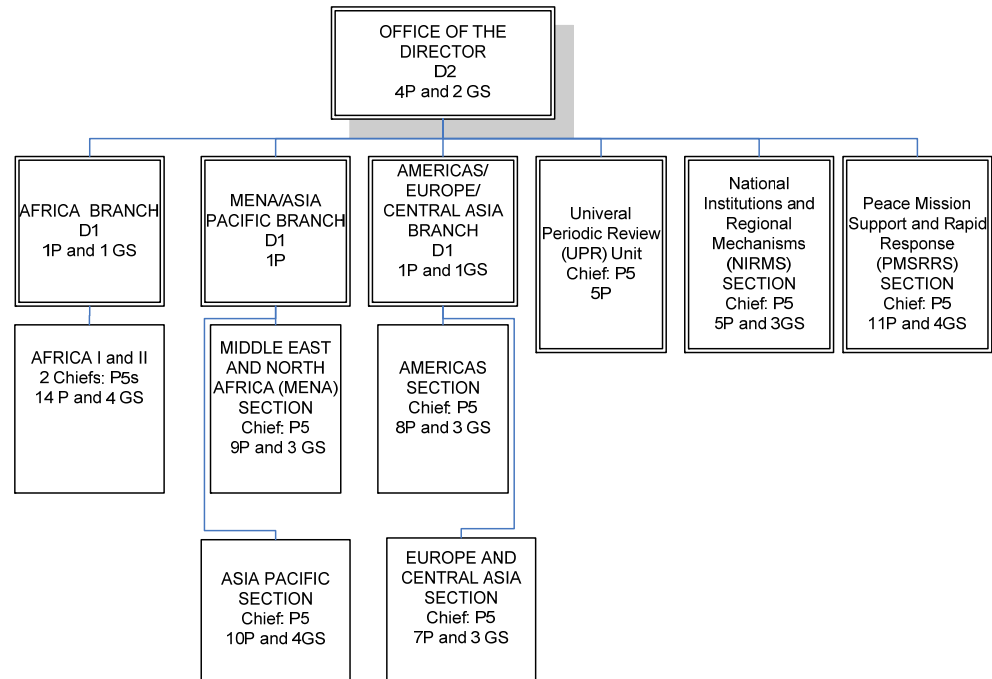
4. FOTCD's role and functions have expanded in scope and size over the years as OHCHR has undergone significant growth since the establishment of the post and mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/141 of December 1993. In particular, the implementation of the 2005 plan of action that marked a shift at OHCHR towards greater country engagement and the establishment of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2006 which has a broader mandate than its predecessor the Commission on Human Rights, led to significant growth and expansion in FOTCD's workload. The number of field presences increased from one in 1993, to 40 in 2004, to the current 53, and field operations currently constitute almost 50 per cent of OHCHR's overall budget. Further, the 2011 upgrading of the New York Office leadership to Assistant Secretary-General has intensified the input and coordination FOTCD has to provide on country-specific issues.

5. It is essential that FOTCD performs its core functions of supporting the field presences and Executive Office, and of collaborating with the New York Office and the rest of OHCHR sections and divisions in an even, timely and

efficient manner. FOTCD indicated that because of competing demands, some aspects of the work particularly support to field presences could sometimes be marginalized. Other major inherent risks FOTCD indicated it faces include coping with the significant growth, the unpredictable nature of the workload, political constraints inherent in field offices and dependence on other agencies for administrative support of the field offices since OHCHR has limited delegation of authority for administrative issues.

6. A Director at the D-2 level (Division Director) who reports to the Deputy High Commissioner currently heads FOTCD, which is structured into five geographical regions (FOTCD branches and sections) and three other thematic sections. The current structure was established in the restructuring exercise carried out in 2009 that involved placing the five geographical sections under three new branches headed by D-1 posts (Branch Chiefs). Prior to the restructuring, the heads of the geographical sections (Section Chiefs) reported to the Division Director. The FOTCD branches and sections have approximately 50 Professional staff (desk officers) who act as focal points for all issues relating to the countries assigned to them and backstop for the field offices in those countries. Chart 1 below shows FOTCD organizational chart.

Chart 1: FOTCD organizational chart as at 31 December 2010



7. FOTCD’s budget for the period 2010-2011 is \$155 million (41 per cent of the total OHCHR budget). This budget does not include the budgets relating to the human rights components of the 14 peacekeeping missions that are also substantively supported by OHCHR since they are financed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) budget.

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

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

9. The main objective of the audit was to assess whether FOTCD's structure was appropriate for its mandated objectives and functions. This included reviewing the following:

- (a) Appropriateness and clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- (b) Efficiency of the work flow processes; and
- (c) Adequacy of arrangements for coordination of activities within FOTCD and with field offices as well as other OHCHR divisions.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

10. The audit was conducted between September and November 2010. It involved the review of the current FOTCD structure and the way it supports the FOTCD branches and sections' activities and processes. The audit focused on the FOTCD branches and sections, and also reviewed coordination between FOTCD and the other OHCHR sections including the three FOTCD thematic sections (PMSRRS, NIRMS and UPR). However, the audit did not include a review of the internal structure and work processes of the three FOTCD thematic sections since they have distinct mandates that would be more appropriately addressed in separate audits. Also, OIOS conducted an audit of PMSRRS in 2010 (AE2011/336/01, final report issued in May 2010). The activities of the UPR and NIRMS will be considered in future OIOS audit work plans.

11. The audit methodology comprised interviews and workshops with responsible personnel including field office staff, interview with the OHCHR Organizational Effectiveness Programme consultant, review of documentation, verification of processes, and analysis of relevant data and comparison of the structure with other UN agencies to identify best practices.

IV. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Roles and responsibilities

Need to review, clarify and modify desk functions and desk officers' job descriptions

12. FOTCD branches and sections' roles and responsibilities (henceforth referred to as desk functions) cover a broad spectrum of work involving field offices and all other OHCHR divisions. Therefore, documenting and communicating the extent to which the desk officers are involved in the various categories of desk functions is important in ensuring that the desk functions are clearly defined and understood by all staff.

13. FOTCD had developed in 2006 a policy paper that had a comprehensive list of the desk functions. Job classifications and related job descriptions for the

desk officers were also established accordingly. The desk functions can be divided into the following broad categories:

- Substantive functions, such as supporting field offices in formulating strategies through research and analysis of information;
- Programme support functions including administrative functions;
- Advisory functions, such as preparing briefing notes and talking points; and
- Support to the Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies.

14. However, clarity over the extent to which the desk officers should be involved in the various functions was affected by the factors discussed below.

15. FOTCD had not reviewed the policy paper on desk functions since it was established in 2006 and there were variations between what was envisioned when the posts were established and the proportion of time that desk officers were actually spending on the various categories of desk functions. Desk officers informed OIOS that they were increasingly spending more time on the programme support and advisory functions reducing the time available to work on substantive functions, such as research and analysis, review of monthly reports and support in programme formulation, as per their standard job description.

16. There was also a need to clarify some grey areas relating to desk functions such as the extent to which desk officers should be involved in reviewing web stories, thank you letters and translation of documents. Desk officers were of the view that some of these tasks were not priority areas and/or should not be within their responsibilities. The possibility of copying or informing desk officers rather than requiring them to be involved in such tasks needed to be considered. Further, the desk officers at the P-2, P-3 and P-4 levels performed similar functions in most cases irrespective of their grades, contrary to the job classifications and the structure stipulated in the 2006 policy paper. This needed to be addressed because it could mean that either the posts are not appropriately classified or the higher-grade posts are not being optimally utilized. There were also uncertainties regarding the division of tasks between the desk officers and administrative staff in the FOTCD branches and sections, which showed that there is a need to review and clarify desk officers' roles in relation to administrative functions.

17. FOTCD had also not communicated the 2006 policy paper on desk functions to the field offices and other OHCHR sections. Further, there was a need to review and clarify the division of responsibilities, authority and accountability between the FOTCD branches and sections and other OHCHR sections and offices, including OHCHR New York office, for cross-cutting or overlapping work areas, in order to clarify the role of the desk officers in these areas. Examples include desk officers' involvement in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, peace mission support, humanitarian action work and support to national institutions. As these areas are important and sometimes involve several sections, informal work division had not always been effective.

18. In addition, the FOTCD branches and sections identified priority countries but the difference in desk functions between priority and non-priority countries had not been clearly communicated. Therefore, other sections and field offices expected the same level of support for all countries. The impact of the expansion in the work of the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies and the growth in the number of field offices on desk officers' workload was also not regularly assessed as part of the work planning and therefore needed to be assessed.

19. Because of these shortcomings, there was a risk that FOTCD had not adequately determined and prioritized desk functions and assessed whether it has staff with the appropriate mix of grades, skills, training and experience to effectively perform the desk functions. For example, consideration needed to be given on whether some of the desk officer posts should be for specialized administrative and programme support functions to support the high level of programmatic and administrative support required by large field presences. This was already the case for one of the large field presences and experience from this arrangement would provide a useful basis for assessing the required staff mix. There is also a risk that vacancy announcements and recruitment may not be adequately focusing on all the essential aspects of desk functions, and FOTCD branches and sections may not be clearly communicating the nature of desk functions to applicants to enable them to make informed career decisions. This was evidenced by the fact that desk officers interviewed indicated that they had different expectations of the job and that this was a source of frustration.

Recommendation 1

(1) The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) should review, clarify and modify FOTCD branches and sections' roles and responsibilities (desk functions) and desk officers' job descriptions, including but not limited to: (a) assessing the gaps in functions that desk officers are currently not able to perform; (b) clarifying and documenting the division of responsibilities, authority and accountability for overlapping or cross-cutting work areas; and (c) determining the appropriate mix of staff grade, skills and experience.

20. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 1 and stated that a review of the functions of desk officers is necessary, taking into account the growth of the Division and the human rights field presences, as well as other developments such as the role of the New York Office, which have impacted the workload of the FOTCD branches and sections and also requires a more strategic approach in the way the Division and the overall Office operate. A review and redefinition of the functions of desk officers is important, as their role does not appear to be fully or evenly understood by colleagues in the field and in other Divisions. As raised in the present report, a major issue faced by desk officers is the considerable amount of time they are compelled to dedicate to administrative matters. Thus, in parallel to the functions of desk officers, a review of the functions of GS staff within the Division would be needed. The role and*

responsibilities of the Programme Support and Management Services should also be considered in this context. It is considered, however, that the description of the functions of the desk offices cannot be rigid given in particular the importance of a multidisciplinary approach and of general constraints related to administrative procedures, or the different types of field presences. Harmonized clearance procedures for FOTCD Branches, including responsibilities for daily tasks not requiring policy or strategic decisions, are yet to be implemented on a routine basis. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a strategy or plan of action for reviewing and clarifying the desk functions which should include: assessment of priority functions that desk officers currently are not able to perform consistently; consultation with other divisions to clarify and document the division of responsibilities and where applicable coordination arrangements; review of the standard job descriptions; and assessment of the appropriate mix of staff grade and skill that FOTCD will aim to achieve in the long run.

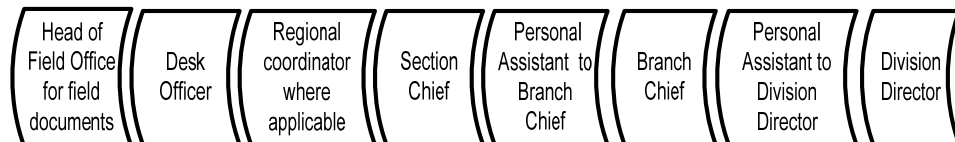
B. Work flow processes

Need to review and document the approval process for outputs

21. Outputs produced by the FOTCD branches and sections include reports, briefing notes, talking points, press releases, letters, planning documents and various administrative memos on human resources and financial issues. Efficient clearance of outputs is essential given the considerable amount of documents that FOTCD submits to the Executive Office, the New York Office as well as to other parts of the Secretariat.

22. The clearance process for most outputs followed the pattern outlined in Chart 2 below. In addition, documents requiring clearance by the High Commissioner went through additional clearance processes at the Front Office and administrative documents were further reviewed by the Human Resources and Finance Sections.

Chart 2: Workflow process for approval of outputs



23. The clearance process was not efficient because it was lengthy and was the same for most outputs irrespective of the level of importance or risk associated with the outputs. The review layers increased after the 2009 restructuring because a new level of management was added, but the workflow processes were not adequately reviewed and therefore opportunities to minimize the review layers were not adequately assessed. For example, currently the clearance of administrative actions are shared between the Division Director and the Branch Chiefs. There is a potential for the Division Director to delegate to the Branch Chiefs the clearance of almost all human resources and financial issues and use monitoring tools or post facto review of reports for oversight purposes. Further, there is a potential to combine the review by the Division

Director's and Branch Chiefs' personal assistants since the focus of review is similar. Combining the review would also have the added benefit of helping to clarify whether the Director's clearance was required and minimize the uncertainties and inconsistencies currently experienced. There was also a potential to limit the layers of review of administrative documents emanating from the field offices since P-5 and D-1 staff in the field have already signed off on them. Reducing the layers would help clarify accountability and minimize inefficiencies.

24. Further, there were inefficiencies because of uncertainties and inconsistencies regarding which documents required final clearance by the Branch Chiefs and Division Director. This was mainly because the senior managers' responsibilities for clearance of documents had not been adequately clarified. Workflow processes were not documented and the documentation of the division of roles and responsibilities for the clearance of the outputs between the senior managers (D-2, D-1 and P-5) did not go into sufficient details on responsibilities for clearance of the various types of outputs particularly administrative outputs. For example, human resources was covered as one general area yet there are various types of human resources related outputs which can have different review levels. In relation to substantive outputs, the Division Director's office issued additional guidelines on clearance of documents but there were still inconsistencies partly because the structure was still new, but also because the extent to which the Branch Chiefs can approve outputs that required sign off by the High Commissioner or the Deputy High Commissioner had not been adequately clarified.

Recommendation 2

(2) The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division should review and document the work flow processes for all regular outputs and assess the extent to which approval of outputs could be delegated to the branches and sections and where layers of review could be removed in order to improve efficiency of the clearance process for the Division's outputs.

25. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the clearance of documents at all levels of the Division absorbs a tremendous amount of time and merits rethinking, notably through more delegation to the branch and, in some cases, to section chiefs. The Director's office has prepared a list of documents with division of clearance responsibilities among the D-2 and D-1s and will review this list by the end of March 2011, providing for delegation of authority while bearing in mind the responsibilities and accountability of the Director and his office. This division of labour will be clearly communicated to the Executive Office. It should be underlined that the clearance process at the level of the Director is prompt, particularly taking into account the considerable number and variety of submissions (up to 30 documents a day) – which actually constitutes only one fragment of the responsibilities of the Director. Indeed, clearance is usually immediate (e.g., briefing notes, letters, memos) and only exceptionally exceeds one day, even for most cumbersome documents such as public reports.*

The overall clearance process, from the field or the desk to the Executive Office can be lengthy, bearing in mind the overall workload. The current distribution of documents (whether cleared or with requests and suggestions for revisions) can also contribute to delays as, given the number of documents submitted, the Director's Office cannot physically return them. Responsible sections are to retrieve documents but do so at various rhythms. Thus, in addition to the OIOS suggestions, FOTCD will consider and put in place a more efficient system to ensure that documents are promptly collected, revised and transmitted. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of the plan of action for reviewing and documenting work flow processes for regular outputs of the FOTCD branches and sections.

Need to improve efficiency in the recruitment process

26. During the period 2009-2010, FOTCD filled 54 posts at HQ and in the field, and, as at the end of October 2010, it had about 60 ongoing recruitment cases. In addition, FOTCD issued some 90 short-term vacancy announcements in the period 2009-2010. Efficient and timely recruitment is essential because delays in recruitment can adversely affect timely programme delivery. FOTCD also informed OIOS that they were concerned that its staff were spending too much time on recruitment at the expense of substantive work. In recognition of the delays and inefficiencies experienced in the recruitment process, OHCHR had set up an interdivisional task force, the Organizational Effectiveness Programme (OEP) Task Force on Recruitment, to review the recruitment process. The task force carried out its work at the same time as the audit was being conducted and its findings were presented to the Senior Management Team and endorsed in November 2010. OIOS reviewed the results of the task force's work and agrees with the following major recommendations that addressed efficiency issues:

- As much as possible, the selection process should be dealt with by the office concerned, e.g., for recruitments in the field, the hiring manager should be the supervisor of the post, which in most cases is also the head of that field office.
- The use of generic job profiles. FOTCD had already drafted the generic vacancy announcement for P-3 posts, but this was pending approval by the Human Resources Section at the time of the audit.
- A more efficient use of the established rosters for recruiting professionals at the P-3 level as well as possibly at the P-4 level.
- The Directors or the Branch Chiefs should decide the selection of all temporary staff regardless of the duration of the assignment.
- The establishment of a roster of professional candidates for the filling of temporary vacant posts.
- The establishment of a set of user-friendly guidelines or questions and answers, clearly outlining and explaining to staff key issues relating to OHCHR's recruitment process such as applicants' entitlements, hiring managers and senior managers responsibilities, application of geographic diversity measures equally at all levels, etc. as defined by the UN Charter, Human Resources Action Plan and ST/AI/2010/3.

27. The task force also recommended that for HQ-based recruitment, the Programme Support and Management Services (PSMS) should manage the entire process of setting up interview panels through the establishment of a roster of potential panel members. However, there was a need to ensure that this was done within the framework of the United Nations Administrative Instruction on recruitment, ST/AI/2010/3. Therefore, although the Human Resources Section can support and manage the short-listing and evaluation process, the hiring managers such as FOTCD will have to remain responsible and accountable for the short listing and evaluation decisions, in compliance with the administrative instruction. OHCHR should ensure that the role of the Human Resources Section relating to interview and evaluation of staff is adequately clarified.

Recommendation 3

(3) OHCHR should put in place an action plan to implement the recommendations raised by the Organizational Effectiveness Programme Task Force on Recruitment.

28. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 3 and stated that most of the recommendations of the OEP Task Force were endorsed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on 16 November 2010 and are pending the endorsement by the High Commissioner. It should also be noted that some recommendations first require action by a review group to be composed of PSMS/Human Resources Management Section, the Staff Committee and the OEP Review Group focal point. FOTCD stands ready to implement the recommendations and hopes to discuss the OEP task force recommendations at this year's Heads of Field Presences Meeting. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of the conclusions reached by the review group established to look at the OEP task force recommendations and a plan of action for implementing the recommendations endorsed by the High Commissioner and the review group.*

Need to establish internal procedures to ensure consistency in the way FOTCD branches and sections conduct their work

29. Internal procedures within the Division are useful to guide staff in the implementation of office-wide policies in cases where there is a need to tailor the organizational policies to the specific needs of the division. The audit identified the following areas where the FOTCD branches and sections would benefit from internal procedures:

- Orientation of new staff: Other than the office-wide orientation of new staff that takes place once a year, there was no formal requirement for orientation of new staff within the Division. Most new staff indicated that this delayed their learning of procedures and work arrangements.
- Handover notes were not consistently prepared, filed and archived, and those prepared were of varying degrees of quality and length. FOTCD had not established the minimum information requirements that needed to be included in handover notes and a mechanism to ensure that the handover

notes are prepared consistently. Because of the nature of desk functions, handover notes are essential and the level of details required in hand over notes need to be tailored to the divisions needs'. A requirement that supervisors ensure this is done before signing off the separation exit form would help to improve compliance.

- Standard filing indexes were developed by most sections but they were of varying degree of quality. There were opportunities for the sections to compare and share good practices, and consideration should be given to standardizing the system in all sections. There was also a need to improve procedures to ensure that all documents were filed. This is essential in the FOTCD branches and sections because of the regular requirement to prepare briefing notes and talking points at short notice and therefore the need to always refer to information in files. One consideration would be centralizing the filing system at the section, branch and Director Level, as appropriate, which would help ensure that all documents are filed and that the division can then comply with the archiving requirements. At the office level, a new post for archiving was established which may further help in monitoring the division's compliance with office wide archiving requirements.

Recommendation 4

(4) The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division should establish internal procedures for the orientation of new staff and the handover and filing of both administrative and substantive documents.

30. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 4 and stated that this is essentially the responsibility of the Staff Development Unit in cooperation with FOTCD. PSMS is recruiting a dedicated archive focal point, a post co-funded by all Divisions. Handover would be covered by FOTCD. Based on FOTCD's comments, OIOS has revised the original recommendation made in the draft report to exclude the reference to training and archiving which it agrees first need to be addressed at the office level before FOTCD can effectively implement the related internal procedures or practices. However, establishing the division's filing system and ensuring documents are appropriately filed requires internal procedures or instructions at FOTCD level which would help the division to comply with the organization-wide archiving policies once they are implemented. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of details of FOTCD internal procedures for the orientation of new staff and the handover and filing of documents.*

C. Coordination

Need for guidelines on coordination between FOTCD, field offices and OHCHR New York (NY)

31. OHCHR NY is responsible for ensuring that human rights issues are integrated into the United Nations agenda and for providing substantive support on human rights issues to the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies. Effective coordination with OHCHR NY is therefore essential in

ensuring that FOTCD branches, sections and field offices optimize the opportunities available in New York-based United Nations agencies and intergovernmental bodies to address relevant human rights issues. FOTCD branches, sections and field offices need to be kept informed about discussions or issues carried out in New York. Similarly, OHCHR NY needs to receive information from FOTCD and the field in a timely manner if such input is to have impact. Regular interactions and discussions between the trio (field, FOTCD and NY) are also essential.

32. Currently, the tools used to facilitate coordination include: the OHCHR NY intranet page, while not updated regularly, had useful background information, some guidelines and a section on updates; and other useful practices such as the updates provided by OHCHR NY at the weekly senior management meetings and OHCHR NY participation in the new staff orientation programmes.

33. Staff from both OHCHR NY and FOTCD indicated that there had been improvements in interactions during the last year, which could be attributed to the transfer of staff from headquarters to NY. However, there were no comprehensive guidelines on the coordination arrangements. Such guidelines would help to ensure that a clear strategy for addressing the communication arrangements at the current resource levels is established and that the current good practices are formalized and consistently applied. This is consistent with recommendations made in a workshop organized by FOTCD during the April 2010 annual heads of field meeting, which included participants from the field, FOTCD and OHCHR NY and identified the need to improve current arrangements for communication and interaction. Some of the major recommendations made are summarized below:

- Need to establish regular, frequent and systematic exchange of information such as monthly reports from Geneva, New York and the field;
- Three-way communication should be ensured and should be set up as part of standard operating procedures;
- OHCHR NY to hold regular briefings and trainings;
- A common shared drive of updated and thematic country information should be established;
- Integrated working cells of relevant desk officers from Geneva, OHCHR NY and the field should be established; and
- Shared priority identification and setting.

Recommendation 5

(5) OHCHR should establish guidelines for coordination arrangements between the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, field presences and OHCHR New York.

34. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 5 and stated that this point is critical, particularly since the establishment of the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) post in New York and the dynamic role the ASG has been playing. In this context, it is important to define the respective roles of the New York Office*

(NYO) and FOTCD, notably with regard to interaction with other entities of the Secretariat or participation in technical assessment missions. FOTCD, but also the Office at large, needs to be strategic in its relationship with the New York Office. The role of the New York Office, with enhanced leadership at the ASG level, continues to evolve, and FOTCD, together with NYO and other parts of OHCHR, as relevant, will work on improving coordination. FOTCD, together with NYO and other parts of OHCHR, as relevant, will work on guidelines to improve and facilitate coordination. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of guidelines for coordination arrangements between FOTCD, NYO and the field.

Need for FOTCD to be consistently informed about activities relating to specific countries

35. To ensure cohesion in OHCHR activities, the FOTCD branches and sections and in particular the desk officers as the focal point for OHCHR engagement with countries need to be always informed about country-specific events and initiatives such as seminars, meetings, visits to countries, press conferences, invitations to government officials for events and any other projects relating to specific countries.

36. Some efforts were being made to improve the current arrangements. The OEP Task Force on Planning had raised a recommendation that OHCHR establish face-to-face office-wide consultations during the annual work planning process. If implemented, this would help to ensure that FOTCD is informed upfront and can contribute to initiatives that other divisions planned to undertake in relation to specific countries. Secondly, the OEP Task Force on Country Visits was established to review ways to improve coordination of OHCHR senior officials' visits to countries. The task force's work was ongoing at the time of the audit.

37. However, the ongoing efforts do not address all areas. There were several examples where other divisions had arranged events, press briefings or invited government officials without informing the desk officers and therefore FOTCD branches and sections could not participate or provide advice to ensure cohesion, as expected. Other divisions also sometimes prepared country briefs without sharing them with or involving FOTCD. There was a need for a mandatory requirement or procedure to ensure that FOTCD branches and sections was always informed of the activities and when they would take place. An example of a control that could be put in place for events involving travel would be a procedure that ensures that FOTCD is informed before travel is authorized.

Recommendation 6

(6) OHCHR should issue a directive that the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division branches and sections should always be informed about all activities relating to specific countries. The directive should specify controls to enforce and monitor compliance.

38. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 6.* Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of procedures or mechanisms established to ensure that FOTCD branches and sections are always kept informed of all activities relating to specific countries.

Need to establish a mechanism to monitor field office satisfaction with headquarters support

39. According to OHCHR 2010-2011 strategic plan, increasing effectiveness and efficiency in supporting field operations is one of the five global management strategic goals. FOTCD's goal according to its Division Management Plan was that 90 per cent of the field staff would provide positive feedback on headquarters support.

40. However, FOTCD had not established a formal mechanism to measure the satisfaction level in order to assess whether it is achieving its goals. *FOTCD stated that the annual meetings of heads of field presences are one of the tools already in place to assess the level of satisfaction with Headquarters support. The membership and participation of field colleagues in the Senior Management Team (since 2010) also contributes to this process.* While these tools were useful in obtaining feedback, the feedback obtained was informal and was not systematically reviewed and analyzed. There is a need to define how the feedback would be used to measure the level of satisfaction. For example, formal feedback could be obtained from the heads of field offices during their annual meetings in the form of quick surveys.

41. Formal assessment of field office satisfaction with headquarters is essential as a lessons learned mechanism and as a performance monitoring and accountability tool.

Recommendation 7

(7) The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division should establish a system for monitoring field offices' satisfaction with the support provided by Headquarters.

42. *OHCHR accepted recommendation 7 and stated that this involves FOTCD as well as PPMES and PSMS.* Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of details of the mechanism put in place to measure field office satisfaction with the support from headquarters.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

43. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of OHCHR 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 OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD) should review, clarify and modify FOTCD branches and sections' roles and responsibilities (desk functions) and desk officers' job descriptions, including but not limited to: (a) assessing the gaps in functions that desk officers are currently not able to perform; (b) clarifying and documenting the division of responsibilities, authority and accountability for overlapping or cross-cutting work areas; and (c) determining the appropriate mix of staff grade, skills and experience.	Governance	Medium	O	Receipt of a strategy or plan of action for reviewing and clarifying the desk functions which should include: review and assessment of priority functions that desk officers currently are not able to perform consistently; consultation with other divisions to clarify and document the division of responsibilities and where applicable coordination arrangements; review of the standard job descriptions; and, assessment of the appropriate mix of staff by grade and skill that FOTCD will aim to achieve in the long run.	October 2011
2	The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division should review and document the workflow processes for all regular outputs and assess the extent to which approval of outputs could be delegated downwards to the branches and sections and where layers of review could be removed in order to improve efficiency of the clearance process for the Division's outputs.	Governance	High	O	Receipt of the plan of action for reviewing and documenting work flow processes for regular outputs of the FOTCD branches and sections.	Already initiated; Implementation date not provided
3	The OHCHR should put in place an action plan to implement the recommendations raised by the Organizational Effectiveness Programme Task Force on Recruitment.	Human Resources	High	O	Receipt of the conclusions reached by the review group established to look at the OEP task force recommendations; and a plan of action for addressing the recommendations endorsed by the High Commissioner and the review group.	Not provided.

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
4	The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division should establish internal procedures for the orientation of new staff and the handover and filing of both administrative and substantive documents.	Operational	Medium	O	Receipt of details of FOTCD internal procedures for orientation of new staff, handover and filing.	On-going; implementation date not provided
5	OHCHR should establish guidelines for coordination arrangements between the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division, field presences and OHCHR New York.	Operational	High	O	Receipt of guidelines for coordination arrangements between FOTCD, New York Office and the field.	On-going; implementation date not provided
6	OHCHR should issue a directive that the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division branches and sections should always be informed about all activities relating to specific countries. The directive should specify controls to enforce and monitor compliance.	Operational	Medium	O	Receipt of procedures or mechanisms established to ensure that FOTCD branches and sections are always kept informed of all activities relating to specific countries.	December 2011
7	FOTCD should establish a system for monitoring field offices' satisfaction with the support provided by Headquarters.	Operational	Medium	O	Receipt of the approach that OHCHR will use to determine the level of field office satisfaction with support provided by headquarters and whether the goal of 90 per cent satisfaction is attained.	On-going; implementation date not provided

¹ C = closed, O = open

² Date provided by OHCHR in response to recommendations