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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. Bernard Cochemé, Chief Executive Officer
A: United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

DATE: 31 October 2011

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



REFERENCE: IAD: 11- 00657

SUBJECT: **Assignment no. AS2011/800/1 - Audit of UNJSPF Geneva operations**

OBJET:

Overall results relating to the operation of the UNJSPF Geneva office were satisfactory

1. Attached please find the final audit report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. The audit identified a number of opportunities for improvement (see Annex). While OIOS will not report on the implementation of these opportunities, we encourage you to implement them to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your operations. OIOS will review their implementation as part of future audits.
3. Please note that under General Assembly resolution 59/272, a Member State may request that the final audit report be made available. Also note that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/263, OIOS has included the complete management response as an appendix to the final report.
4. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNJSPF for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

cc: Mr. Sergio Arvizu, Deputy CEO, UNJSPF
Mr. Alan Blythe, Chief of Office, UNJSPF Geneva
Ms. Jaana Sareva, Chief, Legal Office, UNJSPF
Mr. Zakary Ikiara, Chief, Policy and Oversight Coordination Unit, DM
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, United Nations Board of Auditors
Ms. Suzanne Frueh, Executive Secretary, Joint Inspection Unit
Mr. Moses Banuwamye, Executive Secretary, IAAC
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Special Assistant to the USG-OIOS
Ms. Amy Wong, Programme Officer, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

FINAL AUDIT REPORT

Audit of UNJSPF Geneva operations

BACKGROUND

Since its inception in 1975, the Geneva Office of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) has gradually taken on increasing responsibilities. Currently, the Geneva Office is responsible for administering services to 20 of the 23 member organizations and 8 UN family entities located in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Geographical proximity and language commonality of the member organizations were the main considerations in setting up the Office and assigning the client organizations to the Office. Table 1 provides a breakdown of participants in the Fund that are serviced by the UNJSPF Secretariat as a whole, as of 21 February 2011.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by Office as of February 2011

UNJSPF	Active	Pending Separation	Other	Total	Percentage
Geneva	49,670	91	1,471	51,232	42.8
New York	68,031	203	130	68,364	57.2
Total	117,701	294	1,601	119,596	100

Source: UNJSPF Geneva (Cognos)

The Geneva Office has gradually grown to be a full-fledged processing office/centre after additional units were created outside of PES, including CSRMU, Legal Unit and the Information Technology (IT) Unit. The current distribution of the posts among the units is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Approved posts for the Geneva Office

Section/Unit	Geneva Chief*	PES	CSRMU	Finance Unit	IT	Legal	Total
Posts	2	15	7	4	2	1	31

*Note: Including one administrative assistant

Source: UNJSPF Geneva

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

OIOS conducted this audit from February to March 2011 in Geneva. The audit covered UNJSPF Geneva operations for the period January 2008 to December 2010. The key controls tested for the audit included: (a) performance monitoring; (b) regulatory framework; and (c) needs assessment.

AUDIT RESULTS

In OIOS' opinion, the UNJSPF Geneva Office's risk management, control and governance processes examined were **satisfactory** to provide reasonable assurance that the Office carried out its core functions effectively. There were adequate mechanisms to monitor the performance of the Office; and policies and procedures were in place to guide its operations.

OIOS identified opportunities for improvement in terms of: (a) defining the performance indicators used in the performance monitoring reports, for clarity and consistency; (b) documenting the

AUDIT RESULTS

roles and responsibilities of the different units in the Geneva Office and aligning them with the actual responsibilities of the posts; (c) streamlining the current process for establishing pension entitlements in the Geneva Office; and (d) developing appropriate measurement criteria for determining resource requirements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of UNJSPF for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

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ANNEX: Opportunities for improvement

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Geneva operations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF or the Fund). Comments made by UNJSPF are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE

2. The audit was conducted to assess whether the UNJSPF Geneva Office effectively implemented adequate risk management, control and governance processes to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of its objectives. The key controls tested for the audit included those related to: (a) performance monitoring; (b) regulatory framework; and (c) needs assessment.

3. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:

(a) Performance monitoring - those controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the performance of the Fund's Geneva Office is regularly assessed and monitored.

(b) Regulatory framework - those controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance that policies and procedures exist to guide the operations of the Office.

(c) Needs assessment - those controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance that there is a proper assessment of needs to ensure that the Office has the necessary capacity to support its operations. This includes the necessary information and communications technology (ICT) support to enable the Office to perform its functions efficiently and effectively.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

4. OIOS conducted this audit from February to March 2011 in Geneva. The audit covered UNJSPF Geneva operations for the period January 2008 to December 2010.

5. To gain a general understanding of the current practices, processes and activities of the Geneva Office, OIOS interviewed key staff and reviewed relevant documents including policies and procedures, as well as financial and operational data. The audit team conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating the associated risks.

6. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of written policies and procedures, and also whether they were implemented consistently.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

7. In OIOS' opinion, the UNJSPF Geneva Office's risk management, control and governance processes examined were **satisfactory** to provide reasonable assurance that the Office carried out its core functions effectively. There were adequate mechanisms to monitor the performance of the Office; and policies and procedures were in place to guide its operations.

8. OIOS also identified areas that presented opportunities for improvement, such as in regard to needs assessment for determining resource requirements, streamlining of pension entitlement workflow, and defining the performance indicators in performance reports for clarity and consistency.

V. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Performance monitoring

Performance reporting could be enhanced

9. The different units in the Geneva Office submitted monthly reports to the management team with general narrative discussions on recent activities and detailed information on workload, productivity and staffing levels. OIOS' review of the reports from August to December 2010 showed that the statistics and format for productivity/performance reporting could be enhanced, as explained below.

Productivity statistics

10. In July 2008, the Geneva Office introduced an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, expecting to handle many telephone enquiries by clients. However, the implementation was not successful and the system was mainly used as a voice messaging system, which also logs key information about the phone calls the Geneva Office had received and answered, including caller ID, call duration, unanswered calls, the extension number of the staff member who answered the call, etc. The Client Services and Records Management Unit (CSRMU) in Geneva reports the total phone call volume it received in the last month, but does not analyze the detailed data to report more relevant figures such as phone calls answered relative to total phone calls received, and phone calls answered by individual staff members. For instance, according to the December 2010 report, a total of 1,123 phone calls were received. However, the original IVR log showed that only 457 calls were answered by CSRMU in the month.

11. Similarly, CSRMU Geneva also reports email enquiries, but only mentions that on average about 800 messages were received, and indicates the number of hours needed to process and answer the incoming emails. There was no further analysis of the email enquiries to identify and report the number of original enquiries, which is more indicative of actual performance than the total number of emails received. The Unit also implemented a central walk-in log in April 2010. Although the walk-in traffic was significant, the walk-in statistics were yet to be analyzed and reported in a way that distinguish appointments for pension enquiries from simple drop-ins (for instance, for the purpose of delivering a hard-copy document).

Report format

12. CSRMU Geneva created a table for each type of enquiry (see Table 1 below) in the monthly report with statistical analysis for cases opened and closed. The opening balance of cases, new cases opened, cases processed, cases assigned to follow-up and closing balance of cases were scattered in multiple tables. A sample test by OIOS indicated that the data contained in the tables could not be reconciled for each of the work-types. In contrast, the Pension Entitlements Section (PES) and the Finance Unit merged such statistics into one table and the figures were properly accounted for. PES and the Finance Unit also reported productivity of each individual staff member.

AUDIT RESULTS

13. However, PES, CSRMU and the Finance Unit all need to combine workload/productivity statistics with staffing statistics, that is, to link the performance in a specific month with the actual staff days worked at the individual, unit, section and office levels. Average productivity/performance measures can be derived, such as cases processed per person and cases processed per day.

14. Trend analysis of such data would not only enable the staff members and managers to conduct more relevant performance reviews but also assist in capacity planning. The methodology used by the Fund to determine resource requirements and allocation would benefit from consistent productivity measures/criteria and workload projection.

Performance indicators could be defined for clarity and consistency

15. Since early 2009, the Policy and Analysis Unit (PAU) of the UNJSPF Secretariat started preparing monthly performance reports for both Offices (New York and Geneva) and the Fund as a whole. After the performance reporting system Cognos was introduced in late 2010, 2009 reports were retrospectively revised. The performance reports capture workload and productivity statistics for the main activities of PES and CSRMU in both the Offices of the Fund. As shown in Table 1, there were significant differences between the performance statistics compiled by the Geneva Office in its monthly operational reports and those used by the PAU in its Standardized Operations Performance Reports (SOPR).

Table 1: Workload/Productivity indicators in Performance Reports

Geneva Section/Unit	Geneva Monthly Operational Reports	UNJSPF Standardized Operations Performance Reports (sample: December 2010 report)
Pension Entitlements Section (PES)	<p>I. Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant count and net change from prior month/quarter/year ago and a breakdown by organization <p>II. Benefit processing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial entitlement cases processed • Entitlements revision cases processed • Participant's data updated with breakdown by staff member • Entitlement cases released • Entitlement cases audited • Cases audited and calculated by auditors • Benefit cases calculated by each calculator 	<p>I. Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly participation cases processed • Participant breakdown by member organization at the end of a month <p>II. Benefit processing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Separations Processed 2007-2010 • All Separations Processed 2007-2010 • All separations count for the month and the count/percentage of extreme cases (mostly Article-32 cases) • Increase in number of gross periodic benefit entitlements • Increase in number of monthly payroll benefits • Breakdown of the periodic benefits in award • Number of two-track requests received, processed, invalidated and under consideration <p>III. Processing efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing time of two-track re-calculation cases • Benefit processing performance compared to benchmarks • Outstanding benefit cases for more than 120 days • Outstanding disability benefit cases
Client Services and Records Management	<p>I. Enquiries with a work-type opened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending stocks at the end of the month • New cases opened in the month • Cases opened year-to-date 	<p>I. Enquiries with a work-type opened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual enquiries (resulted in work-type cases) <p>II. Certificate of Entitlement exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Certificate of Entitlement cases processed

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Unit (CSRMU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases closed in the month • Cases closed year-to-date • Aging of active cases • Average aging of cases closed in the month • Average aging of cases closed year-to-date <p>II. Document scanning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of documents scanned in the month and year-to-date <p>III. Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of emails in the incoming inbox • Calls received per month <p>IV. Client Satisfaction Survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of surveys received in the month (from walk-in clients) 	<p>III. Validation and Restoration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing lead-times for validation and restoration <p>IV. Correspondence processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence processing performance compared to benchmarks <p>V. Transfer cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new requests, invalidated, processed and pending transfer cases <p>VI. Emergency Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of requests received, not receivable and under consideration
Finance Unit (FU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening and closing case balances • Closing balance by Work-Queue (staff member) • Cases closed by work-types • Cases closed by queue (staff member) 	<p>None.</p>

16. It appeared that the staff members in the Geneva Office did not fully understand the definitions of many indicators contained in the SOPR and how the parameters were set when the figures were generated. Also, the parameters used might not accurately reflect the actual workload and productivity. For instance, PES had to constantly monitor and update the data for active participants, and hence simply reporting new entries into the Fund that were processed in a month may not be sufficient to capture the workload associated with servicing participants. Consequently, the Geneva Office was yet to use SOPR as a management tool.

17. While it is acknowledged that the users of the Geneva Office performance reports are different from those of the SOPR, it is desirable that the indicators in the two reports be defined to avoid inconsistency in reporting.

18. **The UNJSPF Secretariat could benefit from defining the performance indicators for clarity and consistency.**

19. *The UNJSPF Secretariat stated that monthly reports of each office contain more detailed information that is not included in the consolidated report. Furthermore, since the function of the executive reports is to provide an overall view of the Fund's operations, transactional volume and performance against the benchmarks, they do not include detailed statistics like productivity statistics per staff member, ending stocks of cases by work type, their aging and similar information which are used by unit area supervisors for detailed monitoring of work loads. The Fund produces a series of reports which support different needs and naturally have different scopes, levels of detail and metrics.*

B. Regulatory framework

Roles and responsibilities need to be documented

20. In 2007, among other organizational changes in the Geneva Office, CSRMU was created as a separate unit from the erstwhile Pension Entitlements and Client Services Section to be aligned with the

Operations structure in the New York Office. Since then, the segregation of duties between CSRMU and the remainder of PES had not been reflected in any policy document. All the administrative procedures and documents were carried over from PES and not updated. The staff members of both teams had realized the need for a more clear definition of roles and responsibilities.

21. OIOS' sample review of the job descriptions (JD) for the posts in the CSRMU indicated that: (a) the JD questionnaires created in 2007 and 2008 for the Chief of the Unit and the senior client servicing assistant were not converted into formal JDs; and (b) the descriptions in the questionnaires and JDs for other posts were adapted from the JDs for PES posts and were yet to be updated to align with the actual job responsibilities of CSRMU staff.

22. The UNJSPF Geneva Office needs to formally document the roles and responsibilities of the different units and align the job descriptions with actual responsibilities of the posts.

23. The UNJSPF Secretariat stated that emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the Geneva Office was fully staffed and, moreover, with staff of a grade corresponding to the grade of the post they are encumbering. Roles and responsibilities of the different units will be formally documented in line with revised functions and job descriptions revised in line with responsibilities. This is estimated to be completed by end of 2011.

Pension entitlement work flow could be streamlined

24. PES Geneva, headed by the Section Chief, is responsible for the calculation and processing of entitlements, focusing on the accuracy of the calculations. This is particularly important as the calculated benefit amount, once established, is expected to remain valid for a long period.

25. PES Geneva is divided into two groups, each headed by a Benefits Officer and comprising of benefits assistants and benefits clerks. The workload between the two teams is divided such that participants with the names A-K are assigned to one team and participants with names L-Z are assigned to the second team.

26. Operationally, the cases are first received by the Benefits Officers who review the case files to ensure that all documentation is available prior to assigning the cases to staff undergoing training or staff that is new to the team. Seasoned staff members handle the cases as they arise. In disability related cases, the Benefits Officers first review for eligibility prior to assigning the case to a team member.

27. The current process is for a case to be assigned to a 'calculator', who determines the entitlement amount, which is then independently verified by an "auditor" and subsequently reviewed and released by the Benefits Officer. In instances of large lump sum payouts, the calculations are verified and/or reviewed by the Section Chief and the Chief of UNJSPF Geneva.

28. Given the volume of work and in an effort to meet the 15 day performance benchmark (effective once all pertinent documentation is received) of processing entitlements, the "auditors" themselves are required to devote time to performing the calculations in addition to auditing them. This precludes them from assisting on complex cases and providing training to calculators. Furthermore, Benefit Officers were themselves involved in processing cases, and were challenged to release all pending cases.

29. In OIOS' view, PES should consider re-engineering the process flow whereby simple or routine cases with monetary amounts below a pre-determined threshold are assigned to seasoned 'calculators' and released by Benefits Officers, whereas complex entitlements cases and/or entitlement amounts above a

pre-determined threshold follow the current flow, to help alleviate the backlog of cases and resource constraints.

30. **The UNJSPF Geneva Office could benefit from streamlining the current process for establishing pension entitlements such that cases will be assigned to ‘calculators’, ‘auditors’ and/or Benefits Officers based on the complexity of the case and/or the monetary amount involved.**

31. *The UNJSPF Secretariat stated that the current process structure reflects that in place for the Fund as a whole. The role of Benefits Officer is primarily to “release” cases and to manage the allocation of cases for calculation and audit amongst staff as a function of complexity of each case and experience of staff. The Section is currently reviewing roles internally in relation to the different types of cases and will implement any revision which results within the next six months. More general processing will be reviewed with the introduction of IPAS.*

C. Needs assessment

Staff concerns regarding increase in workload could not be assessed

32. The Geneva Office is responsible for administering services to 20 of the 23 member organizations and 8 UN family entities located in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Geographical proximity and language commonality of the member organizations were the main considerations in setting up the Office and assigning the client organizations to the Office. Table 2 provides a breakdown of participants in the Fund that are serviced by the UNJSPF Secretariat as a whole, as of 21 February 2011.

Table 2: Distribution of participants by Office as of February 2011

UNJSPF	Active	Pending Separation	Other	Total	Percentage
Geneva	49,670	91	1,471	51,232	42.8
New York	68,031	203	130	68,364	57.2
Total	117,701	294	1,601	119,596	100

Source: UNJSPF Geneva (Cognos)

33. The Geneva Office has gradually grown to be a full-fledged processing office/centre after additional units were created outside of PES, including CSRMU, Legal Unit and the Information Technology (IT) Unit. The current distribution of the posts among the units is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Approved posts for the Geneva Office

Section/Unit	Geneva Chief*	PES	CSRMU	Finance Unit	IT	Legal	Total
Posts	2	15	7	4	2	1	31

*Note: Including one administrative assistant

Source: UNJSPF Geneva

34. At the operational level, staff members in the Geneva Office highlighted the ever-increasing workload relative to limited resources and were concerned that productivity and quality of work would be adversely impacted if the resource issue was not addressed immediately.

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35. OIOS reviewed the workload and resources for the Fund's main units in Geneva but was unable to determine whether the concerns expressed by Geneva Office staff were supportable. In PES, for instance, the total number of participants serviced in 2010 had increased by 36 per cent compared to the number of participants serviced by it in 2005. As the number of approved posts remained constant at 15 during the period, the number of participants serviced per PES staff increased from 2,494 in 2005 to 3,385 in 2010. In the last three years, there was only one month when the average benefit processing time slightly exceeded the 15-day performance benchmark, significantly outperforming the UNJSPF average. The PES team stated that it would not be realistic to expect this would continue in the long run if the team is not adequately staffed. Likewise, going by the number of 600-, 700- and 800-series work-type cases processed per staff member in the period from 2005-2010, the workload of the Finance Unit in Geneva had more than doubled from 1,170 in 2005 to 2,487 in 2010.

36. Yet, during the same period (2005 to 2010), the total biennial budget for the Geneva Office had increased from \$5.6 million to \$9.5 million, representing a 70 per cent increase during the period. In the absence of comprehensive metrics to quantify the workload handled by the Office, OIOS was unable to determine whether the resources allocated to the Geneva Office were commensurate with the needs. A reliable needs assessment also has to take into account the efficiency gains realized from the investments made in information technology projects, implications from the backstopping provided to the Office by Staff Pension Committees of member organizations, impact of any process reengineering initiatives, and such other mitigating or aggravating factors that would have a direct impact on the Office's workload.

37. OIOS is of the opinion that the methodology used by the UNJSPF Secretariat to determine resource requirements could be improved. In doing so, due consideration needs to be given to the relative differences in functions performed by the New York and Geneva Offices so that resources are allocated equitably and utilized efficiently.

38. The UNJSPF Secretariat would benefit from reviewing its methodology for determining its resource requirements by developing appropriate measurement criteria.

39. *The UNJSPF Secretariat commented that very often the requests of the Secretariat, which are based on work load analysis, are not approved. For example, for the 2010-11 biennium the UNJSPF Secretariat requested 3 new posts for the Geneva Office. Two of these posts were not approved by the Pension Board. The third post was approved by the Board and supported by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) but was not approved by the Fifth Committee. For the 2012-13 biennium, the Secretariat requested one new post for the Geneva Office which was not approved by the Board.*

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ANNEX
OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Audit of UNJSPF Geneva operations

Para. no.	Recommendation	Client comments
18	The UNJSPF Secretariat could benefit from defining the performance indicators for clarity and consistency.	<i>In Table1, Geneva monthly operational reports are being compared with the <u>consolidated</u> monthly executive performance report (standardized operations performance report), while it would be more appropriate to use the monthly executive report for Geneva in the comparison. The monthly reports of each office contain more detailed information that is not included in the consolidated report. Furthermore, since the function of the executive reports is to provide an overall view of the Fund's operations, transactional volume and performance against the benchmarks, they do not include detailed statistics like productivity statistics per staff member, ending stocks of cases by work type, their aging and similar information which are used by unit area supervisors for detailed monitoring of work loads. The Fund produces a series of reports which support different needs and naturally have different scopes, levels of detail and metrics</i>
22	The UNJSPF Geneva Office needs to formally document the roles and responsibilities of the different units and align the job descriptions with actual responsibilities of the posts.	<i>The emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the Geneva Office was fully staffed and, moreover, with staff of a grade corresponding to the grade of the post they are encumbering. Roles and responsibilities of the different units will be formally documented in line with revised functions and job descriptions revised in line with responsibilities. Estimated for 2011.</i>
30	The UNJSPF Geneva Office could benefit from streamlining the current process for establishing pension entitlements such that cases will be assigned to 'calculators', 'auditors' and/or Benefits Officers based on the complexity of the case and/or the monetary amount involved.	<i>The current process structure reflects that in place for the Fund as a whole. The role of Benefits Officer is primarily to "release" cases and to manage the allocation of cases for calculation and audit amongst staff as a function of complexity of case and experience of staff. The Section is currently reviewing roles internally in relation to the different types of cases and will implement any revision which results within the next six months. More general processing will be reviewed with the introduction of IPAS.</i>
38	The UNJSPF Secretariat would benefit from reviewing its methodology for determining its resource requirements by developing appropriate measurement criteria.	<i>As explained at a recent meeting with OIOS, it should be noted that resources allocated to UNJSPF are based on the decision taken by the Pension Board, subject to approval of the 5th Committee. Very often the requests of the Secretariat, which are based on work load analysis, are not approved. For example, for the 2010-2011 biennium the UNJSPF Secretariat requested 3 new posts for the Geneva Office. Two of these posts were not approved by the Pension Board. The third requested post was approved by the Board and supported by the ACABQ; however, it was not approved by</i>

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		<i>the 5th Committee. For the 2012-2013 biennium, the Secretariat requested one new post for the Geneva Office which was not approved by the Board.</i>
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