



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2018/132

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**There is need to strengthen controls by
addressing deficiencies in the structure and
staffing of the Service, implementing results-
based management, and enhancing
operational arrangements**

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Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service (ISS) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements put in place by ISS to support UNCTAD's intergovernmental processes. The audit covered the period from January 2016 to June 2018 and included a review of: (a) mandate and structure; (b) performance planning and monitoring; (c) operational arrangements; and (d) regulatory framework.

The audit showed that there was need to strengthen controls by addressing deficiencies in the structure and staffing of ISS, implementing results-based management, and enhancing operational arrangements.

OIOS made 12 recommendations. To address the issues identified in the audit, UNCTAD needed to:

- Clarify and formally document ISS role in liaising with various country groups, including the level and nature of substantive and other types of support that it should provide to the country groups and the arrangements for internal coordination;
- Review the structure of the Intergovernmental Support Service to determine and address any gaps; and ensure that all posts with significant changes in functions are properly classified in accordance with ST/AI/1998/9;
- Strengthen planning and performance management activities in ISS by developing work plans, establishing robust performance indicators and establishing systems to assess and manage key risks;
- Strengthen the arrangements for monitoring, reporting and managing timeliness in the issuance of pre-session documents;
- Finalize the standard operating procedures on planning and servicing of intergovernmental meetings and establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure these are complied with;
- Strengthen feedback and lessons learned mechanisms for intergovernmental meetings;
- Consult with the Division of Conference Management to obtain actual attendance records of meetings for comparison with its own records before preparing the final list of participants and establish mechanisms for regularly monitoring this information;
- Document the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for planning, monitoring and managing its publications programme; and ensure that adequate arrangements are established for its divisions to be regularly informed and held accountable for timely implementation of their publications;
- Explore measures to minimize the impact of delays in translation of publications;
- Explore alternative methods for evaluating and obtaining feedback on readership of major publications;

- Establish mechanisms for receiving and tracking inquiries from Member States; clearly communicate to Member States as to who within ISS should be contacted for inquiries; and develop a unified approach for communicating and promoting the planned events of UNCTAD; and
- Strengthen the administration of the trust fund for financing the travel of experts.

UNCTAD accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them.

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Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

2. The work of UNCTAD is focused around three pillars that complement each other: (a) intergovernmental machinery and consensus-building; (b) research and analysis; and (c) technical cooperation. Consensus building is a mechanism for discussing and building intergovernmental consensus on key international and national issues from a trade and development perspective.

3. The UNCTAD Intergovernmental Support Service (ISS) facilitates the functioning of the intergovernmental machinery and consensus-building arm of UNCTAD. ISS plans, manages and services the sessions of the UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference and the Trade and Development Board (TDB) including its subsidiary organs. Details of the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery

Body	Details
UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A subsidiary organ of the United Nations General Assembly and highest decision-making body for UNCTAD. • Meets every four years to establish UNCTAD mandate. It reviews the global economic situation and calibrates the UNCTAD programme of work. • Currently comprised of 195 Member States.
TDB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A permanent subsidiary organ of the Conference. • Oversees UNCTAD activities and reports to the Conference and the United Nations General Assembly. • Meets in Geneva in a regular session and up to three times a year in executive sessions.
Working Party	Subsidiary organ of TDB, meets two to three times per year.
Two Commissions: (i) Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission and (ii) Trade and Development Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidiary bodies of the TDB mandated to conduct policy dialogue on selected topics, consider reports of expert meetings and review or approve outcomes of expert meetings.
Expert Groups	<p>There are 5 main Expert Groups that meet under auspices of the Commissions (3) and the TDB (2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Group of Experts on e-Commerce and the Digital; • Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development; • Intergovernmental Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting; • Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law & Policy; and • Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection <p>Other ad-hoc multi-year and single-year expert meetings may also be held under auspices of the commissions to discuss areas of emerging interest.</p>

4. According to the Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/1998/1 on the organization of the secretariat of UNCTAD, the core functions of ISS are to: (a) provide conference servicing and related policy advice to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the Deputy Secretary-General and presiding officers for all UNCTAD meetings, for the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, for United Nations conferences convened by the General Assembly serviced by UNCTAD, and for intergovernmental consultations between sessions of UNCTAD bodies; (b) monitor the institutional follow-up to decisions of the intergovernmental machinery; (c) liaise with country groups; (d) prepare the UNCTAD calendar of meetings, meetings arrangements and credentials; (e) edit UNCTAD documentation and report writing; and (f) prepare and dispatch official correspondence.

5. ISS is headed by a D-1, who reports directly to the UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General and is supported by 23 staff (nine professional and 14 general service). It comprises of two sections and one unit: (a) the Conference Servicing and Logistics Section, which plans and services UNCTAD intergovernmental meetings; (b) the Documents Management Section, which coordinates the processing of UNCTAD intergovernmental documents and publications; and; (c) the Group Liaison Unit, which serves as the interface between the regional groups coordinators, individual representatives of Member States and the UNCTAD Secretariat. ISS coordinates its activities with the President of TDB, the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, substantive divisions of UNCTAD and the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Division of Conference Management (UNOG DCM).

6. The last quadrennial conference that was held in Nairobi in July 2016 (UNCTAD XIV) called for revitalization of the existing intergovernmental machinery of UNCTAD, including to better support implementation of its 2030 Agenda. It emphasized on the continuing engagement of Member States to improve the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery.

7. Comments provided by UNCTAD are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements put in place by ISS to support UNCTAD's intergovernmental processes.

9. This audit was included in the 2018 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational and reputational risks associated with the implementation of ISS mandate.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from June to October 2018. The audit covered the period from January 2016 to June 2018. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, OIOS reviewed the following aspects of arrangements to support the intergovernmental processes: (a) mandate and structure; (b) performance planning and monitoring; (c) operational arrangements; and (d) regulatory framework.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel and stakeholders; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data; and, (d) sample testing.

12. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Mandate and structure

Need to clarify and document ISS role in liaising with country groups

13. Liaising with country groups is a broad aspect of ISS mandate stipulated in ST/SGB/1998/1 on the organization of the secretariat of UNCTAD. While the mandate requires ISS to liaise with all country groups, OIOS observed that currently the Group Liaison Unit (GLU) which is responsible for implementing this aspect of the mandate, acts as a de-facto secretariat to G77 groups – African, Asian and the Group of Latin America and Caribbean (GRULAC). The three staff within GLU have accordingly been mapped to provide services to the G77 groups; no staff were mapped to provide services to the other country groups. UNCTAD explained that the services provided by GLU were on a demand-driven basis and that no requests for support had been made by the non-G77 groups. OIOS noted that the revised job description (June 2018) of the Chief, GLU expanded the incumbent's functions to include support to all country groups. However, this arrangement had not been operationalized as the Chief, GLU post was still vacant and the allocation of country groups to various GLU staff had not been changed to include country groups other than the G77 groups. ISS needs to conduct a needs assessment to determine and clarify the level and nature of dedicated support that GLU should provide to the different country groups.

14. The support provided by GLU included substantive, procedural, political and logistical support. However, there was uncertainty on the extent to which GLU should provide substantive support. Staff and focal points of Member States raised the concern that some of the substantive support ISS provided could affect its impartiality in facilitating the intergovernmental processes. There were also concerns that ISS sometimes tended to get too involved in trying to shape outcomes of substantive deliberations rather than sticking to the procedural aspects of the intergovernmental deliberations. Further, some managers indicated that ISS at times provided substantive support or communicated the Organization's position on substantive issues directly without seeking input of relevant substantive divisions. In addition, five staff members within substantive divisions had been assigned as regional focal points for Africa, Asia, GRULAC, and groups D and B pursuant to paragraph 178 of the Accra Accord adopted in 2008. This arrangement was still in use for Group D but there was no clarity on coordination mechanisms.

15. To address these issues, UNCTAD needs to clarify and document GLU's role in liaising with country groups, as well as how GLU should coordinate with other parts of ISS/UNCTAD who also engage and support the country groups. Other than the job description of GLU staff, the details of GLU's role and the work it does in liaising with country groups were not addressed in any formal document. As discussed later in the present report, there were unexplained changes in the Chief, GLU post from an established P-4 post to a temporary P-4 post and then an upgrade to P-5 which could indicate that the role of GLU has been interpreted differently over the years. The ongoing review of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the organization of UNCTAD is an opportunity to update and clarify ISS' mandate in this area. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) could also be used to clarify and communicate ISS' role and coordination arrangements with other parts of UNCTAD.

(1) UNCTAD should clarify and formally document the role of the Intergovernmental Support Service in liaising with various country groups, including the level and nature of substantive and other types of support that it should provide to the country groups as well as the arrangements for internal coordination.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 1. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNCTAD has clarified and documented ISS' role in liaising with the various country groups

including the nature and level of substantive or other types of support that it should provide to country groups and internal coordination arrangements.

Need to review ISS' structure and strengthen human resources management

16. OIOS observed structural deficiencies and weaknesses in ISS' human resources management practices that could undermine its operational effectiveness and ability to effectively execute its mandate. These included the prolonged vacancy in the Chief, GLU post, inadequately explained transfers and changes in posts, failure to reclassify posts whose functions had changed significantly, delays in filling a vacancy in the Document Management Section, and concerns about capacity constraints and backlogs within the editorial team.

a) Prolonged vacancy in the Chief, GLU post

17. The post of Chief, GLU (P-5) had been vacant for over one year since 1 April 2017. ISS indicated that the day to day activities of the function were assigned to a P-3 Economic Affairs Officer under the overall supervision of the Head of ISS. However, due to competing work priorities, the P-3 Economic Affairs Officer did not have the capacity to fulfill the role of Chief, GLU and therefore this arrangement was not sustainable. Action was taken to classify the post in February 2018 (10 months after the post became vacant) but UNCTAD decided to postpone the recruitment process until the present audit was completed.

b) Inadequately explained transfers and changes in posts and failure to reclassify posts

18. The Chief, GLU post changed from being an established P-4 post in the ISS staffing table prior to 2004 to a temporary post from 2004 to 2007 and a P-5 post from 2007 onwards. The upgrade of the Chief, GLU's role to P-5 was done in 2007 using the P-5 post of Chief, Conference Services and Logistics Section (CSL Section) which was vacant at the time. At the same time, the roles and functions of Chief, CSL Section were assigned to a Conference Affairs Officer (P-4). The rationale for the changes including: (i) transfer of the P-5 post from CSL Section to GLU; (ii) upgrade of the Chief, GLU function to P-5; (iii) downgrade of the Chief, CSL Section function to P-4; and (iv) change in the role of the P-4 Conference Affairs Officer to be the Chief, CSL Section were not documented.

19. Even though the functions of the P-5 and P-4 posts had changed significantly, the posts were not reclassified as required by the administrative instruction on classification of posts (ST/AI/1998/9). The Chief, GLU post (P-5) was filled from 2007 to April 2017 without a formal classified job description. The staff holding the Conference Affairs Officer P-4 post also continued to serve as the Chief, CSL Section from 2007 to date (over 11 years) without a formally classified job description. In February 2018, corrective action was taken with regard to the P-5 post and a request for reclassification was sent to UNOG Human Resources Management Service. However, no steps were taken to reclassify the P-4 post.

20. Further, under the authority of the UNCTAD Secretary-General, a new P-4 post was redeployed to ISS in April 2017 in exchange for a vacant P-3 post that was transferred to the Communications, Information and Outreach Section. The redeployment was included in the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019 ostensibly to support the servicing of TDB and the two new intergovernmental groups of experts established through UNCTAD XIV, and was approved in January 2018. At the time of the audit, 18 months after the redeployments, ISS had not formally classified the P-4 post nor updated the post's job description. This raises questions as to the rationale and justification of the redeployments. At the time of audit, ISS was exploring options and had temporarily placed the staff under the Head of ISS. At times, the staff worked for the Chief, CSL Section but reported through the Director ISS. This is not operationally effective and sustainable.

c) Weaknesses in post management and capacity constraints in the editorial team

21. Section 12 of ST/SGB/1998/1 mandates ISS to manage and administer the editing of UNCTAD documentation and report writing. The Document Management Section, with a total of nine posts across three functional teams (Editorial, Documentation and Graphic Design), is responsible for discharging this mandate. There were delays in filling one of the nine posts; the post became vacant in May 2017, was advertised in December 2017 (7 months later) and the recruitment was still ongoing in November 2018. There is a need to ensure that posts are advertised and filled in a timely manner to minimize impact on operations. There were also significant backlogs in editorial work which were attributed to staffing constraints in the Editorial Unit. In June 2018, the Editorial Unit had a backlog of about 271,210 words in relation to various documents and publications. One of the three posts in the Editorial team was a P-3 position funded through general temporary assistance (GTA) which had been repeatedly filled on temporary basis over the last seven years, contrary to the purpose for which GTA funds are approved (temporary needs).

22. The gaps and deficiencies discussed above show the need for a comprehensive review of ISS' staffing and structure to help determine the optimal structure and work allocation at the current resource level. Also, ISS needs to strengthen the management of its human resources by ensuring timely recruitment and reclassification of posts whose functions have changed significantly.

(2) UNCTAD should: (a) review the structure of the Intergovernmental Support Service to determine and address any gaps; and (b) ensure that all posts with significant changes in functions are properly classified in accordance with ST/AI/1998/9.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 2. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (a) the structure of ISS has been reviewed and a plan of action has been established for addressing the identified gaps; and (b) all posts with significant changes in functions (such as the P-5 post currently used for the Chief, GLU, the P-4 post of Conference Affairs Officer, and the P-4 post transferred from the Communications, Information and Outreach Section) have been reclassified.

B. Performance planning and monitoring

Need to strengthen planning and performance monitoring

23. Programme planning helps to articulate key priorities, goals and objectives of an organization and facilitate alignment of actions and resources towards their achievement. The UNCTAD Guidelines for Results-Based Management (RBM) requires project managers to, amongst others: set clear goals, objectives, and expected results/accomplishments; establish performance indicators to assess achievement of expected results; and identify, analyze and plan to mitigate risks that could prevent the achievement of expected results.

24. ISS did not have a comprehensive service-wide plan that articulated its strategic goals, objectives and priorities, and collective strategies and actions through which these would be accomplished. Planning was disaggregated and done at the lower functional and operational levels and mainly driven by the calendar of meetings and the publications programmes prepared by CSL and Document Management Sections, respectively. While the calendar of meetings and publication programmes are important planning tools, a service-wide plan is necessary to capture ISS' vision, planned initiatives and key performance indicators and targets and clearly communicate these to staff and other parts of UNCTAD. Examples of initiatives

that ISS could include in its work plan are initiatives to leverage technology in servicing meetings and development of SOPs to streamline and guide operations.

25. Within the overarching UNCTAD strategic plan and budget, ISS' performance indicators were aggregated under the Executive Direction and Management section. This limited the visibility and extent to which strategic planning of ISS could be done and strategic goals established. UNCTAD had established only one indicator (timely submission of pre-session documentation) relating to one aspect of ISS operations. This indicator was not adequate to monitor the extent to which ISS was effective in implementing its mandate. Performance indicators needed to be established for other aspects of ISS operations such as the level of client satisfaction with the support services provided by ISS, utilization of conference services, and implementation of intergovernmental decisions.

26. Further, the chosen performance indicator (timely submission of pre-session documents) only measured timely submission of documents to UNOG DCM within the target of 10 weeks or negotiated timelines. This indicator did not address the timeliness in submitting pre-session documents to Member States. In the last two years, UNCTAD achieved 100 per cent timeliness for this chosen indicator but the actual timeliness in submitting pre-session documents to Member States was lower at about 65 per cent. Since timely submission of pre-session documents to Member States is essential to ensure the effectiveness of meetings, UNCTAD needs to establish an additional indicator to monitor this aspect.

27. In addition, ISS did not conduct risk assessment which would help it develop action plans to mitigate the risks. The nature of ISS' mandate lends itself to risks that should be assessed and mitigated. When preparing for major conferences and meetings, risk assessments are vital elements of the planning process to help anticipate and address factors that could affect their effectiveness.

28. In the sixtieth session report of the TDB, UNCTAD committed to adopt and integrate RBM in its work programming. Subsequent initiatives were undertaken to institutionalize RBM, including the planned development of an RBM manual, recruitment of a programme officer, and establishment of an RBM coordination group under the office of the Deputy Secretary-General to coordinate the roll out and provide in-house training in RBM. At the time of the audit, the RBM team had helped to set up draft RBM results framework and related monitoring plans for at least seven organizational units across UNCTAD. These services had not yet been extended to ISS.

(3) UNCTAD should strengthen the planning and performance management activities in the Intergovernmental Support Service by: (a) developing work plans to outline its vision, desired goals and strategies; (b) establishing robust performance indicators for all key aspects of its operations; and (c) establishing appropriate systems to assess and manage the key risks impacting its operations.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 3. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that ISS has: (a) established a practice of preparing work plans; (b) developed appropriate performance indicators for all key aspects of its operations; and (c) established appropriate systems to assess and manage the key risks impacting its operations.

C. Documents management

Need to monitor and improve the management of delays in submitting pre-session documents

29. To allow the timely issuance of pre-session parliamentary documents to participants in intergovernmental meetings, the General Assembly's resolution 47/202 prescribes the "10-4-6" documents

processing rule which requires UNCTAD to submit pre-session parliamentary documents to UNOG DCM 10 weeks ahead of the session (slotting date) to allow four weeks of processing time for UNOG DCM so that the documents can be issued six weeks before session opening. In exceptional circumstances, UNCTAD can negotiate and be allowed to submit documents to UNOG DCM after the 10-week target (negotiated late slotting) on the understanding that UNOG DCM would not guarantee issuance within the six-week rule. Cases that would justify negotiated late slotting of documents include delays by Member States in providing the inputs required for document processing. At the time of the audit, no formal targets had been established for issuance of publications that were to be considered in intergovernmental meetings. In the October 2018 session of TDB, Member States set a four-week target for issuance of publications before sessions.

30. To promote compliance with the “10-4-6” processing timelines for parliamentary documents, ISS developed its own internal deadlines which required substantive divisions to submit documents to ISS for processing 14 weeks in advance of the session dates. ISS had also established a mechanism to monitor the receipt of input from divisions and entered into negotiated late slotting arrangements where compliance with the 10-week requirement appeared unlikely. In 2016-2017, UNCTAD achieved 100 per cent compliance in submitting documents to UNOG DCM within the 10-week target or negotiated time slots. This showed that the ISS tracking and monitoring system with regard to timely submission of parliamentary documents to UNOG DCM was adequate.

31. However, as noted earlier in the report, UNCTAD’s compliance rate with the six-week rule for issuance of parliamentary documents for the period January 2016 to June 2018 was 65 per cent which is lower than the 100 per cent compliance rate in submission of parliamentary documents to UNOG DCM. The difference was due to the fact that documents that had late negotiated time slots rarely met the six-week target. Fifty-three out of 154 parliamentary documents were issued less than six weeks before sessions during January 2016 to June 2018. Out of these 53 documents, late slotting had been negotiated for 45 documents.

32. With regard to publications, the timelines were not monitored because prior to October 2018, there were no agreed timeframes for issuing publications that were to be discussed in intergovernmental meetings. UNCTAD indicated that it was unable to compel partners to act within timeframes which were not formally set. There were general delays experienced in finalizing publications including those that were due to be discussed in intergovernmental meetings. For example, at the sixty-fifth session of the TDB held in June 2018, Member States cancelled two days of sessions because they had not received the required background documentation in time for their consideration (two key publications: The World Investment Report and The Economic Development in Africa Report).

33. ISS needs to ensure compliance with established timelines for the issuance of pre-session parliamentary documents as well as the newly established timelines for issuance of publications to help ensure that Member States have adequate time to read the documents before sessions. In cases where delays are anticipated (as in the case of negotiated late slotting), ISS should proactively inform Member States and meeting participants about the revised issuance dates. Member States’ focal points indicated that they tended to learn of delays at the last minute. Explanations for the delayed issuance of pre-sessions documentation were also not communicated or footnoted in the documents, as required by UNOG DCM guidelines. Communicating the reasons for delays to Member States would enhance accountability and also allow Member States to identify measures to minimize delays from their side in providing their inputs.

34. Further, there was a need to clarify the medium for issuance of pre-session documents to ensure that Member States get access to the documents as soon as they are issued. Currently, once processed and translated, pre-session parliamentary documents are automatically issued by UNOG DCM via the official document management system (ODS) with paper copies being sent to Member States’ registered address.

The documents are also uploaded on the UNCTAD website and the delegates' portal. The use of different means to disseminate documents could be confusing, especially in cases where Member States may not be aware of where to look for documents that may already have been issued. From a sample of 15 pre-session parliamentary documents issued in 2018, OIOS noted that eight were made available on the UNCTAD website between 3 to 21 days after they were first uploaded in ODS. Such delays could exacerbate the perception of delays. The criteria for posting documents on the delegates' portal as opposed to the UNCTAD meetings webpage were also not clear. Whereas ISS indicated that the delegates' portal was used for a small number of documents under embargo or with restricted distribution, OIOS noted that some documents considered to have restricted distribution (for instance the World Investment Report for 2018 that was embargoed) were not posted on the delegates' portal.

(4) UNCTAD should strengthen the arrangements for monitoring, reporting and managing timeliness in the issuance of both pre-session parliamentary documents and publications by the Intergovernmental Support Service.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 4. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that mechanisms have been put in place to monitor compliance with the established timelines for issuing pre-session documents and to proactively advise Member States of revised timeliness where delays are anticipated.

D. Servicing of meetings and conferences

Need to finalize the draft procedures for servicing intergovernmental meetings and conferences

35. CSL Section, whose core mandate is the planning and servicing of intergovernmental meetings, had developed SOPs that outlined the expected practices for planning and servicing meetings, and the roles and responsibilities of the various organizational units of UNCTAD. The SOPs included a checklist on key elements to effectively plan and manage meetings. However, the SOPs were still in draft form and had not yet been approved or shared with substantive divisions to get their feedback. Some good practices were suggested in the SOPs but since they had not been formalized, compliance was either inconsistent or absent. Given the wide range of players involved in planning and servicing intergovernmental meetings and conferences, the SOPs need to be finalized to ensure a common understanding of practices, roles and responsibilities. SOPs would also be useful for training new staff.

(5) UNCTAD should finalize the standard operating procedures of the Intergovernmental Support Service on planning and servicing intergovernmental meetings and establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they are complied with.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 5. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the SOPs on planning and servicing of intergovernmental meetings have been finalized and promulgated, and appropriate mechanisms have been established to ensure compliance.

Need to strengthen feedback and lessons learned mechanisms

36. The draft SOPs on meeting and conference servicing require post-meeting surveys to be conducted to collect Member States' views and feedback on intergovernmental meetings. While the SOPs require the surveys to be administered for all meetings, in practice they were only done for higher level meetings such as Quadrennial Conferences. OIOS review of a random sample of 18 meetings held in 2016-2017 showed that no surveys had been conducted for these meetings. ISS provided OIOS with examples of two cases where surveys were done and indicated that the response rates were very low. Some Member States

attributed the low response to delays in administering the surveys after the meetings had been held. For example, the post-conference survey for the last Quadrennial Conference was administered nine months after the conference was held. It is evident that the requirement to do surveys for every meeting is not working as intended in the draft SOPs. ISS needs to re-assess the requirement and clarify the meetings for which surveys should be mandatory, as well as the timelines for such surveys. As feedback from meeting participants is essential, ISS could explore alternative feedback mechanisms such as complaint redressal during or after meetings.

(6) UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service strengthens its feedback and lessons learned mechanisms for intergovernmental meetings by: (a) clarifying the meetings for which post-meeting surveys are mandatory and the timelines within which they must be conducted; (b) exploring other feedback mechanisms such as a complaint redressal during or after meetings; and (c) formalizing the post-event reflection meetings.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 6. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the measures taken to clarify and strengthen lessons learned and feedback mechanisms.

Need to improve arrangements for recording of attendance at meetings

37. Attendance records are important statistics that could be used to assess the success and relevance of a meeting and should be accurately recorded. The draft SOPs developed by CSL Section require ISS to maintain provisional and actual record of meeting attendance but since the SOPs have not been officially approved, compliance was not enforced. ISS did not record or keep track of actual number of participants at its intergovernmental meetings. Instead, it only maintained a record of the attendees registered and/or expected to attend the meetings. These estimates were in some cases not accurate or reliable. OIOS review of meeting attendance data of about 300 meetings kept separately by UNOG DCM showed huge variation between the expected and actual participation. As UNOG DCM maintains attendance records, ISS needs to collaborate with them to access their records for comparison with its own and make adjustments as appropriate before preparing the final list of participants.

(7) UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Support Service should: (a) consult with UNOG's Division of Conference Management to obtain actual attendance records of meetings for comparison with its own records before preparing the final list of participants; and (b) establish mechanisms for regularly monitoring this information.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 7. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (a) ISS has consulted with UNOG DCM to regularly obtain their actual attendance records for comparison with its own records before finalizing the final list of participants and (b) mechanisms have been established to monitor the attendance records.

E. Publications

Need to formally document ISS' role in planning and managing the publications programme

38. UNCTAD issues about 200 publications every biennium. ISS has been assigned the role of planning and monitoring the UNCTAD's publications programme as part of its overall role of supporting intergovernmental processes. According to the job descriptions of senior ISS staff, ISS' roles and responsibilities include editing of publications, tracking and monitoring the implementation of the publications programme, managing liaison with UNOG DCM, advising senior management on publication

matters, and reporting to Member States on the status of publications. Publications also form part of the work of the substantive divisions and are overseen by the UNCTAD Publications Committee. As there are many players involved in the planning, monitoring and managing of publications, it is essential that roles and responsibilities be clearly defined and communicated.

39. ISS' role in managing the publications programme had not been clearly defined. The UNCTAD publications policy issued in 2009 is a high-level policy document that defines the process of planning, approving, quality control, disseminating and evaluating publications but does not go into the operational aspects of who should do what and how. This resulted in uncertainties, blurred accountability and deficiencies in the planning and monitoring of publications. In a memo dated 20 September 2018, the UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General clarified that ISS is expected to take the lead in preparing the publications programme.

40. ISS maintained an Excel spreadsheet of all publications which it used for tracking and preparing statistics and summary reports to senior management. Two separate status reports were issued in 2016-2017 which showed significant delays in finalization of publications. By 31 December 2017, only 55 per cent of the publications planned for the biennium 2016-2017 had been issued. To minimize and manage delays, UNCTAD needs to strengthen the arrangements for planning and monitoring of publications. There is also a need to clearly define the role of ISS in planning, tracking and monitoring the overall implementation of the publications programme, and the role and accountability of the substantive divisions in ensuring that their publication plans are achievable. Effective planning and monitoring is essential to enable ISS to effectively manage UNCTAD's publications.

(8) UNCTAD should: (a) document the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for planning, monitoring and managing its publications programme; and (b) ensure that adequate arrangements are established for its divisions to be regularly informed and held accountable for timely implementation of their publications.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 8. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for planning, monitoring and managing the publications programme, including mechanisms for holding substantive divisions accountable for the timely implementation of their publications, have been clarified and documented.

Need to proactively address delays in issuance of translated versions of UNCTAD publications

41. There were significant delays in translation and issuance of UNCTAD publications in other official languages of the United Nations. Data reviewed by OIOS indicated that publications translated and issued in languages other than English were consistently released almost a year or more after the launch of the English versions. The issuance of delayed and potentially outdated publications constitutes a waste of resources and may undermine their value and relevance. This is particularly so if the original publication itself was already delayed. For example, the English version of the 2016 Trade and Development Report was issued in September 2016 but the Arabic version was issued in April 2017, the French and Spanish versions in July 2017, the Russian version in November 2017 and the Chinese version in February 2018.

42. ISS attributed these delays to capacity constraints within UNOG DCM including the UNOG DCM practice of prioritizing the processing and issuance of parliamentary documents over publications. ISS in its role as adviser to UNCTAD senior management on publication-related matters needs to play a more proactive role in identifying potential solutions for preventing, reducing and managing these delays. Continuous monitoring and engaging with UNOG DCM is necessary and ISS indicated that it was already making efforts towards this end. It is also necessary to assess the continued need and value of translating

the publications into all the official languages and set timeframes or cut-off after which translations would no longer be required.

(9) UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service, in consultation with the substantive divisions, explores measures to minimize the impact of delays in translation of publications by: (a) assessing the continued need and value of issuing all publications in all official languages; and (b) identifying a cut-off period after which the publications would no longer be translated.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 9. Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of details of actions taken to minimize the impact of delays in translation of publications.

Need to improve feedback mechanisms and ensure compliance with established requirements

43. The UNCTAD Publications Policy states that the secretariat will carry out an annual survey of publications issued during the previous year as well as in-depth readership surveys of selected publications. The results of these surveys will be presented to the Working Party. The last systematic survey of UNCTAD publications was conducted in 2014 and reported during the seventieth session of the Working Party. In the 2014 survey, an online questionnaire was disseminated to all Member States and all non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations in the database of ISS. The response rate was low; only 155 responses were received out of 1,200 surveyed (13 per cent). In its meeting of March 2015, TDB called for UNCTAD to improve the design, methodology and scope of publications surveys. UNCTAD/ISS had not addressed this request and no annual surveys had been conducted since 2014. As ISS has the role of monitoring and managing the publications programme, it needs to ensure that the issue of surveys is addressed and other mechanisms for evaluating publications are explored. A good alternative best practice that UNCTAD could consider is to establish criteria for obtaining readership feedback on a case by case basis at the planning stage of a publication. Tailoring the need for feedback to the individual surveys (within defined broad guidelines) could be more effective.

(10) UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service, in collaboration with substantive divisions, explores alternative methods and arrangements for obtaining and evaluating feedback on readership of major publications.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 10. Recommendation 10 remains open pending receipt of evidence that alternative methods for obtaining and evaluating feedback on readership of major publications have been explored and implemented.

F. Systems for providing general support to Member States

Need to strengthen arrangements for informing, receiving and addressing Member States' inquiries

44. ISS' core mandate is to support the intergovernmental processes which entails regular submission and receipt of information and addressing of requests, queries, questions and complaints (inquiries) from Member States. It is therefore essential to have an effective system for disseminating information and ensuring that inquiries are addressed in a timely manner. However, ISS had not established a system for recording, logging and tracking inquiries from Member States. Therefore, it was not possible for ISS to monitor or have any visibility on the volume and status of the inquiries. Member States interviewed by OIOS complained about lack of timely responses to inquiries. In addition, ISS' website indicated the names of the staff to be contacted but did not clearly indicate which staff member serves which group.

45. Further, there was a need for a unified calendar of meetings and events. The UNCTAD official calendar of meetings approved by the TDB is the main planning document that guides its conferencing and meeting activities. However, the calendar was not exhaustive; it only captured parliamentary meetings and events. Other meetings, seminars and workshops planned by UNCTAD and serviced by ISS were not included. Of the about 250 meetings and events hosted by UNCTAD every year, only 65 (26 per cent) were included in the calendar of meetings. Member States' focal points interviewed by OIOS indicated that they often learned of UNCTAD events through notices and flyers posted in elevators at UNCTAD offices and sometimes through communication channeled through their respective national capitals. At the time of the audit, UNCTAD had launched an internal corporate calendar on its intranet to enhance coordination in planning and scheduling of UNCTAD events. However, this was not being updated regularly and used effectively. UNCTAD needs to establish an effective unified approach (calendar) for planning and communicating events so as to enhance awareness, increase Member States' participation and attendance, and ensure that the value and purpose of its events is realized.

(11) UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service (ISS): (a) establishes mechanisms for receiving and tracking inquiries from Member States; (b) clearly communicates to Member States as to who within ISS should be contacted for inquiries; and (c) develops a unified approach for communicating and promoting the planned events of UNCTAD.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 11. Recommendation 11 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (a) a system for receiving and tracking Member States' inquiries has been established; (b) Member States have been informed of focal persons to be contacted for inquiries; and (c) a unified system for communicating and publicizing UNCTAD's planned events has been developed.

G. Regulatory framework

Need to improve the administration of the trust fund for financing experts from developing countries

46. ISS administers a trust fund for financing the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in UNCTAD's expert group meetings. The trust fund was established in April 2001 and governed by Decision 456 (XLV) of the TDB which sets out the criteria for nomination of experts, financing of experts' travel and reporting requirements pertaining to the trust fund. In 2016 and 2017, the trust fund received Member States' donations in the amount of \$63,000 and recorded expenditures of \$92,000 towards travel of 28 experts from various developing countries. OIOS review of a sample of 11 travel transactions showed gaps in supporting documentation. Travel requests were not prepared in seven cases and the ones prepared were signed by the Chief, CSL Section and not by the Head, ISS as required. Evidence of a letter requesting funds from the government were also not submitted as required in four of the cases reviewed.

47. UNCTAD submitted financial reports to donors and also reported on the trust fund to the TDB. However, the report to TDB only reported on the number of experts financed but did not indicate details on the funding aspects as recommended in Decision 456 (XLV). Further, it has been 17 years since the trust fund was established and it would be useful to assess the extent to which it has achieved its objective. It would also be useful to assess and communicate to Member States when there are significant gaps in funding so that they could consider contributing more to the trust fund. ISS indicated that UNCTAD sends letters to Member States annually to request their contribution to the trust fund and acknowledged that such communications would be more effective if they included a funding gap analysis.

(12) UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service strengthens the administration of the trust fund for financing the travel of experts by: (a) providing adequate support for their travel in accordance with established requirements; (b) reporting to Member States the details of donations received and any significant gaps in funding; and (c) assessing the extent to which the trust fund is achieving its objectives.

UNCTAD accepted recommendation 12. Recommendation 12 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (a) ISS has established review mechanisms to ensure that all required documentation is submitted before travel of experts is approved; (b) details of donations received and any significant gaps in funding are reported to Member States; and (c) an assessment has been made of the extent to which the trust fund has achieved its objectives.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

48. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNCTAD for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UNCTAD should clarify and formally document the role of the Intergovernmental Support Service in liaising with various country groups, including the level and nature of substantive and other types of support that it should provide to the country groups as well as the arrangements for internal coordination.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNCTAD has clarified and documented ISS' role in liaising with the various country groups including the nature and level of substantive or other types of support that it should provide to country groups and internal coordination arrangements.	30 June 2019
2	UNCTAD should: (a) review the structure of the Intergovernmental Support Service to determine and address any gaps; and (b) ensure that all posts with significant changes in functions are properly classified in accordance with ST/AI/1998/9.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: (a) the structure of ISS has been reviewed and a plan of action has been established for addressing identified gaps; and (b) all posts with significant changes in functions (such as the P-5 post currently used for the Chief, GLU, the P-4 post of Conference Affairs Officer, and the P-4 post transferred from the Communications, Information and Outreach Section) have been reclassified.	30 June 2019
3	UNCTAD should strengthen the planning and performance management activities in the Intergovernmental Support Service by: (a) developing work plans to outline its vision, desired goals and strategies; (b) establishing robust performance indicators for all key aspects of its operations; and (c) establishing appropriate systems to assess and manage the key risks impacting its operations.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that ISS has: (a) established a practice of preparing work plans; (b) developed appropriate performance indicators for all key aspects of its operations; and (c) established appropriate systems to assess and manage the key risks impacting its operations.	30 September 2019

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by UNCTAD in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
4	UNCTAD should strengthen the arrangements for monitoring, reporting and managing timeliness in the issuance of both pre-session parliamentary documents and publications by the Intergovernmental Support Service.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that mechanisms have been put in place to monitor compliance with the established timelines for issuing pre-session documents and to proactively advise Member States of revised timeliness where delays are anticipated.	30 September 2019
5	UNCTAD should finalize the standard operating procedures of the Intergovernmental Support Service on planning and servicing intergovernmental meetings and establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they are complied with.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the SOPs on planning and servicing of intergovernmental meetings have been finalized and promulgated, and appropriate mechanisms have been established to ensure compliance.	30 June 2019
6	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service strengthens its feedback and lessons learned mechanisms for intergovernmental meetings by: (a) clarifying the meetings for which post-meeting surveys are mandatory and the timelines within which they must be conducted; (b) exploring other feedback mechanisms such as a complaint redressal during or after meetings; and (c) formalizing the post-event reflection meetings.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the measures taken to clarify and strengthen lessons learned and feedback mechanisms.	30 June 2019
7	UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Support Service should: (a) consult with UNOG's Division of Conference Management to obtain actual attendance records of meetings for comparison with its own records before preparing the final list of participants; and (b) establish mechanisms for regularly monitoring this information.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: (a) ISS has consulted with UNOG DCM to regularly obtain their actual attendance records for comparison with its own records before finalizing the final list of participants and (b) mechanisms have been established to monitor the attendance records.	30 June 2019
8	UNCTAD should: (a) document the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for planning, monitoring and managing its publications programme; and (b) ensure that adequate arrangements are established for its divisions to be	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for planning, monitoring and managing the publications programme, including mechanisms for holding substantive divisions accountable for the timely implementation of	30 September 2019

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
	regularly informed and held accountable for timely implementation of their publications.			their publications, have been clarified and documented.	
9	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service, in consultation with the substantive divisions, explores measures to minimize the impact of delays in translation of publications by: (a) assessing the continued need and value of issuing all publications in all official languages; and (b) identifying a cut-off period after which the publications would no longer be translated.	Important	O	Receipt of details of actions taken to minimize the impact of delays in translation of publications.	30 September 2019
10	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service, in collaboration with substantive divisions, explores alternative methods and arrangements for obtaining and evaluating feedback on readership of major publications.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that alternative methods for obtaining and evaluating feedback on readership of major publications have been explored and implemented.	30 September 2019
11	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service (ISS): (a) establishes mechanisms for receiving and tracking inquiries from Member States; (b) clearly communicates to Member States as to who within ISS should be contacted for inquiries; and (c) develops a unified approach for communicating and promoting the planned events of UNCTAD.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: (a) a system for receiving and tracking Member States' inquiries has been established; (b) Member States have been informed of focal persons to be contacted for inquiries; and (c) a unified system for communicating and publicizing UNCTAD's planned events has been developed.	30 June 2019
12	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service strengthens the administration of the trust fund for financing the travel of experts by: (a) providing adequate support for their travel in accordance with established requirements; (b) reporting to Member States the details of donations received and any significant gaps in funding; and (c) assessing the extent to which the trust fund is achieving its objectives.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: (a) ISS has established review mechanisms to ensure that all required documentation is submitted before travel of experts is approved; (b) details of donations received and any significant gaps in funding are reported to Member States; and (c) an assessment has been made of the extent to which the trust fund has achieved its objectives.	30 June 2019

APPENDIX I

Management Response



CABINET DU SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
DE LA CNUCED

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S
OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

11 December 2018

TO: Mr. Gurpur Kumar, Deputy Director
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

FROM: Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General
UNCTAD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Isabelle Durant', written over the 'FROM' line.

SUBJECT: Draft report on an audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Assignment No. AE2018/340/01)

I refer to your memorandum addressed to UNCTAD Secretary-General on the above-mentioned subject, dated 5 December 2018. I would like to begin by expressing our sincere appreciation for the work of the audit team. The outcomes of this audit provide a solid basis upon which to improve further the operation and delivery of UNCTAD Intergovernmental Service Section.

We are satisfied to see that all comments and suggestions to the recently submitted detailed audit results were incorporated into the draft audit report.

In addition, the Appendix I is also attached with the completed action plan with target dates and the titles of the UNCTAD staff members responsible for implementing the recommendations.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information or clarification.

I look forward to our positive continued cooperation.

cc: Mr. M. Kituyi
Mr. A.T. Issa
Mr. D. Owoko
Mr. M. Bautista
Ms. N. Lewis-Lettington

Management Response

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNCTAD should clarify and formally document the role of the Intergovernmental Support Service in liaising with various country groups, including the level and nature of substantive and other types of support that it should provide to the country groups as well as the arrangements for internal coordination.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 June 2019	
2	UNCTAD should: (a) review the structure of the Intergovernmental Support Service to determine and address any gaps; and (b) ensure that all posts with significant changes in functions are properly classified in accordance with ST/AI/1998/9.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 June 2019	
3	UNCTAD should strengthen the planning and performance management activities in the Intergovernmental Support Service by: (a) developing work plans to outline its vision, desired goals and strategies; (b) establishing robust performance indicators for all key aspects of its operations; and (c) establishing appropriate systems to assess and manage the key risks impacting its operations.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 September 2019	
4	UNCTAD should strengthen the arrangements for monitoring, reporting and managing timeliness in the issuance of both pre-session parliamentary documents and	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 September 2019	

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Management Response

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	publications by the Intergovernmental Support Service.					
5	UNCTAD should finalize the standard operating procedures of the Intergovernmental Support Service on planning and servicing intergovernmental meetings and establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they are complied with.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 June 2019	
6	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service strengthens its feedback and lessons learned mechanisms for intergovernmental meetings by: (a) clarifying the meetings for which post-meeting surveys are mandatory and the timelines within which they must be conducted; (b) exploring other feedback mechanisms such as a complaint redressal during or after meetings; and (c) formalizing the post-event reflection meetings.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 June 2019	
7	UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Support Service should: (a) consult with UNOG's Division of Conference Management to obtain actual attendance records of meetings for comparison with its own records before preparing the final list of participants; and (b) establish mechanisms for regularly monitoring this information.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 June 2019	
8	UNCTAD should: (a) document the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for planning, monitoring and managing its publications programme; and (b) ensure	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 September 2019	

Management Response

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	that adequate arrangements are established for its divisions to be regularly informed and held accountable for timely implementation of their publications.					
9	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service, in consultation with the substantive divisions, explores measures to minimize the impact of delays in translation of publications by: (a) assessing the continued need and value of issuing all publications in all official languages; and (b) identifying a cut-off period after which the publications would no longer be translated.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 September 2019	
10	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service, in collaboration with substantive divisions, explores alternative methods and arrangements for obtaining and evaluating feedback on readership of major publications.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 September 2019	
11	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service (ISS): (a) establishes mechanisms for receiving and tracking inquiries from Member States; (b) clearly communicates to Member States as to who within ISS should be contacted for inquiries; and (c) develops a unified approach for communicating and promoting the planned events of UNCTAD.	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG/Chief ISS	30 June 2019	
12	UNCTAD should ensure that the Intergovernmental Support Service	Important	Yes	UNCTAD DSG, Chief	30 June 2019	

Management Response

Audit of the Intergovernmental Support Service of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	strengthens the administration of the trust fund for financing the travel of experts by: (a) providing adequate support for their travel in accordance with established requirements; (b) reporting to Member States the details of donations received and any significant gaps in funding; and (c) assessing the extent to which the trust fund is achieving its objectives.			ISS and Chief RMS		