

prior to that, adequate systems for travel management such as enterprise resource planning systems were not in place in some organizations.

The standards of accommodation for air travel vary greatly among United Nations system organizations. First class travel is provided for authorized travel by high-ranking officials in seven organizations including the UN Secretariat and for certain non-staff categories. This class of travel costs an average of 33 per cent more per trip compared to business class travel. With major improvements in the comfort offered by business class travel, the report recommends that legislative bodies abolish first class travel for all categories of staff and non-staff by January 2019.

To further staff safety and productivity and eliminate unnecessary stopovers that lead to negligible cost savings, the reports also calls upon legislative bodies to request their executive heads to establish by 2019 a consistent percentage cost threshold below which the most direct route may be selected in lieu of the most economic route, taking into account the time thresholds established in each organization's travel policy for the selection of the most economic routes.

Providing for exceptions to the standards of accommodation is not a common practice across the United Nations system. However, between 2006 and 2016, the UN Secretariat and its affiliated entities granted 3147 exceptions, amounting to a total additional cost of US \$8.6 million. Exceptions for prominent persons accounted for half of all additional costs, increasing from US \$70,000 to US \$2.62 million. To address this, the General Assembly should clearly establish the standards of accommodation applicable for prominent individuals.

The review looked closely at the measures for improving policies and practices and strengthening accountability in air travel management and found that while 26 organizations have undertaken reforms and revisions of their travel policies in recent years, they are not

Mr. Chairman,

The JIU welcomes the comments made by the Secretary-General and the CEB in report A/72/629 Add.1 and, in particular, the view that the JIU report is clear, comprehensive and constructive with conclusions that are both practical and feasible.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize the need for the General Assembly to play its part in advancing efficiencies in air travel management, by ensuring that timely action is taken on the recommendations including those addressed to the Assembly.

I thank you for your kind attention, and welcome any comments or questions that you may have.