complementary to the existing evaluation system, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/231.

255. The Committee agreed with the proposal contained in the report on strengthening the role of evaluation findings, that the central evaluation activities implemented by the Office of Internal Oversight Services consist of one in-depth evaluation each year, releasing some of the existing capacity to:

(a) Enhance support for self-evaluation by other departments and offices;

(b) Prepare one thematic evaluation on a cross-cutting theme from among the priority areas of work of the Organization included in the medium-term plan.

256. The Committee recommended that the Secretary-General report on the implementation of the proposal contained in paragraph 12 (a) above, in the context of the biennial report of OIOS on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives.

257. With reference to paragraph 12 (b) above, the Committee requested the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services to propose themes for consideration by the Committee at its forty-third session, at which time the Committee would consider commissioning a pilot project on one theme. The pilot project would subsequently be considered by the relevant intergovernmental bodies. The usefulness of that pilot project would be considered by the Committee at its forty-fifth session.

258. The Committee reiterated the need for evaluation of programme activities to be consistent with the provisions of regulation 7.1 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

259. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the following schedule of in-depth evaluations (to be submitted to the Committee at its forty-third, forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions, respectively):

(a) Law of the sea and ocean affairs;

(b) Public administration, finance and development;

(c) Human settlements.

2. In-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Council support and coordination

260. At its 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 10 and 11 June 2002, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination (E/AC.51/2002/4).

261. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report.
Discussion

262. The Committee welcomed the report, noting that it was useful, comprehensive and documented a number of good lessons. The Committee was pleased to see that the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division had overall provided efficient services. The view was expressed that the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination could be considered a model. Useful innovations such as organizing round tables, panel discussions, seminars and joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions were noted.

263. Support was expressed for a more active role of the Secretariat in making suggestions on the grouping and scheduling of agenda items, in submitting timely reports, in improving the utilization of meeting time at the beginning of sessions, and in advising non-governmental organizations on the process of application for consultative status.

264. The question was raised whether the lack of invitations to eminent persons explained the low participation of senior officials from United Nations organizations in the high-level segments, noted in table 4. Concern was expressed regarding the marginal participation of non-governmental organizations from Africa in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the question was raised whether insufficient public awareness was preventing them from increasing their number.

265. Concern was expressed that some recommendations were aimed at enhancing the role of the Secretariat with respect to aspects of matters which were the prerogative of Member States, including issues relating to streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly.

266. The following views were expressed regarding a number of recommendations presented in part one of the report:

(a) Recommendation 1 (c). As the purpose of the joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions was to have a frank discussion, some delegations expressed the view that it might not be desirable to produce an outcome document, while others maintained that that represented a good idea;

(b) Recommendation 1 (d). While it was felt that documentation should be provided in a timely fashion to delegations in Geneva, it was suggested that the briefing of delegations in Geneva should be done by the New York missions;

(c) Recommendation 2. Concern was expressed about establishing an indicative multi-year horizon for topics to be discussed and it was suggested that the Office of Internal Oversight Services re-examine that issue;

(d) Recommendation 4. Concern was expressed that the recommendation was in contradiction with the resolution adopted by the Second Committee every year on operational activities;

(e) Recommendation 5. Concern was expressed on the rescheduling of the Economic and Social Council segments throughout the year, because such a measure might affect the participation of small delegations, especially those from the developing countries;

(f) Recommendation 6 (b). The redesign of the Economic and Social Council web site was supported on the condition that such a change would be an
enhancement and not a replacement of the existing system, which is widely used by many delegations;

(g) Recommendation 7. Delegations emphasized the role of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in analysing the applications of non-governmental organizations seeking to obtain consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; on the question of enhancing the efficiency of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, delegations were against the idea of limiting the discussion to previously asked questions, since such a measure could limit the participation of Member States on matters of concern to them.

267. Regarding matters addressed mainly in part two of the document, the Committee expressed serious concern about the continuing problem of the timely issuance of documents. The Committee stressed the importance of delegations’ familiarizing themselves with the documents before the sessions and the need to consult their Governments in order to make statements. It was noted that the six-week rule was considered by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to be unrealistic, and clarification was sought on what a realistic deadline for circulating documents would be.

268. Regarding recommendation 1 (a) of part two, it was observed that the recommendation related to the grouping of agenda items and the revitalization of the General Assembly, which would be the subject of upcoming consultations. The issue should therefore not be considered by the Committee until the outcome of those consultations was known and further study of the impact of the recommendation had been made by the Committee.

269. It was further observed that recommendations 1 (a) and (b) of part two of the report were being addressed in the context of the process of reform of the Organization proposed by the Secretary-General in 1997, and they were not approved by the General Assembly. Other similar proposals were being considered in the context of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

270. The view was expressed that the proposals in paragraphs 77 and 78 could have been added to the recommendations presented in the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

271. The Committee, having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination (E/AC.51/2002/4), concluded that the conclusions and recommendations included in part one of the report should be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July 2002 and by its relevant subsidiary bodies, as well as by the competent Main Committees of the General Assembly.

272. The Committee noted that some of the recommendations contained in part two of the report related to issues that were being or had been conclusively discussed by the General Assembly and its relevant bodies under various items of the agenda and, in that regard, invited the Committee on Conferences to consider recommendations 1 (c) and (d) and 2 contained in the report, and stressed that, in considering recommendation 2, the need for the provision of adequate services to Member States be kept in mind.
273. The Committee, having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, requested the Secretary-General to take into account the views of all Member States in future evaluation reports of the Office without a selective approach, and stressed the need for the conclusions and recommendations to be reflected objectively, while ensuring justifiability and transparency.

274. The Committee expressed deep concern about the question of late issuance of documentation and emphasized that the six-week rule should continue to be observed.

3. In-depth evaluation of legal affairs

275. At its 4th meeting, on 11 June 2002, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of legal affairs (E/AC.51/2002/5).

276. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. The representative of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee’s consideration of the report.

Discussion

277. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the overall good performance of the Office of Legal Affairs. The Committee noted the efforts made by the Office to improve the quality of its services and the timeliness of its reports and also noted the additional measures needed to consolidate those improvements.

278. The Committee noted that there were legal aspects that needed to be attended to in all sectors of the Organization. The view was expressed that the Office of Legal Affairs should be considered as a centre for expertise and resources available to other departments and offices through training and secondment of staff as needed. It was also felt that there was a need for consistent legal expertise both in the contractual administration at Headquarters and in the field, especially in peacekeeping operations. It was noted that the response time to requests for legal advice needed to be shorter in certain circumstances.

279. The remark was made that, with regard to paragraph 10 of the evaluation report, it was not appropriate to characterize the view of one participant as being expressed by a larger group or a majority of Member States.

280. The Committee appreciated the use of model agreements. It was noted that model agreements could not apply in all cases and that there was a need to amend standard texts in detail. The Committee supported the recommended establishment and maintenance of a reference collection of recent agreements and contracts, which would benefit Member States as well. Clarification was requested as to why the administrative instruction on the drafting of agreements with host countries had not been revised since 1987. Regarding the settlement of commercial claims made against the Organization, the view was expressed that it is important to consider conciliation before arbitration.

281. Coordination was pointed to as a concern due to the large number of organizations involved in legal affairs. The view was expressed that the main themes of the in-depth evaluation were the need for coordination and the increased