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**Statement By Ambassador Joseph Torsella,  
on  
Agenda Items 142:  
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services Activities  
Before the Fifth Committee  
March 5, 2012**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States thanks Under Secretary-General Ms. Carman Lapointe for her presentation of the “proposal on the dissemination and distribution of audit reports.” We welcome her efforts to promote and enhance transparency at the United Nations. We also applaud the Secretary General and his team for supporting this initiative and for recognizing the tremendous benefit it will have in enhancing the public trust of the Organization.

The United Nations is at a critical juncture in how responds to one of the defining ideals of our time, one that the Organization itself espouses in its advocacy work: transparency.

Many governments here in this room have been leaders in setting a new standard for public openness and shedding light on the inner workings of public institutions. Many others have made national pledges to join them. Quite simply, when so many governments are advancing these important principles, when people around the world are demanding greater accountability and transparency from all of us, the United Nations should lead, not lag, in these efforts. The United Nations should be held to the same standard, and we should support the Organization’s efforts in that direction.

This great movement has been animated by the knowledge that when public institutions are more open, they are more responsive and accountable to the people they serve. When public institutions are more open, they build the stakeholder confidence that translates into commitment, resources, and opportunity. And when public institutions are more open, they can defend themselves against those who would use them for private purposes.

All of that is true of the UN which is not only a public institution but a global one. Yes, it is accountable to us as member states. But the UN is also accountable to the public each of us represents here –citizens who look to it, fund it, and depend on it. Who among us could tell the journalists or researchers, for example, in our home countries that we in New York have the right to read these documents, but they do not?

And yes, these audits will occasionally make public some uncomfortable facts. But let’s be honest: those facts become public now, and as long as human nature is curious, they will always become public, no matter what we decide. The difference is whether they will become public in a way that

suggests the UN has something to hide, or in a way that says the UN is a mature, confident, and competent organization, ready and able to identify and correct its own shortcomings.

And finally, yes, this will likely have an impact on the quality of audits: it will improve them. Official publication of audits will give managers a greater sense of ownership and impetus to effect change, and citizens will be able to read both audit findings and management responses. In Under Secretary General Lapointe the Organization has hired a well-regarded and accomplished auditor of international standing, who believes that this step will make her office and the Organization function better. We should give great deference to her judgment.

We therefore urge you, our colleagues, to welcome this report with enthusiasm.

Thank you.