

STATEMENT TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
by Ms. Joan Dubinsky, Director, UN Ethics Office
Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly
Item 135: Human resources management
22 November 2012

Mr/Mme. Chairperson,
Distinguished Representatives,

I have the honour to present the Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office, as contained in General Assembly document A/67/306. This annual report covers the reporting period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012.

The Report responds to General Assembly resolution 60/254, which requested annual reporting on the activities of the Ethics Office and implementation of ethics policies.

Allow me to take this opportunity to highlight key aspects of this year's Report.

During the 2011-2012 reporting period, we have:

- Strengthened how we provide services under our five core mandates;
- Emphasized the critical importance of ethical leadership;
- Continued to enhance the UN's organizational culture for ethics and integrity and developed ways to assess it;
- Maintained high levels of success in conflict of interest management, through the financial disclosure programme and the provision of ethics advice.

The Ethics Office provides high quality, confidential services to UN Secretariat staff, located around the globe. The Office addresses issues of ethical concern to staff, such as conflicts of interest, protection against retaliation, procurement-related advice, policy review, outreach and training. During the current reporting period, we received 887 requests for service, representing a 16 per cent increase over the prior reporting period. Staff at all levels rely upon the Ethics Office as a secure and confidential resource on ethics, integrity, values, standards, and organizational culture.

This year, we continued our outreach, communication, and education efforts. My staff and I visited numerous field operations, including peacekeeping and special political missions, as well as offices away from headquarters. We strengthened our training programmes, launched a new public website, and expanded the 2005 version of the UN's *Ethics Guide*. The revised guide, called *Putting Ethics to Work: A Guide for UN Staff*, serves as a companion piece to our 2011 publication *The Roadmap: A Staff Member's Guide to Finding the Right Place*.

During the 2011-2012 reporting period, the Ethics Office received 46 enquiries about retaliation, of which 30 were requests for advice; one matter was beyond the Office's jurisdiction, and 15 were completed complaints. Among those 15 complaints, we found two matters that reached the prima facie case standard. Both were referred to OIOS for investigation. Furthermore, the Organization has implemented our recommendations to remedy a proven case of retaliation.

In the course of administering the Organization's protection against retaliation policy, we have identified some challenges with its current formulation. In order to make the policy more robust and drawing upon our six years of experience in implementing this policy, a comprehensive, structured review of the policy has begun. The purpose of this review is to enhance how the Organization encourages the reporting of serious misconduct, protects whistleblowers from retaliation, and intervenes to prevent retaliation from occurring.

Regarding the Financial Disclosure Programme, this reporting year witnessed the highest overall compliance rate of 99.9 percent – the highest in the history of the Programme. Of the 4,306 filers participating in the 2011 filing cycle, 4,303 submitted their financial disclosures. Each year, between 1.5 and 2.5 percent of all filers disclose information that presents a real or potential conflict of interest that must be addressed. The rate during 2011 was 1.9 percent, reflecting 80 filers who had disclosed 103 discrete conflicts that were remediated. The Financial Disclosure Programme continues as an effective mechanism to protect the Organization from ethical and reputational risks and to manage personal conflicts of interest in a timely manner.

In response to General Assembly resolution 66/234, the Secretariat has initiated a review of the regulatory framework for the UN's Financial Disclosure Programme. We are also pursuing a number of measures to address and mitigate personal conflicts of interest. These efforts include

providing guidance on managing conflicts of interest to staff in multiple fora, such as during staff orientation, during regular ethics training, through dedicated briefing sessions and development of a new website and Ethics Guide.

We recognize that ethical conduct and an ethical organizational culture depend, in large part, upon the commitment and engagement of ethical leaders. The Ethics Office is increasing its direct outreach with senior management. During the reporting period, as the Director of the Ethics Office, I have conducted 26 confidential ethics induction briefings with incoming and newly appointed Assistant-Secretary-Generals and Under-Secretary Generals. I have also completed confidential ethical leadership behaviour assessments for Under-Secretary-Generals who signed Senior Manager Compacts with the Secretary-General.

To enhance the Secretariat's organizational culture, the Ethics Office has launched a first-ever series of thematic leadership dialogues, as part of the Change Management Initiatives. Using a traditional management cascade approach, each successive layer of management will lead their direct reports in a guided conversation about what it means to be a UN international civil servant and the UN Oath of Office.

During the reporting period the Ethics Office was asked to undertake an ethics and reputational risk assessment for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The results of this qualitative and quantitative assessment will enable the UN to use its peacekeeping resources more strategically, enhance its reputation, and support effective mandate delivery.

The Ethics Office remains a leading advocate of the values and principles of the United Nations and will continue to promote an organizational environment committed to ethical conduct and institutional integrity.

This concludes my presentation on the Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the Ethics Office. I thank you for your kind attention, and remain at your disposal to answer any questions that you may have.