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Statement by Cherith Norman Chalet
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on Agenda Item 143: UN Common System
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[As Delivered]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My delegation would like to thank Mr. Kingston Rhodes, Chair of the ICSC, Mr. Johannes Huisman, Director of Programme Planning and Budget Division of OPPBA, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the ACABQ for introducing their respective reports. We would also like to acknowledge the staff representatives for their statements given this morning.

Mr. Chairman,

The International Civil Service Commission was established to ensure consistency and continuity in the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system. It also performs its functions in support of the United Nations and of those specialized agencies and other international organizations which have agreed to participate in the UN common system and have accepted the statute. As a result, the Commission's mandate covers all aspects of staff employment and conditions of service. On matters such as salary scales, education grant and dependency allowance, the Commission makes recommendations to the General Assembly for its consideration. On other matters, such as the level of post adjustment for the different duty stations, the Commission may take decisions that require implementation by individual organizations in the UN common system.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has long supported the work of the Commission and its critical role in ensuring staff compensation is simplified, streamlined, modern, and fair. Noting the recent outcome of the updated compensation package for UN staff in the Professional and higher level categories that achieved these objectives, we look forward to the outcomes of the UN General Service-level staff compensation package.

The United States also welcomes the Commission's continuing efforts to modernize the common system, including its recommendations to the General Assembly on the guidelines for the use of the National Professional Officer category outside of UN Headquarters duty stations and the recommended "Principles and guidelines for performance appraisal and management for the recognition of different levels of performance." Exploring ways to reward outstanding

performance as well as how best to address underperformance are long overdue and we look forward to the positive changes based on the proposed performance incentives. We also recognize the Commission's report on diversity, including gender balance and geographical distribution in the UN common system.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN and its twenty-four organizations of the Common System cannot be isolated from member state budgetary and global marketplace realities. It is in that regard that my delegation notes with serious concern the resistance by some agencies to not implement the Commission's decision regarding the post adjustment level for staff serving in Geneva. The very methodology that resulted in upward adjustment for several consecutive years cannot suddenly and capriciously be deemed erroneous when the outcome is a downward adjustment. I would note that the compensation practices of many member states are similar to that of the common system, in that they seek to establish parity across duty stations. Over the past few years, U.S. diplomats in Geneva have seen a fifty percent reduction in their cost-of-living adjustment. That was deemed fair and appropriate, as have downward adjustments at other UN duty stations.

Furthermore, it is not in the Organization's best interest to allow a single duty station or a few agencies within that duty station to jeopardize the legitimacy of the Commission and the integrity of long-standing practices which have served the entire UN common system well for decades. Based on the merit and independence of the survey and methods applied, we fully support the Commission's post adjustment decision and encourage all heads of agencies based in Geneva to implement fully and promptly.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, we look forward to engaging constructively on this agenda item this session and finding ways to best support the International Civil Service Commission and its role within the common system.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.