



United States Mission to the United Nations

799 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov

Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman

Minister Counselor for UN Management and Reform

On Agenda Item 145: Report on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Fifth Committee, Main Session of the 72nd UN General Assembly

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(As Delivered)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mendoza for her presentation of the annual report on the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and for her leadership in improving the Office and its functions. We would also like to thank the Chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), Ms. Grace Tan, for introducing her Committee's annual report, and for the candid assessments that IAAC continues to convey to Member States regarding the work of OIOS. We would also like to thank the Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit, Mr. Jerry Kramer, for the reports of the JIU on donor-led assessments and on internal audit.

Mr. Chairman,

The work of OIOS in identifying and addressing fraud, waste and mismanagement is vital to the sustainability and effectiveness of the United Nations. As OIOS noted in its report, fraudulent and corrupt activities pose financial, operational, and reputational risks to the Organization. In that regard, we commend OIOS for the high-level fraud and corruption-related investigations and audits it conducted in 2016 and 2017, and for its renewed focus on tackling fraud and corruption through measures such as proactive operational response in high risk areas like medical insurance fraud, educational grant fraud, and implementing partner fraud. At the same time, we note that much work remains to be done within the Organization to properly and comprehensively address the under-reporting of fraud, as highlighted by several oversight bodies in recent years.

Regarding the OIOS investigative function, the United States notes the significant reduction in the length of time to complete an investigation from an all-time high of 23 months in 2011 to the current timeframe of 10 months, and we encourage OIOS to continue to work towards its stated target of completing investigations within six months. With 31 substantiated allegations during the reporting period, it is imperative that investigations are completed expeditiously in order to limit threats posed by fraud and misconduct. The United States supports OIOS's investigations into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and other types of misconduct against UN

personnel, and recognizes the Office's leadership in working with other UN entities to improve system-wide investigative capacity for these acts. We urge OIOS to continue these efforts because thorough, impartial investigations are essential to achieving accountability and protecting the credibility of the Organization.

We also encourage OIOS to continue working with the Ethics Office to strengthen coordination and cooperation in order to effectively implement the Secretary-General's policy on protection against retaliation, and to investigate matters related to retaliation in a timely manner. In order for the Investigations Division to carry out its work in all of these areas, and noting its recent recruitment campaign, we urge OIOS to swiftly address its vacancies at Headquarters and regional offices.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States commends the outcome of the external assessment of the Office's audit function, which concluded that OIOS conforms to the standard set by the Institute of Internal Auditors Standards. We encourage OIOS to continue to strengthen its use of data analytics in order to manage risk and maximize the information available in the Umoja environment. We further encourage OIOS to continue to move toward performance audits. With respect to evaluations, we note the positive efforts of the Office to utilize evaluations in order to promote meaningful organizational change and the effective and efficient implementation of mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States remains committed to strengthening OIOS' operational independence, including the need for greater authority and flexibility regarding the use of its resources. We commend OIOS for updating its guidelines and protocols on advising management. And we encourage OIOS to implement these guidelines and to maintain operational independence.

Thank you.