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STATEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP  
BY

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OF THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE GAMBIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

BEFORE THE SIXTH COMMITTEE  
73<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNDER AGENDA ITEM ~~A/73/217~~ 147  
"ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AT THE UNITED NATIONS"

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**Mr. Chair,**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. Once again, please permit me to congratulate you for your able leadership. The African Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on Administration of Justice at the United Nations as contained in document A/73/217.

**Mr. Chair,**

The African Group is happy to note that our organization has a functioning administration of justice like any of its member states, predicated upon transparency and the rule of law. Seeing the efficient functioning of this machinery with the aim to bring justice to those who toil day and night to keep the daily running of this organization brings joy to the African Group.

The African Group recognizes the imperfection that exists in every organization including the United Nations. The Group takes note of the shortcomings that the people involved in the day-to-day running of the organization are confronted with. We therefore understand fully well that our organization is not perfect nor do we expect it to be perfect. We certainly do expect our organization to yield at a minimum, that which is practicable and within our reach.

**Mr. Chair,**

The group commends the United Nations for the progress registered by the Administration of the Justice System since it was established. We are encouraged by the positive impact that the machinery of the Justice System has impacted the livelihood of the staff by creating a conducive atmosphere of transparency, rule of law and justice for all.

It goes without saying that, the sole purpose of this system is to improve performance, enabling working conditions and provide security. Consequently, it is worthy to call member states and the United Nations System to support the Administration of Justice in the UN System to attain independence, transparency, and professionalism by the provision of adequate resources to support decentralization of justice for the benefit of all. This is the practice recognize by the international standard and it is consistent with relevant rules and principles of the rule of law and due process geared towards ensuring respect for the rights and obligations of the staff members and accountability for all.

As a member of the family of the United Nations, the African Group values the unfettered support it will continue to provide for the protection of human rights of the staff members and partners of the United Nations for as long as the United Nations continues to tread carefully along the lines of agreed international standards, as well as measures that emulate best practices to develop its human resources to defeat shortcomings to triumph for posterity and longevity.

**Mr. Chair,**

The role of this committee must not deviate or shy away from asking the right questions or sending the right messages where necessary. It will be recalled that the important contributions this Committee has contributed to making the System of Administration of Justice operational through the drafting of statutes and its amendments for the tribunal. In view of which, it is incumbent upon us to listen and take note of the concerns and achievements of the subsidiaries of our organization as they are being reported for our due attention and action.

The African Group notes the recommendations and proposals presented by the Secretary-General in his report and invite the members of the Sixth Committee to review its recommendations and proposals. We believe that this debate should be based on the basic principles of independence, transparency, professionalism, and decentralization, as well as on the principles of legality and due process.

**Mr. Chair,**

The African Group supports the Office of Staff's Legal Assistance, which has been performing a vital task through the representation, advice and other legal services. We take note with satisfaction that this Office visited the five sub-regional offices, to provide invaluable opportunities to inform managers, staff and staff associations about the internal justice system, including its role. We reiterate that the Internal Justice Council continues to play an important role in the system to help ensure independence, professionalism, and accountability. We wish to encourage the Council to continue to provide its views and contributions on the application of the system of justice within the scope of its mandate.

**Mr. Chair**

The African group supports the recommendations and observations highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General and looks forward to the added values it will bring to the administration of justice at the United Nations. The group recognizes the work of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal, which have actively been carrying out their functions as noticed in their justiciable commitment at the United Nations.

We note with appreciation the consideration for gender parity as reflective in the current composition of both Tribunals. We encourage a well thought out consideration for equality of gender, race and regional representation in the administration of justice.

**Mr. Chair**

The Group wishes to express the importance of the Management Evaluation Unit process as it provides the Administration with the opportunity to prevent unnecessary litigation before the Tribunals. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General, on the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, which provides workplace informal conflict resolution services to the Secretariat and other subsidiaries.

Regarding the work of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the African Group emphasizes that the informal resolution of conflict is a crucial element of the internal system of Administration of Justice. We call upon the implementation of incentives intended to encourage more recourse to informal resolution, encouraged by the justices during the process. The African Group supports efforts geared towards the promotion of a culture of trust and conflict prevention throughout the Organization.

In view of the foregoing, the group calls on the Secretary-General to make good of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services beyond its responsibility of oversight integrated office, to an office that conducts and reinforces due process within the Organization coupled with ensuring accountability and transparency in decision-making process by holding managers accountable for their actions, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The Office of the ombudsman should be structured in such that conflict at workplace is self-regulatory and resolvable without the need to refer to a tribunal.

**Mr. Chair,**

In conclusion, the Group takes due note of the need for a concerted effort between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> committee, a clear understanding of division of labour in this regard, to avoid overlaps and unnecessary budgetary cost. The African Group reiterates its continued and unwavering commitment to the best practice of administration of justice at the United Nations. The African Group once again expresses gratitude to the Secretary-General and his team for making it possible for delegation to make informed pronouncements on this topic.

**I thank you**