



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

at the Sixth Committee

**on the Agenda item 152:
"Administration of justice"**

United Nations

New York

15 October 2020

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Secretary-General, the Internal Justice Council, and the Office of the United Nations Ombudsperson and Mediation Services for their reports.

An efficient functioning of the administration of justice is key to render justice and to deliver on the principle of rule of law within the United Nations system. We commend all efforts to improve the effectiveness of the administration of justice system and encourage future work in this direction. In particular, we welcome initiatives aimed at reinforcing and coordinating the administration of justice system in order to improve its coherence and transparency. We stand ready to work towards overcoming the challenge of having two independent administrative tribunals with concurrent jurisdiction among the organizations of the United Nations common system.

We would like to underline three main issues.

First, with regard to **staff personnel**, we welcome the positive trend in the reduction of the backlog of old cases on the docket of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal. Nevertheless, concerns still remain and more progress is needed to avoid a piling up of pending cases, given the expected receipt of 300 new cases annually. We remind that, in line with the right to a fair trial, judicial proceedings must be expeditious and cannot take unreasonably long time. A fair balance has to be struck between the length of the proceedings and the more general principle of the proper administration of justice.

Second, we consider that the **recommendations of the Internal Justice Council** could contribute to improving the accountability, transparency, and the operational efficiency of the internal justice system. We welcome the recommendation to establish a target of seven judgements per judge per month. Such a key performance indicator for UN Dispute Tribunal judges would accelerate the treatment of cases, and would allow personnel to effectively seek justice. We equally welcome the recommendation to develop rules of evidence for the Dispute Tribunal, as well as the other recommendations to improve transparency.

Third, we thank the Secretary-General for the five initiatives to improve the prevention and resolution of disputes involving **non-staff personnel**. The pilot project gives access to the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services for non-staff personnel and aims at addressing the disparity of treatment between staff and non-staff personnel. We note with concern that the majority of non-staff cases, amounting to 62 per cent, are from field operations. We support

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

the proposal to continue the pilot project, as it is our view that all categories of staff should have access to justice and to effective remedies. At the same time, we need to assess its effectiveness and to look into the root causes of such disputes.

In closing, we recommend that the Secretary-General's next report include proposals on reviewing formal policies concerning dispute resolution, and an overview on the functioning of the pilot project to offer access to informal dispute-resolution services to non-staff personnel.

We express our appreciation for the invaluable contribution of the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, and the Management Evaluation Unit to the system of administration of justice within the UN.

I thank you Mr./Madam Chair.