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“Administration of justice at the United Nations”

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Madam/Mr. Chair,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement given by the European Union on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

To start, the Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the Secretary-General for his reports on the Activities of the Office of the UN Ombudsman and Mediation Services and on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations. The Kingdom of the Netherlands also thanks the Internal Justice Council for their report.

[General remarks]

Following an extended period of time of being confronted with the coronavirus and its impact, 2022 was in many cases a year of, gradually, returning to office. Certain workplace dynamics resurfaced and new workplace dynamics arose. The Kingdom of the Netherlands notes that 2022 was in several aspects a year of change and transition.

However, the importance of a pleasant and inducive workplace where all United Nations personnel can perform their best whilst securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity is clear. Prevention activities aimed at maintaining a harmonious work environment as well as maintaining the highest standards of conduct and integrity contribute to this.

If workplace conflict does occur, it is best addressed as soon as possible, for example at the managerial level or by using the services of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services. The Kingdom of the Netherlands appreciates efforts addressing workplace conflict aimed at preventing situations from escalating or reaching the formal system of the Administration of Justice. The “informal first” approach is one of the initiatives that contributes to this.

Madam/Mr. Chair,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands would further like to highlight the following elements.

[Report on the Administration of Justice]

First, the Kingdom of the Netherlands notes that the UN Dispute Tribunal disposed of 251 cases during 2022 and again reduced its backlog. This tackling of the backlog is appreciated.

However, considering there is still a backlog, the Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to encourage the UN Dispute Tribunal to increase its efficiency in line with the measures introduced by the General Assembly in resolutions 73/276 and 74/258.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks all the judges and personnel at the Dispute Tribunal as well as Appeals Tribunal for their dedication and the work that has been done. Also, the Kingdom of the Netherlands congratulates the new judges who were sworn in in June 2023 with their appointment to the tribunals.

[Report of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation services]

Second, the services offered by the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation services (hereinafter 'the Office') provide a safe, accessible and cost effective way for all staff members to discuss any kind of workplace-related concern. The Kingdom of the Netherlands notes with appreciation the work of this Office, including the work of the regional ombudsman offices.

Of the total number of 1,560 cases opened by the Office in 2022, 100 were mediation cases. The Kingdom of the Netherlands sees possibility for increased utilization of mediation services and encourages the Office to continue to share information about and promote mediation.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands appreciates and highly values the continuation of the pilot project that offers access to informal dispute-resolution services to non-staff members and thanks the Office for its update on services for non-staff personnel. Considering, amongst others, the continued importance and valuable contributions of non-staff personnel, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is in favour of regularising the pilot project within existing resources.

[Conclusion]

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands emphasizes the importance of a strong, efficient and professionalized internal system of administration of justice at the UN, which can be accessed by both staff and non-staff personnel.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes that the Secretary-General's report A/78/184 on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities contains information on strengthening the administration of justice within the Organization. In the next report the Kingdom of the Netherlands would welcome information on the implementation by the Organization of decisions taken by its judicial institutions.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to follow developments with great interest and looks forward to further improvements being made.

Thank you, Madam/Mr Chair.