

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



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Fifth Committee

Agenda item 141:

Administration of Justice at the United Nations

Statement by Mr Peter Wright

on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand

5 November 2012

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Mr Chairman

I have the honour of speaking today on behalf of Canada, Australia and my own country, New Zealand. At the outset, CANZ wishes to express its appreciation to the members of the Secretariat and the ACABQ for introducing their respective reports.

Mr Chairman

CANZ maintains its long-standing support for an independent, transparent and effective system of administration of justice within the United Nations.

As we have said before, we believe that United Nations staff members and the Organisation deserve a fair and efficient system of internal justice, which is consistent with international law and the principles of the rule of law and due process.

We also firmly believe that a properly functioning system of internal justice underpins our collective efforts to strengthen accountability, oversight, and human resources management in the United Nations.

Mr Chairman,

While conscious that the system is still evolving, CANZ share the ACABQ's concern at the implications of the growing number of cases proceeding to formal adjudication. We likewise agree with the Advisory Committee that stronger measures are required to encourage the settling of disputes through the informal system

The informal process plays a key role in the resolution of disputes and, by extension, in avoiding unnecessary recourse to litigation. With mutually satisfactory solutions being found in 70 to 80 per cent of cases received by the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the results speak for themselves.

With regard to the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA), CANZ takes this opportunity to again state its position that the provision of legal assistance to staff be complemented by some form of financial contribution by the staff. In this regard, while noting the options put forward by the Secretary-General for a mandatory staff-funded scheme, we regret the Secretary-General did not put forward a single preferred proposal at this session.

Mr Chairman

After three full years of operation, the system of administration of justice has well and truly passed its start-up phase. CANZ has taken note of the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General aimed at further strengthening certain aspects of the system during the current session. We will examine all of these proposals and the resource implications associated with them carefully, with a view to ensuring the UN's internal justice system is the effective, efficient and fair system we intended it to be.

We look forward to engaging constructively with all delegations to ensure our consideration of the issues raised in the reports before us are as productive as possible.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.