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United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session

Fifth Committee

Introduction of the Note of the Secretary-General on the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit "Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations"

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the note of the Secretary-General conveying his comments and those of CEB members on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit "Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations" found in document A/70/685/Add.1.

Organizations of the UN system welcome this report, finding it informative and thorough. They appreciate the report's in-depth examination of a very complex issue and value its contribution to the overall analysis of the use of various non-staff modalities within their organizations and across the UN system. Organizations note that the term "non-staff" describes an extremely diverse body within the workforce, which goes beyond the use of just consultants and contractors to include UN volunteers, government-provided personnel and even, in some cases, meeting participants. Each of these categories has its own definition and terms and conditions of contract, thus complicating any analysis of the use of these types of arrangements.

For some organizations, utilizing personnel categories described in this report has become a useful component of their operations, in that these engagements allow for a level of agility and flexibility in their staffing that otherwise would not be possible. This is particularly true for humanitarian operations, where a rapid surge capability is deemed essential.

Furthermore, these organizations note the benefit of providing non-staff contract holders with appropriate conditions of service, including insurance and other entitlements as appropriate. In addition, organizations with voluntary funding models noted that the unpredictability of funding further constrains their ability to make long-term staffing commitments, driving the need for these types of arrangements.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, as you can see from the note of the Secretary-General, organizations generally welcome and accept the recommendations presented in the report. For example, recommendation 4 regarding strengthening internal monitoring and oversight through enhanced information systems received broad support, and organizations strongly support recommendation 8, on the importance of promoting a gender balance policy for these types of contractual arrangements.

Some of the recommendations, however, presented organizations with challenges. You can see, for example, that recommendation 3, which calls for organizations to develop plans to address long-term non-staff personnel, agencies support in principle but would find difficult to implement in the near or medium term due to the impact on financial resources that would ensue. Also, recommendation 7, which addresses the working conditions of third-party contractors, presents organizations with difficulties, as they note that their ability to influence salaries, social benefits and entitlements to third parties could be somewhat limited.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear from their responses that the overall consensus from organizations was that many of the recommendations offered a constructive approach to addressing challenges faced by organizations when utilizing the types of contractual workforce arrangements described in the report,

In closing, Mr Chairman, on behalf of the organizations of the UN system, I would like to thank the JIU for this report, which covered a topic of interest to CEB members and importance to the entire UN system. I reiterate that organizations of the system found much value in the report.

Of course, I stand ready to answer any questions you or the committee may have.

Thank you