



United States Mission to the United Nations

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**Statement by Isobel Coleman, Ambassador for UN Management and Reform
On Agenda Item 142: Report on Office of Internal Oversight Services Activities
Fifth Committee Main Session of the 70th UN General Assembly
October 13, 2015**

The United States thanks Assistant-Secretary-General Mr. David Kanja for his presentation of the annual report on the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). We recognize the achievements made during the past year, including promoting increased implementation of OIOS recommendations and reducing vacancies across the Organization, particularly in the Investigations Division where the vacancy rate was the highest.

We also thank the chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), Mr. J. Christopher Mihm, for introducing the Committee's annual report to the Fifth Committee. We note the IAAC's recommendations to OIOS, particularly as they relate to organizational risk, operational independence, and investigations. The IAAC provides valuable insight on issues critical to the effectiveness and performance of the United Nations, and we encourage it to continue providing Member States with candid assessments of OIOS' performance.

OIOS is vital to the continued sustainability and effectiveness of the United Nations. Its focus on responsible use of resources and attention to waste and mismanagement are critical to overall the transparency and accountability of the United Nations. For example, permanent public disclosure of internal audit and evaluation reports allows stakeholders to see into the organizations' operations and better monitor progress towards addressing those recommendations. We commend OIOS for their role in implementing permanent disclosure.

Independence and objectivity are vital to ensuring that OIOS' work is credible. Yet we remain concerned that OIOS faces challenges in achieving full operational independence. We believe that greater authority over its budget would allow OIOS to perform its oversight functions free of influence from the organizations and the officials it oversees.

Similarly, while the overall vacancy rate has improved, it remains a problem, particularly in the Investigations Division. No doubt, the vacancies noted by the Under-Secretary-General negatively affect the effectiveness of the Office, contributing to significant delays in completing investigations. These persistent problems must be addressed if the organization is to fulfill the responsibilities under its mandate.

Turning to a specific area within the purview of the Investigations Division: the IAAC, OIOS, and the Controller have all voiced concerns about under-reporting of fraud. We urge OIOS to more proactively address this. Given the recent news reports about potential corruption and fraud by senior UN diplomats, it is all the more imperative that OIOS work with management to ensure that guidelines regarding fraud are clear and any breach be investigated immediately. We further believe that a central intake system would strengthen OIOS' investigative capacity by increasing the completeness and accuracy of reporting on all actual and potential fraud. However, noting the challenges that OIOS faces in completing timely and proactive investigations, we are concerned by any attempt to transfer all investigations to OIOS. We firmly believe that OIOS should focus its attention on proactively pursuing and investigating serious cases of fraud, mismanagement of resources, corruption, and sexual abuse and exploitation, including through the use of forensic auditing.

The United States notes the continued need to strengthen the evaluation capacity and culture across the United Nations and notes the correlating observation by the IAAC regarding the resource disparity in the Inspection and Evaluation Division. Evaluation is critical to programme performance and effectiveness. An increase in performance audits of programs rather than compliance audits would also help evaluate effectiveness.

Looking forward, we urge the General Assembly to mandate a comprehensive review of the Office to assess opportunities to improve collaboration across the three divisions, reduce the vacancy rate, and address inter and intra-office dynamics, including employee morale.

Finally, we commend OIOS for the positive trend in the organization's implementation rate of OIOS recommendations. This progress demonstrates that management takes these issues seriously and we urge continued effort in this area.

In closing, while there are areas that could be strengthened and improved, OIOS continues to serve a critical function. We welcome its new leadership under Heidi Mendoza, and look forward to efforts she will undertake to ensure that OIOS continues to evolve into the strong and independent oversight body envisaged by Member States and the United Nations when it was first created over twenty years ago.



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**Statement by Isobel Coleman, Ambassador for UN Management and Reform
On Agenda Item 114(i): Appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal
Oversight Services
70th UN General Assembly
October, 12, 2015**

The United States welcomes the appointment of Ms. Heidi Mendoza as the next Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services. We extend our warm congratulations to her and take this opportunity to underscore the importance of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and its role in providing critical oversight of the United Nations. The United States is committed to ensuring a strong OIOS able to carry out robust audits and effective investigations to ferret out waste, fraud and corruption. OIOS must also have the ability to conduct performance evaluations of key programs, enabling management and member states to ensure effective use of resources. We look forward to working with Ms. Mendoza and engaging with Member States to strengthen OIOS.