

**Statement of the Vice Chairman**

**Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)**

**20 October 2015**

**Administration of justice at the United Nations and activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services**

*(ACABQ report: A/70/420; related Secretary-General's reports: A/70/187; A/70/151)*

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/70/420) on the administration of justice at the United Nations and the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services.

Mr. Chairman, the Advisory Committee's report addresses the data on the activities of the administration of justice system in 2014, and the Secretary-General's responses to the General Assembly's requests in resolution 69/203. I will highlight some of the Committee's key recommendations.

With regard to the trend in the activity of the justice system, the Committee notes that the statistics demonstrate a continuing fluctuation in the number of cases received by different parts of the formal system from year to year. It is therefore premature to draw conclusions about what constitutes a normal level of recourse to the formal system and whether or not the caseload of the system has stabilized.

The Advisory Committee welcomes the establishment of the interim independent assessment of the administration of justice system, and reiterates its view that such an assessment is desirable at this juncture to evaluate the functioning of the system to date and to ensure that it is meeting its objectives as a mechanism to effectively resolve labour disputes within the Organization.

With regard to the voluntary supplemental funding mechanism for the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, the Committee notes that the funding from the mechanism achieved enough to recruit a number of staff, despite significant opt-out rates in some entities and geographic regions. Therefore, the Committee does not object the experimental period being extended for one year, from 1 January to 31 December 2016, pending the completion of the independent interim assessment and consideration of any recommendations relating to OSLA functioning and funding.

On the resource requirements requested, the Advisory Committee has no objections to the proposed extension of the three ad litem judges of the Dispute Tribunal.

The Committee's report contains a number of other recommendations, including on measures to encourage informal dispute resolution including through an enhanced cooperation between the formal and informal parts of the justice system. Moreover, the Committee supports the continued involvement of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services in the progressive development of human resources policies and practices.

However, the Advisory Committee notes with regret that the Secretary-General has not yet complied with the request of the General Assembly to finalize the terms of reference for the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services and expects that the ongoing consultations will be concluded expeditiously and the related Secretary-General's bulletin promulgated not later than the end of February 2016.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.