



United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov

**Statement by Ambassador Maura Connelly
Senior Advisor for United Nations Management & Reform
At the First Resumed Part of the 71st General Assembly
Agenda Item 134: Standards of Air Travel
March 10, 2017**

[Check Against Delivery]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank Mr. Stephen Cutts, Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of Central Support Services and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the ACABQ for introducing their reports.

Madam Chair,

Given its impact on the Organization's ability to effectively deliver and its related significant financial implications, my delegation believes that air travel must be reformed. We would like to commend the Secretary-General and his team for providing additional information on this issue in this year's report. This data enhances transparency and enables member states to take informed decisions when identifying opportunities for greater efficiency. We look forward to future reports that present similar information.

The Organization should continue to mitigate travel and its associated costs by ensuring it is used when necessary to implement mandate activities, by conducting virtual meetings when possible, and by limiting the number of exceptions to the standards of accommodation. In this regard, we note the increase in the requests for exceptions in period from July 2014 through June 2016, and share the ACABQ's view that these exceptions should be limited.

My delegation fully agrees with the ACABQ's observation that "today's business class is now functionally equivalent to yesterday's first class", and we support limiting travel to business class only when warranted. We believe economy class should be the UN standard of travel, as it is for the national governments of many UN member states, and travel time requirements for the use of business travel should be re-evaluated.

Madam Chair,

In closing, my delegation notes that many member states, including my own, have adjusted their travel policies to reflect the modern-day travel alternatives and budgetary realities. The UN must adapt and focus its resources to where they can have the most positive impact on mandate delivery.

Thank you.