

**Statement of the Secretary-General,  
on the Report of the Activities of the Ethics Office  
to the Fifth Committee  
28 October 2016**

Madam Chair,  
Distinguished Members of the Committee,

1. I have the honour to present the Report of the Secretary-General on the *Activities of the Ethics Office* from 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016.
2. Since this period also coincides with completing ten years of operations of the Office, please allow me to highlight the key achievements. During the past ten years, the Ethics Office responded to 7,217 requests for services, detected and managed a total of 1,256 conflicts of interest items through the Financial Disclosure Programme, and completed preliminary reviews of 153 claims for protection against retaliation. Of the completed 153 preliminary reviews, the Ethics Office determined 21 prima facie cases and found five (5) cases involved retaliation. These results appear to correspond with those of comparable organizations.
3. The UN Ethics Office continues to assist the Secretary-General as an independent office to enhance the culture of ethics, transparency and accountability of the Organisation. The main initiatives include:
  - i) confidential ethics advice and guidance;
  - ii) the annual financial disclosure programme;
  - iii) the review of claims for protection against retaliation for specific protected activities;
  - iv) outreach, training and briefings with other partner offices and departments; and
  - v) policy support, such as participation in the Department of Management's working group on the UN Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework.
4. Of the 1,124 requests for services the Ethics Office received during the 2015-16 reporting period, the requests for confidential ethics advice were the greatest at 622. The trend of growing requests for ethics advice is one indicator of staff commitment to ethics and integrity. The Office also continued to provide advice, upon request, on due diligence, reputational risks, and best practices in anti-corruption programmes in procurement.
5. The aim of the financial disclosure programme is to protect the integrity of the Organization and enhance public trust by detecting, managing and preventing personal conflicts of interest. The Programme achieved an overall submission rate of 99 per cent and a 100 per cent submission rate for the UN Secretariat for the 2015 filing cycle. During the reporting cycle, the Ethics Office continued to facilitate the inter-departmental working group's discussion on improvements to the Programme's regulatory framework

and worked with the Office of Information and Communication Technology with the aim of developing a new and more robust IT platform for the Programme.

6. For the reporting period, the Office completed preliminary reviews of 23 claims of retaliation for protected activities, and determined six (6) as prima facie cases. The Ad Hoc Working Group on the revised policy proposal for protection against retaliation for reporting potential misconduct, set up during the Staff-Management Committee consultations, continues its deliberation. The Ethics Office has continued providing technical input.
7. During the reporting period, the Office delivered 122 ethics briefing sessions. The Office's website received 140,000 views. The Ethics Office strove to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of its outreach initiatives by combining nearby locations during its missions. The Office monitored the rollout of the 2015 Leadership Dialogue on the theme of *Fulfilling Our Mission: Taking Individual Responsibility*. In collaboration with the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Department of Management, the Ethics Office developed the 2016 Leadership Dialogue discussion guide on *Fraud Awareness and Prevention: How do I fit in?* The Dialogue will facilitate discussions on the different mechanisms to deter, detect, prevent and report allegations of fraud and corruption. The 2016 Leadership Dialogue is designed to raise awareness of the new Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the UN Secretariat (ST/IC/2016/25).
8. During the reporting period, the Ethics Office proactively advocated for and assisted in conducting pre-appointment reviews of potential conflicts of interest for senior leadership positions. The Ethics Office also contributed to policy coherence in the UN system by chairing the monthly meetings of the Ethics Panel of the UN and participated in the annual meeting of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations
9. By engaging directly with staff, management and other stakeholders on UN values and promoting adherence to the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity, the Ethics Office plays a supportive role to the Secretary-General and Member States. The report concludes by requesting the General Assembly to take note of the Secretary-General's intention to adjust the current annual reporting cycle from the mid-year time frame (1 August to 31 July) to the calendar year (from 1 January to 31 December), while fully respecting the mandate to report annually.
10. Finally, I again convey our thanks to the Committee for its continuous support for the Ethics Office.

I would be pleased to answer any questions.