



United States Mission to the United Nations

799 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov

Statement by Cherith Norman, Minister Counselor for UN Management and Reform

Agenda Item 141: UN Common System

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Thank you, Madam Chair. At the outset, we would like to thank the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission, Mr. Kingston Rhodes, the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division, Mr. Jan Huisman, and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for the presenting their respective reports.

Capable and high-performing staff members are essential for this Organization to implement its many complex and challenging mandates. Therefore, establishing and maintaining conditions of service that can attract, retain and incentivize the best and brightest are among this Committee's most important responsibilities. At the same time, with personnel costs exceeding three-quarters of the budgets of most organizations in the UN system, and growth in personnel costs over the last decade crowding out resources for important programmatic work, ensuring that conditions of service are sustainable in an era of fiscal constraint is essential.

Under the steady leadership of Chairman Rhodes, the Commission continues to help us balance these imperatives. General Assembly resolution 70/244—a landmark result for this Committee—is a testament to the thorough and thoughtful nature of the Commission-led comprehensive review of conditions of service for staff in the Professional and higher categories. It is further testament to this Committee's ability and willingness to engage staff and organizations of the UN system and, to the extent possible, take into account their views.

Currently, the ICSC is now the midst of its next comprehensive review, this time on the use of other categories of staff: General Service, Field Service and National Professional Officers. We believe there is significant scope to review these categories, especially with a view to rationalize the use of internationally and locally recruited personnel, to enable UN common system organizations to more efficiently and effectively deliver mandates. We look forward to an update on this work this session and seeing the recommendations of this exercise in the next main session.

We also look forward to discussing the other important issues in the latest annual report, including the revised human resources framework, separation payments, efforts to increase gender balance, and the review of the implementation of the framework for contractual arrangements.

Thank you, Madam Chair.