



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
On Agenda Item 144: Report on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services
Fifth Committee Main Session of the 70th UN General Assembly
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[Check Against Delivery]

Thank you, Madame Chair.

The United States would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ms. Heidi Mendoza for her presentation of the annual report on the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). We welcome Ms. Mendoza to her first main session of the Fifth Committee, and we recognize the achievements of OIOS through her leadership since she was appointed less than one year ago. We are particularly pleased by the significant improvements in the Investigations Division, including the recent appointment of a new Director of the Investigations Division, more timely completion of investigations and a decline in the number of aging investigation cases. We also note the increased implementation rate of OIOS recommendations by the Organization.

We would also like to thank the Chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), Mr. J. Christopher Mihm, for introducing the Committee's annual report. We note the IAAC's recommendations to OIOS, particularly as they relate to organizational risk management, internal controls, and investigations. The IAAC provides valuable insight on issues critical to the effectiveness and performance of the United Nations, and we are grateful for the candid assessments that IAAC conveys to Member States regarding the work of OIOS.

Identifying and addressing fraud, waste, and mismanagement are critical measures to ensure the overall health of the United Nations. We note that the IAAC, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and OIOS have all voiced concerns about under-reporting of fraud. We encourage OIOS to take further efforts to proactively mitigate fraud risk, investigate fraud and to continue prioritizing efforts aimed at identifying and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse.

With regard to investigations, we are pleased with the OIOS efforts in improving the capacity of its investigators and in proactively investigating cases of fraud and sexual exploitation and abuse. OIOS has been essential in addressing the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse that has come to light in the past few years, but much remains to be done. We welcome the efforts by OIOS to train National Investigative Officers (NIOs) to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse levied against uniformed military personnel. We encourage OIOS to continue to explore ways to assist TCCs in conducting impartial, thorough investigations of misconduct in the field.

We recognize that difficult conditions in the field contribute to the rate of unsatisfactory reports related to peacekeeping operations. However, the United Nations is a field-focused organization, and we therefore urge management to address these recommendations as a matter of priority.

The United States is committed to strengthening OIOS' operational independence, and we remain concerned that challenges remain in realizing this goal. We believe that greater authority over its budget would allow OIOS to perform its oversight functions more effectively. We urge OIOS to finalize the guidelines and protocols to be used when advising management about situations that may be subject to audit or investigation. These are critical measures for safeguarding OIOS operational independence.

We welcome the OIOS risk-based approach to determining its annual workplan, and its work in implementing a risk register and internal controls. Such measures help ensure that OIOS is able to focus resources where the need is greatest. We stress that any new systems or policies should be accompanied by education and training to ensure that all staff have the capacity and the skills required to successfully implement the reforms.

We encourage OIOS to fully employ an integrated, office-wide approach to risk management where all three divisions work together to manage risks facing the organization. We applaud Under-Secretary-General Mendoza's leadership and efforts aimed at promoting greater coherence within OIOS as well as to ensure each OIOS division continues to perform.

In closing, the United States looks forward to working with colleagues 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.

Thank you.