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**Statement by Isobel Coleman,  
U.S. Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform with  
Responsibility for Special Political Affairs  
Fifth Committee, Main Session of the 71<sup>st</sup> UN General Assembly  
Friday, 23 December 2016**

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*As Delivered*

Thank you, Madam Chair.

My delegation would like to congratulate you on guiding this Committee to a successful outcome this session. We acknowledge with sincere appreciation the hard work and dedication of Sharon and her dynamic team, as well as the interpreters, the sound engineers, and all who helped facilitate the Committee's work. Their tireless efforts in support of this Committee's work remain essential, and we would also like to thank the members of the Secretariat for their presentations and assistance throughout the negotiations, all of which helped ensure the Committee's success, and in particular Catherine Pollard, Jan Huisman and Rick Martin.

This session was not without its challenges. The timely issuance of documents is essential so that the Committee has the adequate amount of time to properly review and take fully informed decisions. But despite the delays experienced this session, the Committee nevertheless maintained a collaborative and constructive approach throughout and reached consensus on a majority of the important issues that were before us.

Madam Chair,

At the outset of this session, my delegation noted that with the upcoming change in UN leadership that there is a significant inflection point for the Organization, and an important opportunity for the Fifth Committee. With the results we achieved this session we can say with confidence that this committee rose to the challenge. We took positive decisions on important, transformative initiatives that will set the stage for the UN's new leadership to build on the reform efforts launched by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. Together these decisions will help steer the UN to a more efficient, effective, sustainable and relevant future. Over the longer term, the decisions we are taking today should fundamentally improve how the organization delivers on its mandates and serves the people of the world.

We believe that the budget outline of \$5.395 billion for 2018-2019 fully and properly reflects the level of resources required for the biennium. Furthermore, the budget outline we approved today underscores our collective commitment to budget discipline. Gone are the days of double digit percent increases of the budget. For the third biennium in a row, the budget outline level remains

flat. We are forwarding, to the next Secretary-General, a strong signal that we expect the organization to reprioritize, eliminate redundancies, and realize efficiencies to accommodate new tasks and mandates. It is important to note the benefits that we are finally beginning to realize from our significant investments in Umoja are reflected in the 2018-2019 budget outline. Moreover, our decision on the Global Service Delivery Model brings the various transformational initiatives together, allowing the organization to streamline and consolidate services in a cost-effective manner. GSDM requires more thought on how it will be implemented, but conceptually it is the logical and financially responsible next stage, and it builds on the changes already set in motion by the investments we have made in Umoja. When combined with flexible workplace arrangements, the organization will be able to achieve a global footprint that is far more cost-effective than what exists today.

Let me say a few words on some of the other important decisions we take today. This committee's Human Resource Management resolution will help the UN to modernize and streamline a number of reform initiatives that remain fragmented and require full integration. The comprehensive HRM framework, which will be presented at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session, will allow the UN to prioritize and implement human resource management policies that place people first, and better align human capital with mandate requirements for today and for the future.

On the Sustainable Development Goals, following a year of inconclusive deliberations, with this committee's decision, the conversation must return to how the UN can leave behind its siloed approach to global issues, and embrace the realignment of functions and reprioritization of resources. It must also focus on supporting member states to achieve these momentous goals.

In order to ensure that the organization's work benefits those that are most in need, the UN must continue to work towards making the organization more field-centric. This session, the committee took important decisions on over 30 special political missions, including Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, as well as decisions on UNOCI.

Madam Chair, with only a few days left in his tenure, we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for his service to the organization over this past decade. Through his actions and his leadership, the Secretary-General has championed major transformational initiatives, all of which have enabled the United Nations to begin to transition to a more modern, effective and efficient organization.

In closing, I would like to wish all of our colleagues a very happy holidays, and best wishes for the new year.

Thank you.