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Statement by Ambassador Maura Connelly
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At the Fifth Committee Opening of the First Resumed Part of the 71st General Assembly
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[As Delivered]

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to express my delegation's sincerest condolences to the Russian Federation delegation on the recent loss of their Permanent Representative, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin.

I would like to express my delegation's continued support for you as Chair as you skillfully lead us through this session. I would like to acknowledge the Executive Secretary of the Fifth Committee, Ms. Sharon van Buerle, and her dedicated staff. We look forward to working with all of you this session.

Madam Chair,

At the conclusion of the main session in December, my delegation noted that we were at an important inflection point for the Organization. At that time, the Committee took positive decisions on important and transformative initiatives that have set the stage for the UN's new leadership under Secretary-General Guterres. Over the longer term, these decisions should fundamentally improve how the Organization delivers in an efficient, effective, and sustainable manner.

We look forward to embarking on the important work before us this session. This Committee has the opportunity to ensure the critical reform initiatives that UN member states have committed to continue to develop and thrive. We have the important task of considering the financing for two special political missions, the OPCW-Joint Investigative Mechanism and the DPRK Panel of Experts. We must work together to ensure that these missions have the resources necessary to implement their mandates. This Committee will also consider the contingency fund, where we look forward to discussions that will ensure fiscal discipline in the UN. My delegation also stands poised to seize opportunities for further progress on existing reform initiatives, including implementation of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy, procurement, accountability and air travel.

As it is being introduced later today, I would like to say a few more words about ICT. My delegation notes that the Organization, under the leadership of the Chief Information Technology

Officer, is making progress on implementing this strategy. In our resolve to fully bring the UN into the 21st century, we are certain that achieving transformational reform and cost containment depends on real time, accessible and actionable information. We see the inclusion of a full and updated five-year budget projection, including peacekeeping requirements, as a positive development. We encourage the Secretary-General to continually refine these cost projections as the implementation phase continues and planning assumptions require adjustment. Although compliance with the ICT strategy Secretariat-wide remains a challenge, the progress made by the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Department of Field Support in implementing the ICT strategy is noteworthy. This level of coordination and cooperation is essential for achieving benefits. To further assist the Committee in reviewing this important agenda item, we also urge the Secretary-General to provide the Committee with clear indicators of tangible progress and benefits defined by performance metrics. We believe that the next ICT progress report should contain detailed updates for all Secretariat entities on their progress on implementing the ICT strategy.

As its report is also being introduced later today, my delegation would like to note the positive efforts of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) over the past 50 years. We appreciate the Unit's findings and recommendations on the issue of fraud in the UN system; its detection and response mechanisms play a key role in safeguarding the Organization. We thank the JIU for drawing attention to a range of challenges the Organization faces, including those related to administrative support services and service centers. We're grateful for the Chair's leadership and the Unit's continued efforts aimed at improving the Organization.

Madam Chair,

There are other items that we will consider this session that I have not specifically mentioned, in part because my delegation will deliver separate statements upon their introduction. We look forward to working with all partners this session in reaching a consensus that reflects the best course of action on the matters before us.

Thank you.