



**United States Mission to the United Nations**  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017  
[www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov](http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov)

---

**Statement by Cherith Norman Chalet**  
**Minister Counselor for United Nations Management & Reform**  
**At the First Resumed Part of the 72<sup>st</sup> General Assembly**  
**Agenda Item: Standards of Air Travel**  
**March 15, 2018**

---

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Christian Saunders on his recent appointment to Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services and thank him for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on air travel policies. I would also like to thank Mr. Babou Sene, Vice Chair of the ACABQ for introducing the Advisory Committee's report.

Mr. Chairman,

Times have changed since flying was considered a luxury. At a time when the United Nations seeks to instill budgetary discipline, the continued use of first class travel contradicts the fiscal reality of the organization. As the ACABQ stated in its report last year, "yesterday's first class is today's business class." Separately, in its system-wide review of air travel policies, the Joint Inspection Unit also recommended that first class travel be eliminated. Given the significant financial implications and the adverse reputational impact of costly travel policies upon the Organization, my delegation strongly believes significant improvements are needed to air travel policies and practices. This should start with elimination of first class for all UN travel.

At the same time, we commend the Secretary-General's advocacy for cost-conscious travel and his continued practice of limiting the size of his staff when traveling. My delegation believes economy class should be the UN standard of travel, as it is for the national governments of many UN member states. We look forward to additional details in future Secretary-General reports that include, for example, additional measures to modernize air travel policies and systems, and its interpretation of regulations and rules regarding the use of exceptions.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, my delegation notes that many member states, including my own, have adjusted their travel policies to reflect the modern-day travel alternatives and budgetary realities. The UN must also adapt, update, and focus its resources to where they can have the most positive impact on mandate delivery.

*As Delivered*

We look forward to a robust and constructive discussion on all the elements contained in the report and working with all partners in reaching a consensus on this matter.

Thank you.