

**UN Ethics Office**  
**Statement by Ms Elia Yi Armstrong, Director,**  
**before the Fifth Committee**  
**12 October 2018**

Madame Chair,  
Excellencies,

I have the honour to present the latest Report of the Secretary-General on the *Activities of the Ethics Office*. It covers from 1 August 2016 to 31 December 2017, a transitional period, as the reporting moves to a calendar year. The Secretary-General had indicated this change in his previous report (A/71/33).

As an independent office, the UN Ethics Office continues to assist the Secretary-General to enhance the Organization's culture of ethics, transparency and accountability.

During the transitional period, the Ethics Office received a total of 2,037 requests for services (547 for August-December 2016; and 1,490 in 2017). The number received in 2017 is the highest to date, compared to previous 12-month reporting periods.

Just over half include 1,076 requests for advice and guidance (272 from 1 August to 31 December 2016; and 804 in 2017). Inquiries about outside activities were the greatest at 33 per cent.

The Ethics Office managed the Financial Disclosure Programme and reviewed 5,504 confidential disclosure statements for the 2016 cycle and 5,811 for the 2017 cycle. The Programme achieved a filing compliance rate of 100 per cent for the 2016 cycle, while the 2017 cycle achieved 99.9 per cent.

The Ethics Office continued its outreach, both face-to-face and by remote conferencing, to as many staff in as many locations and field missions as possible. It facilitated the Secretariat's Leadership Dialogue on "*Fraud awareness and prevention: how do I fit in?*" (2016) and "*Standards of conduct: what's expected of me?*" (2017). The 2017 Dialogue had more than 30,000 participants, compared to the 17,000 during the very first Dialogue in 2013.

The Secretary-General strengthened the *policy on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations* twice in 2017. The Ethics Office communicated the policy changes to staff during its outreach activities.

During the transitional reporting period, it received 112 related enquiries, (20 from 1 August to 31 December 2016; and 92 in 2017). In addition to providing advice and referrals based on these requests, it initiated 13 preliminary reviews (with three prima facie determinations of retaliation) between August and December 2016; and 26 preliminary reviews

(with nine prima facie determinations of retaliation) in 2017. In 2017, it responded to seven referrals for prevention of retaliation in accordance with this new policy provision.

The Ethics Office also continued to provide support to other departments and offices and various United Nations entities in reviewing policy provisions pertaining to ethics and integrity, including the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat, and was consulted on the regulatory frameworks on the prohibited conduct of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.

Ongoing collaboration among members of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations (EPUN) continues the coherent and consistent application of ethical standards among the Secretariat and the Funds and Programmes. Over the reporting period, I chaired 15 meetings and a special session with the Secretary-General was held on 13 April 2017, commemorating EPUN's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Report proposed several measures for strengthening the independence of the Ethics Office, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/263.

I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.