

Remarks at a Meeting of the Fifth Committee on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)

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Thank you, Madame Chair.

The United States would like to thank Assistant Secretary General-Kanja and Ms. Tan for presenting their respective reports.

Madame Chair, The work of OIOS is as important as ever, particularly with the Secretary General's ongoing reforms. The United States views this agenda item as an opportunity for member states to support the Office's ability to produce high quality and timely audits, investigations, and evaluations that, in turn, strengthen the Organization's accountability.

Madame Chair, In the area of internal audits, we thank OIOS for its ongoing efforts to capture emerging risks through a work plan focused on potential fraud and concerning organizational culture. OIOS reports an increasing trend in the number of pending audit recommendations. This trend is concerning because OIOS's recommendations are developed in order to protect the organization from risk and ensure that internal controls are in place. We encourage the Secretary General to redouble efforts to implement recommendations within the agreed timeframes.

Additionally, we agree with the IAAC's recommendation that OIOS develop a common understanding of the type of audits that it conducts, and we encourage a focus on performance audits.

Regarding the Investigations Division, OIOS reports a significant increase in reporting on sexual harassment. The United States shares the Secretary-General's commitment to zero tolerance, and we are pleased to see that OIOS has created a specialized team to focus on these investigations.

The United States also encourages OIOS to investigate matters related to retaliation in a more timely manner. The IAAC notes that the average time taken to complete investigations pertaining to retaliation is 200 days, whereas the revised whistleblower policy stipulates a 120-day timeframe. We hope the encouraging reduction in vacancy rates within the Office will allow for more timely completion of investigations writ large.

Regarding the Inspection and Evaluation Division, we note OIOS' assessment that recruitment policies and practices do not support the hiring of the best talent. We encourage all hiring managers to focus on this important area.

Madame Chair, The United States remains committed to strengthening OIOS' operational independence, and encourages greater authority and flexibility regarding the use of its resources. We commend OIOS for its work year and look forward to discussing initiatives in 2019 that will strengthen its oversight function.

Thank you.

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