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Statement by Ms. Cherith Norman

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On Agenda Item 142: The UN Common System

Fifth Committee, Main Session of the 74th UN General Assembly

October 25, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In the 72nd session, the General Assembly spoke clearly and unanimously in support of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), urging all UN organizations and specialized agencies in the common system to implement the post adjustment set by the ICSC.

Since its inception in 1975, the ICSC, supported by the General Assembly, has been carrying out this duty, as well as other duties including upholding the principle of providing equivalent compensation for similar work. 2017 was no exception. Many questions have been raised since then, particularly from one duty station, whether such adjustment by the Commission was correct, credible, or even lawful.

The United States supports the Commission's work to consistently apply a methodology to ensure common system coherence. While there is always room for improvement in standardizing methodology data and baselines, none of the complaints surrounding the Commission's methodology were voiced prior to the downward adjustment. The same methodology used by the Commission cannot be deemed correct when it produces an upward adjustment and claimed erroneous when it results in a downward adjustment.

Mr. Chair,

Our delegation was surprised and disappointed to learn that the Commission had not been consulted or called upon by the International Labor Organization Appeals Tribunal prior to its July judgment. We believe the judgment ignores the intent behind GA resolution 72/255. The judgment has now essentially created two pay systems in one duty station. Hundreds more staff members from that duty station await a pending UNDT decision.

Mr. Chair,

The United States welcomes the opportunity for the General Assembly, as the creator and guarantor of the UN Common System, to speak on this issue of post adjustment once again, and we trust that productive discussions will lead to another strong, unanimous resolution to which the Commission and others in the UN can look to.

We also look forward to finding a solution to address the issue of two judicial systems within one UN common system, as highlighted by the Commission, in the interest of one strong, fair and harmonious UN common system.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.