



United States Mission to the United Nations

799 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov

Statement by Ms. Anca S. DiGiacomo

Advisor for UN Management and Reform

On Agenda Item 146: Report on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

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

October 11, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General David Kanja for his presentation of the annual report on the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). We also wish to acknowledge the recent appointment of Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye as the next Under Secretary-General for OIOS. We thank USG Mendoza for her leadership in improving the Office and its functions and look forward to working with Ms. Ndiaye. We also thank the Chair of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), Ms. Patricia Arriagada Villouta, for introducing her Committee's annual report.

Mr. Chair,

We have long valued the work of OIOS. Now more than ever, as the Secretary-General's reforms take hold, we look to OIOS to further support the United Nation becoming more accountable, transparent, and agile. The United States fully support OIOS' important mandate to enhance oversight in the Organization while maintaining the independence it needs to produce high value and timely audits, investigations, and evaluations.

Mr. Chair, we would like to highlight a few areas of the OIOS and IAAC reports.

In the area of internal audits and evaluations, we welcome the development of an OIOS practice guide on auditing and evaluating organizational culture in order to build an assessment of culture within audits and evaluation. Relatedly, we would be interested in hearing more about how this assessment is carried out and what elements will focus on change management initiatives in the context of management reform.

Regarding the Investigations Division, OIOS reports a significant increase in matters referred for investigation – specifically, a 63 % increase over the previous year, which includes sexual harassment cases. The United States shares the Secretary-General's commitment to zero tolerance and strongly supports ongoing efforts to address harassment system wide. In future reports, we encourage a year-to-year comparison specifically on harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse, so we can more closely evaluate these trends.

The IAAC notes that the average time taken to complete investigations has risen to 11.5 months which is well beyond the 120-day timeframe stipulated in the protection against retaliation policy. We agree with the IAAC's recommendations of the Division to analyze and, most importantly, solve the root causes of why investigations exceed timeframes.

Mr. Chair,

OIOS continues to report an increasing trend in the number of pending recommendations, most notably 71 outstanding recommendations from 2015 to 661 outstanding recommendations in 2018. This trend is concerning because OIOS' recommendations are meant to protect the Organization from risk and ensure internal controls are working. We encourage the Secretary-General and senior managers to redouble efforts to implement recommendations without delay.

Mr. Chair,

Overall, we commend OIOS for the work accomplished this past year and acknowledge the challenging environment it often operates in and we look forward to supporting the UN becoming more accountable and effective at implementing its critical mandates.

Thank you.