

Seventy-fourth session

Items 117 (i), 137 and 148 of the preliminary list*

**Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments:
appointment of the judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal**

Proposed programme budget for 2020

Administration of justice at the United Nations

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

**Introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on administration of justice
(A/74/172)**

Distinguished Chair,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the formal system of administration of justice at the United Nations in 2018. In the report, the Secretary-General, as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, provides information on the functioning of the formal elements in the system, offers observations with respect to the functioning of the system, and responds to specific requests of the General Assembly in resolution 73/276.

As in previous years, the report was coordinated by the Office of Administration of Justice and includes input from the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and the Principal Registrar of the Tribunals, as well as entities engaged in the system, such as the Management Evaluation Unit, the Appeals and Accountability Section of the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Legal Affairs, Offices away from Headquarters, participating Funds and Programmes, and the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services.

The Secretary-General appreciates the continued support of the General Assembly in ensuring that the United Nations has an internal justice system that operates in accordance with the purpose and principles established by the Assembly and as set out in founding resolution 61/261 and resolution 62/228.

2019 marks ten years since this new system was established at the United Nations. At this landmark moment, I can report that, on the whole, the system is functioning well. At the same time, the report identifies areas where improvement could be made.

* A/74/50

One of the trends in the internal justice system that continued in 2018 are efforts of all involved in both the formal and informal components of the system to resolve disputes informally without resort to unnecessary litigation.

Another ongoing feature of the system are the “group cases” triggered by one administrative decision that affects large numbers of staff members. In 2018, there were several group cases relating to post adjustment for the Geneva duty station.

There are several areas in his report which the Secretary-General has brought to the attention of the General Assembly in relation to the operation of the Tribunals.

I also note that the report describes several initiatives and projects undertaken with the aim to enhance access to justice and knowledge of staff about the internal justice system and dispute resolution avenues it offers. I will highlight two such initiatives:

(1) The first is the outreach campaign and extensive dissemination of the new handbook “A staff member’s guide to resolving disputes”. The guide has been distributed to each and every staff member through a broadcast message, as part of the outreach strategy developed by the Office of Administration of Justice and in collaboration with all other stakeholders. This was done in response to concerns around low levels of knowledge of staff about the system.

(2) The second initiative is a toolkit for self-represented applicants created by the Office of Administration of Justice to provide guidance to applicants who have no legal representation and to enhance their understanding of, and their ability to, access justice and mitigate efficiency concerns.

Distinguished Chair,
Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your support to the internal justice system which is a key mechanism for ensuring transparency and accountability in the Organization.

My colleagues and I are here to answer any question that may assist in your consideration of this agenda item.