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**Statement by Ambassador Cherith Norman Chalet
U.S. Representative for United Nations Management and Reform
Main Part of the 74th UN General Assembly
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[As Delivered]

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations on your election as Chair of the Fifth Committee. My delegation looks forward to supporting you and the new bureau members as you guide the Committee towards a successful conclusion. We also thank Ambassador Gillian Bird for her extraordinary leadership during the 73rd General Assembly. I would also like to thank Mr. Chandru Ramanathan, Controller for being here this morning and the critical role you play in ensuring this committee is able to fulfill its mandate in the best possible way.

I also look forward to working with Mr Lionel Berridge, the acting Secretary of the Fifth Committee, and his hard working and professional team. Mr. Berridge is well known for his capable work as Secretary of the Committee on Contributions. We want to take this moment to again thank Sharon Van Buerk for her tireless dedication to the United Nations and her leadership as Secretary of the Fifth Committee. We wish her well.

Mr Chairman,

This session is a unique and a critical one as we are set to consider some of the fruits of our reform decisions that sought to enable the UN to operate more effectively, strategically plan and identify efficiencies as a result of streamlining duplicative structures and functions. This will be our main focus as we consider the 2020 annual budget and the human resources management reports. The United Nations is at the crucial phase of implementing the reforms, and this body must be diligent in holding the United Nations accountable, so that the reforms provide the benefits we all seek – a more accountable and effective UN that better manages its finances to deliver on its mandates, one which collaborates across divisions on important peace and security operations, and rationalizes and coordinates its development work at the country, regional, and global levels.

We also recognize that the Global Service Delivery Model is a key reform that we will consider in optimizing and streamlining the way the Secretariat delivers administrative services. However, in order for this reform to actually deliver the intended benefits, it must stay grounded in a solid technical basis and not be co-opted by political machinations.

In addition to the reform related issues, we have before us a number of other important agenda items in this main session. While we will make separate statements on many of these, let me make a few opening observations.

With regard to the 2020 budget, we commend the Secretary General for his first annual budget and for the new budget format, and look forward to continuing to improve the format over time so that the documents focus on results and efficient mandate delivery. However, we are taking a careful look at the budget which notably proposes a \$79 million reduction compared to the 2019 appropriated budget, but because of ongoing construction projects, recosting, and other add-ons, the budget could balloon to over \$3 billion, **just over** \$200 million over 2019. This is concerning.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the summer a decision was made by the International Labor Organization Administrative Tribunal that threatens the UN common system and the General Assembly's authority by negating a decision by the International Civil Service Commission that was endorsed by the General Assembly regarding a cost of living adjustment in Geneva. My delegation strongly believes needs to be addressed as soon as possible this session. The United States fully supports the International Civil Service Commission's authority to set post adjustment for all duty stations for the UN common system and welcome engaging all delegations on the best course of action to preserve the common system.

In closing, even though we have a heavy agenda before us, with your stewardship, **Mr. Chairman**, I am confident that we can conclude our negotiations on time and by consensus. We look forward to working productively with each and every delegation throughout this session.

Thank you.