



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

799 United Nations Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Statement by the United States of America
72nd General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 146: Administration of Justice at the United Nations
Emily Pierce, Counsellor
October 9, 2017

Thank you, Mr. President.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Internal Justice Council, and the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services for their reports. I wanted to follow up on the three areas we highlighted in our statement last year: (1) accountability; (2) efficiency; and (3) transparency.

With respect to accountability, we were pleased to see the progress made through the Secretary-General's revised bulletin on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations. We note the IJC's report that there still exists a substantial fear of retaliation among staff. In this light, we reiterate that this issue may merit further exploration, as there are many, and often subtle, ways retaliation can manifest itself. We would also be interested in more information from the Secretary-General about the system of referrals in light of the recommendations of the IJC. We note the Secretariat's report that during the reporting period there were no findings on the accountability of managers.

With respect to efficiency, we welcome the Secretary-General's reporting that the Management Evaluation Unit's work to conduct management reviews of administration decisions appears to have resulted in a decrease in the amount of litigation pursued at the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. We also acknowledge the significant contribution of the activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services to the prevention of disputes and the informal resolution of disputes. In addition, we recognize the work of the OIOS Investigations Division in putting in place measures to maintain a downward trajectory in the average length of time of investigations. We agree with the Secretary-General that informal resolution of disputes as early as possible should be encouraged, but recognize that deadlines are there to ensure prompt resolution of disputes. We therefore reiterate that care should be taken to ensure that requests for deadline extensions are not abused.

We also appreciate the efforts that have been made to improve transparency, including through outreach missions by the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and the United Nations Dispute Tribunal to help inform staff and managers about the internal justice system. We support the IJC's recommendations that we should consider what additional practical steps could be taken to enhance knowledge and understanding of the system, in particular regarding the availability of staff legal assistance. We also support harmonizing and consolidating the rules, regulations and administrative issuances with a view toward reducing redundancies and eliminating contradictions, as a means to help make the entire process more transparent to staff. In this regard, we welcome the work already underway by the Office of Human Resources and Management. We also support the IJC's recommendation regarding enhancing staff access to documentation and information, in particular that where feasible, the Management Evaluation Unit should provide complaining parties with documents and other information relied upon by the Unit in deciding to sustain the decisions of line managers.

Thank you.