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**STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
BY**

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OF THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE GAMBIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**BEFORE THE SIXTH COMMITTEE
74TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 146
“ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AT THE UNITED NATIONS”**

NEW YORK, 17TH OCTOBER 2019

Chairperson,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. The African Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on Administration of Justice at the United Nations as contained in document A/74/172.

Chairperson,

The African Group is pleased to observe the progress so far made in the internal justice system in the United Nations. The costs for litigation including attorney fees, pre-trial expenditures for depositions and interrogatories, records searches, and court fees can be extremely high and due to our Organization's distinctive international legal status disputes cannot easily be resolved through national courts.

We, therefore, note that during the reporting period pending applications were resolved without the need for a final adjudication on the merits. The fact that 85 per cent of the matters did not proceed to United Nations Dispute Tribunal in the reporting period, bears testimony to the critical role of the management evaluation function in providing resolution to members of staff. The African Group will continue to support efforts to strengthen the United Nations' internal system of justice to ensure work-related disputes are resolved at the highest standard of expertise at the lowest possible cost.

Chairperson,

We all agree that the internal system of justice is designed to enhance the United Nations' overall performance and provide a sense of security among its employees. However, there is more to administration than the mere sense of justice. Administrators should strive to create a sound work environment that values human resource. The benefits of a sound ecosystem at the workplace are well-documented and there is no doubt that positive work climate also leads to a positive culture. This in turn has the potential to enhance commitment, increase employee engagement and boost performance as well as improved service provision.

The African Group, therefore, commend the sturdy co-operation it has continued to afford the United Nations in its attempt to protect of the rights of its staff and partners. However, it is incumbent upon the administration to continue to build on its present successes while treading cautiously along the lines of agreed

international standards, particularly those measures that emulate best practices in the development of its human resource.

Chairperson, The African Group notes with interest the critical matters highlighted in the Secretary-General's report and invites the members of the Sixth Committee to review its recommendations and proposals. We believe that this debate should focus on how to best develop a just system in the administration of the United Nations and an ecosystem that will play a deciding role in retaining and binding the best of its employees.

There is much at stake in the administration of justice in the United Nations. We, therefore, urge this Committee not to focus its energies on grappling with matters for which we are already appearing to have answers. Rather, by asking the right questions and sending the right messages with a view to obtain the best results. For instance, we must ask whether the internal justice system at every stage adequately resourced and decentralised. Is the system actually transparent and professional? Are its working methods consistent with international law, the principles of the rule of law, and due process? Are we taking note of the concerns and achievements of the subsidiary bodies of our Organisation as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, including those being reported for our due attention and action.

Chairperson,

The African Group recognises the remarkable work of the judiciary arm of the United Nations and wishes to encourage them to redouble their efforts as they carry out their functions, which are evident in their justiciable commitment at the United Nations.

We also note, with appreciation, that the Office of Administration of Justice has created a toolkit for self-represented applicants, which was issued and posted on the website of the internal justice system in May 2019. We are keen to learn, however, the results of the survey eliciting feedback from staff and how the information so far obtained is being used to enhance the utility of the toolkit in future iterations. We need to ensure that applicants who opt to be self-represented have all the necessary information the need to as they decide whether to file a case and, if so, how to proceed with. .

Chairperson,

In conclusion, the African Group takes due note of the need for rigorous efforts by the UN System that will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of

administration of justice at the United Nations. The African Group reiterates its continued and unwavering commitment to support the Organisation's efforts to ensure its staff feels confident that if they seek justice through both the formal and informal internal justice mechanisms, the system will be accessible, the professional and independent judges will hear their case, the judgment will be fair, and they will have access to professional legal advice..

I thank you