

Statement at the 75th General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item Number 152: Administration of Justice
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Thank you, Chair.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Internal Justice Council, and the Office of the United Nations Ombudsperson and Mediation Services for their reports.

The United States appreciates the efforts of the UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and UN Appeals Tribunal (UNAT) to continue their work through the difficult working conditions posed by the global pandemic and to make further progress on the reforms that have been the focus of this committee's discussions in recent years. Through the use of virtual hearings and conferences, the important work of these institutions has continued unabated. We hope that this spirit of creative adaptation will continue and translate into opportunities for further efficiency and resiliency in the future. Likewise, we thank the Office of the Administration of Justice, the Office of UN Ombudsperson and Mediation Services, and the Management Evaluation Unit and Office of Staff Legal Assistance for their dedication and adaptation during this challenging year.

We welcome the continued progress made to reduce the backlog of cases before the tribunals, which is critical to delivering justice and maintaining the credibility of the system. We note that the UNDT must continue to focus on surmounting this lingering challenge.

We continue to appreciate the work of the Office of the UN Ombudsperson and Mediation Services, which provided an opportunity for neutral dispute resolution to thousands of staff, despite the challenges of budget constraints and the unique stresses posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Management Evaluation Unit and Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) have also continued important work in helping to resolve requests before they reached the litigation stage, which is a crucial part of maintaining efficiency and effectiveness of the entire system.

We also welcome the publication earlier this year of a digest of the judicial decision of the UNDT and UNAT in honor of their 10th anniversary, which has already improved awareness of the jurisprudence of the tribunals. The widespread positive reception of this digest is evidence of the appetite for greater transparency of the judicial activities of these institutions. Transparency of the system is critically important so that UN staff, their representatives, and the General Assembly can better understand how the tribunals are carrying out administrative justice.

As we have noted in the past, there is much more to be done in this regard. For example, we must move forward with creating a publicly available database of judicial directives, which is common practice among courts. We must also bring efforts to publish a docket providing the status of all cases before the UNDT and UNAT to full fruition. Ensuring that the published rules of procedure clearly describe the procedures that are observed in practice is yet another key

dimension of transparency. We welcome the recent efforts to educate those in the UN system about the tribunals and other available dispute resolution procedures and hope that more will be done to expand such awareness.

Thank you, Chair.