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CANZ statement delivered by Fergus Ewington, Policy Support Officer, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

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Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada and New Zealand in addition to my own country, Australia.

The United Nations is an organisation based on shared values. Key among these are equality, transparency, accountability, due process and respect for the rule of law. In order to deliver upon the United Nations' objectives – including widely embedding these values – it is imperative that the UN's operations are undertaken in a manner that embodies and is consistent with those values. This includes the organisation's internal mechanisms for the administration of justice.

We are convinced that for the United Nations system to continue to attract top talent, to enable staff to perform their duties with excellence, and to



deliver on the objectives and vision of the UN as set out by its Member States, the United Nations system must be a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace. For this reason, we support and reaffirm our commitment to a transparent, effective and adequately resourced system for administration of justice within the UN system.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report, and the staff of the Management Advice and Evaluation Section, the Office of Administration of Justice, the Dispute Tribunal and the Appeals Tribunal for their ongoing work. We value both their tireless work to deliver justice in respect of individual matters, and to consider and identify systemic issues within the UN system, all while pursuing prompt and efficient consideration of complaints and cases.

We also acknowledge and commend the efforts of the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, whose provision of legal services to United Nations staff is a vital component of the process to ensure justice within the UN system. This is particularly true in light of the growth in caseload since 2009.

CANZ welcomes the ongoing commitment to evaluation and improvement of the system of administrative justice at the United Nations, from ongoing efforts relating to multilingualism to support for informal dispute resolution



and protection against retaliation. We echo the Secretary-General's comments regarding the importance of ensuring access for all staff members to the system of administration of justice, regardless of their duty station. As a result, we were particularly pleased by the reported increase in judicial and registry capacity in all of the UN's working languages, permitting pronouncements to be made in Arabic and French. We were also pleased to read details of efforts made to raise awareness of the UN's policy on protection from retaliation, as suggested by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Such efforts further promote the important principles of transparency and access to justice across the UN system, ensuring that the United Nations upholds its own ideals.

We are reassured that the organisation continues to take seriously the identification of these important issues, and is committed to the necessary ongoing work to address them. We also appreciate the detailed statistical analysis set out in the Secretary-General's report, which allows us to consider trends and draw useful insights on the functioning of the system of administration of justice.

Systemic issues remain. This includes the absence of a systemic mechanism to monitor staff wellbeing, particularly in difficult duty stations. CANZ also remains concerned about the harm that discrimination continues to cause,



including within the UN system. We welcome institutional efforts to identify and address discrimination and harassment in the organisation, including through the initiative to develop anti-racism training by the Anti-Racism Office. We however remain alarmed by the rates of sexual discrimination and harassment which continue to be reported and require investigation, including as reported by women in senior positions. We also reiterate the importance for a justice system embedding a victim-centered approach.

Recognising the launch of the strategic action plan of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations, we reiterate our call for more attention and action in response to these issues, including particularly the use of effective prevention measures to ensure that the United Nations is a respectful and enabling workplace for all of its employees.

To that end, we thank the Secretariat for its three-pronged strategy in relation to misconduct, and encourage both the United Nations and all of its Member States to work together to ensure that the United Nations system's framework for the administration of justice is impartial, efficient, transparent and fair.



CANZ countries will continue to engage constructively towards this end, and on all efforts to strengthen systems for the administration of justice globally. We support continued implementation of policies and practices which ensure accountability, with a focus on systemic improvement, and on the importance of a justice system which embodies a victim-centered approach.

Thank you.