



## **New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations Te Aka Aorere**

### **Sixth Committee – UNGA 80<sup>th</sup> Session: Administration of Justice at the United Nations**

#### **Statement by Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ) delivered by Tim Witten-Sage, Legal Adviser**

21 October 2025

Thank you, Mr/Madam Chair.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

CANZ countries thank the Secretary-General, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, and the Internal Justice Council for their comprehensive reports. These documents provide valuable insights into both individual justice outcomes and systemic challenges within the United Nations.

We reaffirm that the United Nations must exemplify the values it promotes globally - transparency, accountability, equality, due process, and respect for the rule of law. We agree with the Secretary-General that these values remain foundational for the work of the organisation, and support the work of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services to ensure these values are reflected in the UN's internal administration of justice system, and its administrative decision-making processes.

We commend the work of the Dispute Tribunal, Appeals Tribunal, and the Office of Administration of Justice, whose efforts in 2024 resulted in the disposal of hundreds of cases, including through innovative mechanisms such as expedited case disposal plans.

CANZ countries take note of the Internal Justice Council's recommendations to strengthen informal resolution mechanisms, including mediation, and to empower managers to resolve grievances early.

We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's efforts to promote multilingualism, and by the Ombudsman's increased outreach to staff in hardship duty stations and remote locations. These steps help ensure equitable access to justice across the UN system.

CANZ countries commend the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services for its continued commitment to delivering high-quality, accessible, and empathetic support to staff across the Secretariat, reflected in its notably strong satisfaction survey participation and positive results.

However, systemic issues persist. The Ombudsman's report highlights the impact of financial constraints, high workloads, and organisational change on staff wellbeing. We welcome the Organization's efforts to align its Mental Health and Well-being Strategy with international best practices, including the WHO/ILO policy brief on mental health at work.

We are particularly concerned by the reports of continued prevalence of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, including among senior staff and in peace operations. We welcome the development of anti-racism training and the strategic action plan led by the Anti-Racism Office, and the steps taken to strengthen a victim-centred approach in cases involving sexual harassment. We reiterate the need for effective prevention measures to be implemented.

We further note the Internal Justice Council's emphasis on sensitising judges to issues including those related to multiculturalism, gender, discrimination, and victims' rights. We support further exploration of how victims' rights can be better incorporated into the administration of justice.

CANZ supports and encourage ambitious, strategic and cross-system reforms at the United Nations leading to more accountable, effective and efficient delivery of the UN's core mandates on peace and security, human rights, and development.

CANZ supports harmonized data collection across the justice system, with a focus on cost-effectiveness, especially considering the UN80 Initiative. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposals for a unified data repository to connect data and statistics across the UN system

and are open to considering effective options to achieve this. This aligns with Internal Justice Council priorities, including calls to strengthen legal assistance and ensure adequate resourcing for the Office of Staff Legal Assistance — both central to the tribunal's mandate.

CANZ countries remain committed to constructive engagement on all efforts to strengthen the administration of justice within the United Nations. We support continued implementation of policies that promote accountability, systemic improvement, and fairness, and we reiterate the importance of a justice system that is impartial, efficient, transparent, and victim-centred.

Thank you.