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**Statement at the 80th General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 77: Criminal Accountability of United Nations Officials
and Experts on Mission
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United States Department of State, Washington DC
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The United States is grateful to the officials and experts on mission who perform the essential work of the United Nations around the world.

We appreciate the high standards of integrity with which the vast majority of these officials and experts conduct their work. The United States reiterates its firmly held belief that, on the rare occasion when UN officials and experts on mission commit crimes, they should be held to account. We take this opportunity to reiterate the United States' continuing and serious concerns regarding information that several UNRWA staff participated in Hamas's brutal terrorist attack against Israel on October 7, 2023, and emphasize the importance of ensuring accountability for those involved.

Turning to the Secretary-General's July reports, we welcome the reporting and additional details on internal procedures for addressing allegations of misconduct by multiple entities in the UN System. We support report 239's recommendation that UN system bodies and related organizations should ensure the coherence and coordination of policies and procedures to report, investigate, refer and follow-up credible allegations of criminal conduct by their personnel. We concur that all UN system entities should continue to measure the adequacy of their existing policies and procedures and promote enhanced cooperation on cross-cutting issues including financial recovery.

With respect to report 270, we welcome the Secretariat's work to integrate the reinforcement training package into training programs for units preparing to deploy to UN peace operations. We note with dismay, however, the high number of allegations reported on Annex I where no information has been provided by the relevant Member State, despite multiple follow-ups by the Secretariat. We urge Member States whose nationals have been accused of crimes or misconduct to cooperate and provide the Secretariat with information on the status of any investigations without further delay as called for in resolution 79/116. In this vein, we echo the Secretary-General's sentiments that "[w]hen Member States fail to act on referrals, impunity prevails and the ability to prevent future harm is significantly undermined."

Turning to related issues in the Secretary-General's February report on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse," we'd like to highlight some positive steps as well as areas where we see continued need for improvement.

For example, we were pleased to see that in 2024, additional UN entities joined the ClearCheck database, increasing participation to a total of 40 entities. We support the further complementarity of ClearCheck and the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme to prevent the movement of perpetrators between the United Nations and NGOs. We laud the decision this year to publish on the UN website the disciplinary decisions pertaining to sexual exploitation and abuse cases included in the Secretariat's compendium, and we note the importance of standardizing this practice across the United Nations system. These steps will contribute to system-wide transparency on accountability efforts.

Nonetheless, we note with significant concern that 102 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported in peacekeeping operations and special political missions in 2024, an increase from the 100 allegations reported in 2023. As the report notes, this is the "third time in the last 10 years that 100 or more allegations have been recorded in a single year." Even if this increase results from allegations stemming from older conduct and enhanced access to reporting mechanisms, these figures remain concerning. With eighty-two percent of these allegations arising in two missions – MONUSCO and MINUSCA – we must acknowledge a deeper problem there.

In this vein, we urge troop- and police-contributing countries to strengthen and deliver robust pre-deployment training and to conduct and conclude timely investigations of all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by their personnel and to hold accountable responsible personnel and report to the UN fully and promptly on all actions undertaken in this regard, in line with the objectives of Security Council resolution 2272.

We continue to urge the Secretary-General, moreover, to hold Member States accountable by continuing to repatriate units when there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by those units. We urge the Secretary-General to replace all units of any troop- or police-contributing country that fails to take appropriate steps to investigate allegations, fails to hold perpetrators accountable, or fails to inform the Secretary-General of the progress of its investigations or actions taken. These steps should be undertaken as a matter of course, without regard to politics and without delay.

Finally, the United States requests that all UN entities, specialized agencies, and related organizations continue to examine the issues addressed in these reports and revise internal rules and procedures, with the goals of further mitigating the risks of misconduct and promoting greater accountability for criminal conduct, sexual exploitation or abuse committed by UN

officials and experts. We look forward to continued engagement in this Committee and with the Secretariat on this important issue.

Thank you, Chair.