



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. KARIM ISMAIL, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 147: ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 18 October 2018)

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 147 entitled "Administration of Justice".

2. The Group expresses its appreciation to Ms. Alayne Frankson-Wallace, Executive Director, Office of Administration of Justice, and to Ms. Shireen Dodson, United Nations Ombudsman, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports. We also thank you Madam Chair for drawing the Committee's attention to the report of the Internal Justice Council.

Madam Chair,

3. The Group of 77 and China attach great importance to the United Nations internal system of justice as an independent, transparent system operating to ensure respect for the rights and obligations of staff members and the accountability of managers and staff members alike. We believe that an adequately resourced and decentralized system is necessary for effective management of the human resources, which is the most valuable asset of the Organization.

4. In that Connection, the Group wishes to reaffirm that the Secretary-General, as the chief administrative officer, has a responsibility to ensure that the internal justice system of the Organization functions properly and to keep the General Assembly fully informed on the operation of the system. We also reaffirm the independence of the Office of the Administration of Justice, its operational and budgetary autonomy, and its mandate to ensure the institutional independence of the formal system of internal justice.

Madam Chair,

5. The Group acknowledges that several components of the Internal Justice System have seen steady increase in their workload over the past years. Last year in particular the increase came at an exponential rate. We are of the view that this situation is bound to continue owing to a number of downsizing exercises and the current large-scale reforms in the Organization. Therefore, we are keen on ensuring that the system is adequately staffed and funded to meet its increasing duties.

6. In this connection, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to establish three permanent full-time judges posts in lieu of the ad litem judges to the Dispute Tribunal, and to convert the related temporary support staff into posts. We also take interest in the idea of creating a formal roster of fully qualified and suitable candidates for judicial positions, which shall take into account the imperative for equitable geographic representation, especially for candidates from developing countries.

7. Furthermore, the Group will give its due consideration to the Secretary General's proposal to

extend on an indefinite basis the voluntary supplemental funding mechanism for the Office of Staff Legal Assistance. However, we wish to stress that the expenses of the Organization shall be borne by its Members as stipulated in article 17 of the UN Charter. We further recall the conclusion of the Interim Independent Assessment Panel: that the Office is under-resourced and that its budget is insufficient, even if supplemented by the voluntary funding mechanism.

Madam Chair,

8. The Group believes that the informal resolution of disputes remains an essential pillar of the Internal System of Justice in order to avoid unnecessary recourse to litigation. In this regard, we encourage efforts aiming at increasing its use when appropriate. We also welcome the Secretary-General proposal to initiate a pilot project that would offer access to informal dispute-resolution services to non-staff personnel by the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services as "part of the Office's mandate".

9. In the same vein, taking in account that the majority of cases reported to the Office in 2017 came from staff away from the headquarters, the Group will seek updated information on the work and mandates of the seven regional offices affiliate to the Ombudsman Office.

10. Lastly, we also welcome the report of the Internal Justice Council, which provides useful views and recommendations to the Assembly on the implementation of the system of administration of justice. We look forward to a thorough examination of this report.

11. In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to engage in a constructive debate to foster substantive progress on this agenda item.

I thank you, Madam Chair.