



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 146: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES AND AGENDA ITEM 135: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 10 October 2018)

Madam Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Ms. Heidi Mendoza, for introducing the report of the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the period 1st July 2017 to 30th June 2018. The Group also thanks Ms. Maria Gracia Pulido Tan, Chair of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on its activities.

Madam Chair,

2. The Group would like to acknowledge the important role of the OIOS in strengthening the internal oversight of the organization through internal audit, inspection, evaluation and investigations. The office plays a central role in improving internal controls, accountability and organizational efficiency and effectiveness, which are key objectives of the ongoing UN reform efforts. We would like to reaffirm our support to the operational independence of the Office in line with the General Assembly resolution 48/218 B.

3. The Group notes that during the reporting period a total of 365 oversight reports were issued by the Office, which contained 1123 recommendations, 25 of which are classified as critical to the Organization. We are pleased to note that these recommendations aim at cost savings, overpayment recovery, efficiency gains and other improvements with financial implications in the approximate amount of 4.8 million, and that 1.4 million in savings and recoveries have already been realized.

4. The Group also acknowledges the important initiatives undertaken by the Office to strengthen its functioning and to ensure that it carries out its work with the highest standards of professionalism and efficiency. We also welcome the continuous coordination between the Office and other oversight entities, including the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit, in order to minimize overlap and duplication in oversight work. We encourage maintaining and further enhancing this coordination.

5. Furthermore, the Group urges full cooperation from all relevant UN entities with the Office in discharging its responsibilities. We note with concern that the lack of budgetary support from one UN entity affected the ability of the Office to fulfil other planned activities in a timely manner. We encourage the Secretary General to ensure continuous reporting on any future impediments to the work of the Office, and to take measures to prevent its recurrence.

6. We also wish to underscore that the total number of outstanding critical recommendations

decreased to 35 at the end of the first quarter of 2018, out of which 17 were past due. We echo the Independent Audit Advisory Committee in urging the UN management to continue its efforts to fully implement all accepted recommendations, and in particular those classified as critical, in a timely manner.

Madam Chair,

7. The Group of 77 and China once again wishes to acknowledge that the ongoing reform efforts, which aim at making the UN more accountable, transparent and effective in delivering on its mandates, sheds more light on the importance of independent and effective internal oversight and hence the role of the OIOS. In this connection, we note that the number of non-peacekeeping related matters reported for investigation has increased by 46% compared to last year. Moreover, the Investigations Division has seen a marked increase in the reporting of sexual harassment cases in light of the renewed commitment towards enforcing the zero-tolerance policy. We welcome the important work of the OIOS in this regard, including the creation of a specialized team to investigate sexual harassment complaints. We also welcome the steps taken by the UN management to ensure accountability and follow up on the investigations' outcomes.

8. The Group also wishes to commend the Office for the progress achieved in overcoming the long-standing challenge of high vacancy rates, and encourages further efforts to sustain this progress and to fill in the remaining vacant posts expeditiously, as well as to address the obstacles for staff retention.

Madam Chair,

9. Turning to the report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on its activities, the Group would like to reiterate its appreciation for the expert advice and assistance it receives from the Advisory Committee. We continue to attach great value to the Advisory Committee's comments, observations and recommendations aimed, among other important tasks, at ensuring compliance with audit and oversight recommendations, as well as the overall effectiveness of the risk management procedures in internal control systems.

10. We have carefully examined the comments and recommendations contained in the report, and look forward to discuss them thoroughly in the coming informal consultations.

11. In conclusion, allow me to reassure you, Madam Chair, of our readiness to engage in an open and constructive deliberation on this agenda item towards a timely and successful conclusion.

I thank you all.