



# General Assembly

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Agenda items 139 and 151

## **Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations**

### **Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services**

#### **Report of the Fifth Committee**

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Tsu Tang Terrence **Teo** (Singapore)

## **I. Introduction**

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2020, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-fifth session the items entitled “Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations” and “Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services” and to allocate them to the Fifth Committee.

2. During the main part of the seventy-fifth session, the Fifth Committee met formally and remotely owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, during which it considered the items. The Committee formally considered the items in person at its 8th meeting, on 30 December 2020. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee’s formal consideration of the items are reflected in the relevant summary records.<sup>1</sup>

3. For its consideration of the items, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on its activities for the period from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 ([A/75/293](#));

(b) Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the activities of the Office for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 ([A/75/301 \(Part I\)](#) and [A/75/301 \(Part I\)/Add.1](#)).

<sup>1</sup> [A/C.5/75/SR.8](#).



## **II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.5/75/L.13](#)**

4. At its 8th meeting, on 30 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services” ([A/C.5/75/L.13](#)), submitted by the Chair of the Committee on the basis of informal consultations coordinated by the representative of Jamaica.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.5/75/L.13](#) without a vote (see para. 6).

### III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

*The General Assembly,*

##### I

##### Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

*Recalling* its resolutions [48/218 B](#) of 29 July 1994, [54/244](#) of 23 December 1999, [59/272](#) of 23 December 2004, [60/259](#) of 8 May 2006, [63/265](#) of 24 December 2008, [64/232](#) of 22 December 2009, [64/263](#) of 29 March 2010, [65/250](#) of 24 December 2010, [66/236](#) of 24 December 2011, [67/258](#) of 12 April 2013, [68/21](#) of 4 December 2013, [69/252](#) and [69/253](#) of 29 December 2014, [70/111](#) of 14 December 2015, [71/7](#) of 27 October 2016, [72/18](#) of 1 December 2017, [73/275](#) of 22 December 2018 and [74/256](#) of 27 December 2019,

*Having considered* the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on its activities for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020,<sup>1</sup>

1. *Reaffirms* its primary role in the consideration of and action taken on reports submitted to it;
2. *Also reaffirms* its oversight role and the role of the Fifth Committee in administrative and budgetary matters;
3. *Further reaffirms* the independence and the separate and distinct roles of the internal and external oversight mechanisms;
4. *Recognizes* the important roles and operational independence of the oversight bodies, including the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat, in contributing to improvements in the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the Organization;
5. *Recalls* that the Office shall exercise operational independence relating to the performance of its internal oversight functions, under the authority of the Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant resolutions;
6. *Reaffirms* the operational independence of the Office, stresses that its independence and objectivity are vital in ensuring that its internal oversight functions are carried out in a credible, factual and unbiased manner, and reaffirms the authority of the Office to initiate, carry out and report on any action to fulfil its responsibilities with regard to internal audit, inspection and evaluation, and investigations;
7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the annual reports of the Office continue to include a brief description of any impairment of its independence;
8. *Encourages* United Nations internal and external oversight bodies to further enhance the level of cooperation with one another, such as through joint work-planning sessions, without prejudice to the independence of each;
9. *Reaffirms* that the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit shall continue to be provided with copies of all reports produced by the Office, and requests that those reports be made available within one month of their finalization;

<sup>1</sup> [A/75/301 \(Part I\)](#) and [A/75/301 \(Part I\)/Add.1](#).

10. *Takes note* of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on its activities for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all relevant resolutions pertaining to the work of the Office are brought to the attention of the relevant managers;

12. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all relevant resolutions, including those of a cross-cutting nature, are brought to the attention of relevant managers and that the Office also takes those resolutions into account in the conduct of its activities;

13. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Office to improve the implementation by the Organization of its recommendations, including through increased engagement with entities on long open recommendations and providing clearer recommendations with a focus on implementation, and encourages the Office to continue to make recommendations more actionable;

14. *Welcomes* the reviewed approach of the Office towards recommendations, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to increase efforts to ensure the full implementation of the accepted recommendations of the Office, including those related to accountability mechanisms, cost savings, recovery of overpayments, technological improvements, organizational efficiency and effectiveness and other improvements, in a prompt and timely manner, and to provide detailed justifications in cases in which recommendations of the Office are not accepted;

15. *Notes with concern* the continued delays in the implementation of the recommendations of the Office, and requests the Secretary-General to implement the outstanding and critical recommendations of the Office in a timely manner;

16. *Welcomes* the continued efforts of the Office to promote the Organization's zero-tolerance approach to fraud, corruption, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, and the actions taken in this regard, including the creation of a specialized team to investigate sexual harassment complaints and the implementation of a procedure for addressing such complaints, and also welcomes the efforts made to strengthen the investigative capacity of the Office in the light of the need to improve the average time required to complete the growing number of investigations into a range of misconduct, including cases of sexual harassment;

17. *Commends* the Office for reducing the average time taken to complete investigations, and encourages the Office to continue to reduce the average time taken to complete investigations in order to meet relevant time frames as prescribed by the Office in its programme impact pathways, and to continue to report on the measures undertaken in this regard in its next report;

18. *Notes* the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in particular the restrictions on travel and movement, on the ability of the Office to conduct investigations, encourages the Office to enhance its other capacities to mitigate any gaps created by the pandemic, and requests the Office to provide information in its next report on the direct impact of the pandemic on its ability to carry out investigations fully;

19. *Encourages* the Office to continue to ensure the oversight, through audits and investigations, of United Nations peacekeeping missions that are closing and to report thereon in its next report;

20. *Recognizes* the high level of risk inherent in United Nations procurement activities, and requests the Secretary-General to entrust the Office with strengthening its focus on the monitoring of such activities, including on evaluating implementation and existing practice within the Organization regarding restrictions on employment

after separation of staff involved in the procurement process and sanctions for violations, as well as with reporting thereon in conjunction with the related report of the Secretary-General on procurement;

21. *Welcomes* the efforts and progress made by the Office in reducing the number of vacant posts, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to make every effort to fill the remaining vacant posts and ensure the retention of staff, particularly in the Inspection and Evaluation Division, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations;

## II

### Activities of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

*Recalling* its resolutions [61/275](#) of 29 June 2007, [64/263](#), section II of its resolution [65/250](#), section II of its resolution [66/236](#), section II of its resolution [67/258](#), section II of its resolution [68/21](#), section II of its resolution [69/252](#), section II of its resolution [70/111](#), section II of its resolution [71/7](#), section II of its resolution [72/18](#), section II of its resolution [73/275](#) and section II of its resolution [74/256](#),

*Having considered* the report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on its activities for the period from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020,<sup>2</sup>

1. *Notes with appreciation* the work of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee;
2. *Reaffirms* the terms of reference of the Committee, as contained in the annex to its resolution [61/275](#);
3. *Endorses* the observations, comments and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee;
4. *Encourages* the Committee to continue its consultations with all relevant bodies in the United Nations, including on the implementation of its recommendations, as appropriate;
5. *Invites* the Committee to continue to examine the operational independence of the Office, including on budgetary matters.

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<sup>2</sup> [A/75/293](#).