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Committee for Programme and Coordination

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Agenda item 7

**Adoption of the report of the Committee on its
fifty-ninth session**

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Jun Yamada (Japan)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 3 (b))

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

1. At its 7th meeting, on 6 June 2019, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management ([E/AC.51/2019/5](#)).
2. The Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report, and representatives of OIOS, together with the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the report, its high quality and the recommendations made therein. A delegation reported finding the summary to be particularly useful. Delegations also expressed appreciation for the work of the Department, noted that it had accepted the recommendations and said that they looked forward to seeing them implemented.
4. In reference to paragraph 40 of the report, several delegations welcomed the fact that the Department had not only absorbed growing demand within its declining resources, but had also done so without a decline in quality. Information was sought on how budget reductions would affect the work of the Department in the future. A



delegation suggested easing the burden on interpreters by replicating an established practice at another intergovernmental body, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whereby a time limit for an intervention by a delegation was enforced while allowing delegations to submit more detailed statements for the record. That avoided statements being read too quickly.

5. A delegation noted that the report and the summary of the Department's performance measures were focused on quantitative metrics of the volume of services delivered and asked whether qualitative parameters would be introduced in future evaluations by OIOS. In addition, some delegations expressed interest in obtaining regular feedback from users on the quality of the work. A delegation, referring to figure X on client perceptions of the degree to which meeting room needs were met, stated that the sample size was small and asked what meeting room needs were unmet. Another delegation, noting that the compliance rate for document issuance was lower for offices away from Headquarters, asked how the Department serviced other duty stations and whether it was the case that the Department might have been designed for Headquarters and then sought to scale up its services.

6. Regarding paragraph 47 of the report, a delegation queried the use of gender and the Sustainable Development Goals as cross-cutting issues and asked whether other cross-cutting issues had been considered. Several delegations welcomed the treatment of gender as a cross-cutting issue and expressed support for the achievements of the Department on gender parity and on implementing a strong gender policy. A delegation recalled a discussion held earlier on another report before the Committee regarding a draft model code of conduct and an implementation guide to prevent sexual harassment during, or related to, United Nations events, which had been created in response to the alleged sexual harassment of interns at United Nations conferences, and stated that it would be a relevant topic for a systematic evaluation or inspection by OIOS in the future when considering conference management. Another delegation asked how investigations into alleged sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse were carried out and by whom.

7. Delegations noted the need identified in the report to improve the harmonization of business processes across the Department without calling for additional financial resources, while one delegation referred to the importance of improving business intelligence capabilities to facilitate planning for and better use of digital platforms to boost such intelligence and improve service delivery.

8. A delegation referred to the statement contained in the summary of the report that the effective management of external factors was elusive, given that resolving the most significant and persistent challenges required the guidance of Member States, and enquired whether such guidance had been sought in the appropriate context, including the programme plan for programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management. Referring to paragraph 46 (a) of the report, a delegation asked what external factors affected the ability of the Department to plan.

9. A delegation, noting that the conference management activities of the regional commissions were not covered in the report, asked how the Secretary-General ensured oversight over those services. It was also stated that the position held by the Secretariat that conference services at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) were not under the purview of the Department did not hold, given that the utilization rate of conference services at ECA was in fact considered by the Committee on Conferences. Another delegation recalled that consideration of ECA by the Committee on Conferences was the result of a request by the General Assembly owing to a specific concern of the African States at a particular point in time. The delegation

also recalled that the low utilization rate had in fact been caused by a methodological error and that the situation had improved significantly.

10. A delegation welcomed the Department's ongoing practice of consulting Member States and the opportunities offered to provide input on changes and innovations in its operations, especially innovations that affected the work of delegations. Emphasizing that the work of delegations depended on the predictability of the work of the Organization, a delegation suggested that that practice be adopted by other Secretariat departments and that future evaluations by OIOS take that into account.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 51 to 54 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the Department.**

12. **The Committee commended the Department on its use of information technology in effectively delivering its programme of work amid growing demand for conference services.**
