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Fifth Committee**Summary record of the 22nd meeting**

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Chair: Mr. Mavroyiannis. (Cyprus)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Bachar Bong

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/74/L.28)

1. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the first part of the resumed seventy-fourth session, prepared on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/74/L.28). He recalled that, in informal consultations on the Committee's working methods, many delegations had expressed support for the idea of consistently setting aside time at the first part of the resumed session of each General Assembly for the introduction and discussion of issues falling under the item relating to human resources management; the programme of work reflected that approach.

2. **Mr. Pierre** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group would give thorough consideration to all agenda items before the Committee, and hoped that all delegations would engage constructively in the related discussions in order to achieve an outcome that was in the interests of the Organization and Member States. Despite recent progress in addressing the chronic problem of late issuance of documents, further improvement was needed. The timely availability of documents was crucial to the Committee's work.

3. Human resources management proposals should be considered holistically, as a package rather than in a piecemeal way, in order to reach concrete outcomes related to gender parity, equitable geographical representation, performance management and deficiencies in the staff selection process. It was important to hold United Nations personnel accountable in the performance of their duties. The Group would therefore engage constructively in the discussions on the accountability system, which were taking place more than one year after efforts had begun to implement the Secretary-General's reforms and the new system of delegation of authority. The Group was committed to concluding the discussions on the matters before the Committee within the time allotted.

4. **Mr. Mmalane** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group would pay particular attention to such matters as the information and communications technology (ICT) strategy; human resources management; the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on its reviews of change management in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2019/4) and internship programmes in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2018/1); the progress report on the construction of a new facility for the

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in Arusha (A/74/662); and the funding of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). It was essential to ensure adequate financing for UNAMID during its drawdown phase.

5. The Group appreciated the fact that all human resources management proposals would be considered as a package, as they were closely interrelated. The Committee should make every effort to overcome past and current difficulties associated with the consideration of that agenda item. The Group also welcomed the Secretary-General's report on progress made in strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat (A/74/658), an issue that was more critical than ever. As the management paradigm in the Organization was being transformed, it should be recalled that the General Assembly had consistently affirmed its commitment to strengthening accountability in the Secretariat, and to ensuring the accountability of the Secretary-General to Member States for the performance of the Secretariat. Accountability was critical to effective and efficient management and required attention and commitment at all levels of the Secretariat, especially the highest level. The Group thus appreciated the work of JIU to improve the accountability system.

6. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union attached great importance to the implementation of the Secretary-General's reforms and appreciated the progress achieved thus far. The proper financing and functioning of the Organization depended on the work of the Committee. The Committee's working methods should therefore be improved to ensure that its negotiations were conducted more efficiently and productively.

7. It was regrettable that the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had been enlarged through a vote in the plenary General Assembly. That had circumvented established practice and the Assembly's rules of procedure, and had undermined the role of the Fifth Committee. The European Union was concerned that the expansion of the Advisory Committee's membership would hinder it from fulfilling its responsibilities. The impact of the expansion on the Advisory Committee's working methods and effectiveness should be discussed by the Fifth Committee in informal consultations.

8. The European Union strongly supported the Secretary-General's efforts to make United Nations human resources policies more modern and effective. The Committee had been unable to reach consensus on human resources management at the main part of the seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions of the General Assembly. The European Union would work constructively with all parties to achieve such consensus during the current deliberations, and to ensure that current and future human resources management reforms met the needs of both the Organization and its staff. The European Union reiterated its call for timely submission of documents in all official languages and looked forward to considering all human resources management issues, including the question of seconded active-duty military and police personnel.

9. The establishment of a robust accountability framework was essential to the reform of the Organization's management, and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance played a critical role in enhancing transparency and accountability in the new system of delegation of authority. The Organization must foster a culture of ethics and transparency, and must prevent and address all types of misconduct. The European Union welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General on those matters.

10. A constructive solution must be identified for the establishment of a global service delivery model for the Secretariat, in order to ensure a modern and cost-efficient United Nations. The European Union agreed with the Secretary-General's vision for the development of such a model, which must be cost-effective, promote efficiencies and release resources to ensure mandate fulfilment.

11. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that the inability of the Committee to reach decisions on critical agenda items, in particular those with policy implications, hindered the advancement of the Secretary-General's reforms and the attainment of the goals set by Member States. At the current part of the resumed session, the Committee would consider important matters such as accountability, the construction of the new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in Arusha, the assessment of the Police Division, the ICT strategy and interim financing for UNAMID. Her delegation particularly looked forward to discussing the work of JIU.

12. Her delegation was deeply concerned at the lack of respect for consensus-based decision-making demonstrated by the Group of 77 and China, which had submitted, for consideration by the General Assembly at

its 53rd plenary meeting, a draft resolution in which it had sought to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee by five members and which the Assembly had voted to adopt. That was a departure from established practice and the Assembly's rules of procedure, which her delegation would bear in mind as the resumed session began. Her delegation would engage with all partners in a spirit of consensus on all matters before the Fifth Committee.

13. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Mexico) said that the Committee's consideration of the items before it at the current part of the resumed session would support the development of a flexible, effective, efficient and streamlined Organization committed to making appropriate use of the funds entrusted to the Secretary-General by Member States.

14. On human resources management, he wished to recall that personnel costs accounted for a significant proportion of the Organization's expenses. Given the scale and significance of the services provided by the United Nations, including in the field, the Secretariat's policies and procedures must be modern and effective. Currently, there were a number of major structural challenges hampering human resources management, as well as problems in the areas of policy design, application and evaluation. The Organization needed a modern, flexible, effective and efficient human resources system in which responsibilities were clearly delineated, with a view to avoiding duplication and waste and promoting transparency and excellence.

15. His delegation would closely follow the discussions on the global service delivery model, taking into account the model's main objective, as well as the requirements in terms of transparency, the appropriateness of cost assessments and the advantages of outsourcing services. In addition, it would pay close attention to the discussions on the accountability system; the report of JIU on the review of change management in United Nations system organizations; the pension scheme for the members of the International Court of Justice, the President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and the former judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; and the status of implementation of the ICT strategy. Lastly, his delegation would participate constructively in the deliberations with a view to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization, enhanced inter-agency coordination and collaboration, the timely achievement of results, and transparency and accountability.

16. **Ms. Grievés** (United Kingdom) said that, as the United Kingdom had left the European Union, it would henceforth participate in United Nations deliberations in a national capacity. Her delegation would continue to take an active part in the discussions in the Fifth Committee and to firmly support a strengthened, effective and efficient United Nations.

17. As the United Nations marked its seventy-fifth anniversary year, the Committee had an opportunity to take decisions that would equip the Organization to respond effectively and agilely to challenges, and to better serve people around the world, over the next 75 years. The United Nations must invest in its staff — its most valuable asset — by effectively managing their performance, developing their capabilities and knowledge, and fostering an inclusive workplace in which they felt valued, safe and motivated. Definitions of diversity based solely on nationality and gender must be transcended in order to ensure that the United Nations workforce truly represented and understood the people it served. The Secretariat's efforts to improve human resources management policies and practices should be supported. A strengthened culture of accountability was central to a more effective United Nations. Her delegation therefore welcomed the operationalization of the Business Transformation and Accountability Division of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

18. United Nations police played a critical role in the Organization's missions, complementing the work of military and civilian personnel, including on civilian protection. Her delegation thus looked forward to discussing the review of the functions, structure, capacity and level of the Police Division. The Committee must address the issues related to seconded active-duty military and police personnel at the current session, in order to avoid putting their important work at risk. In addition, adequate and cost-effective financing for UNAMID must be ensured.

19. It was regrettable that the principle of consensus-based decision-making on matters within the purview of the Fifth Committee had been undermined by the holding of a vote in the plenary General Assembly on the enlargement of the Advisory Committee. There could be no justification for such actions, which served only to erode trust within the Fifth Committee. Sincere efforts should be made to rebuild that trust.

20. **Ms. Nishimura** (Japan) said that the Committee had before it several matters relevant to United Nations reform, including the accountability system, the ICT strategy and human resources management. Her delegation would carefully consider those matters on

their own merits and in relation to the objective of the reform, which was to make the Organization stronger and more integrated, coherent and accountable so that it could improve mandate delivery.

21. Human resources management was key to the effective and efficient operation of the United Nations, which must acquire, train and retain a highly skilled and motivated workforce in order to achieve the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The diversity of the Organization's human resources was also critical. While her delegation appreciated the efforts of the United Nations to build a workforce that reflected various dimensions of diversity, no alternative concepts of diversity should override the imperative to recruit staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, as set out in the Charter. In that regard, her delegation was concerned at the use of the undefined term "regional diversity" and its potential incompatibility with the principle of equitable geographical representation, according to which no one country could represent another. Japan again requested the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to ensure equitable geographical distribution within the Secretariat in order to address the long-standing issue of some Member States being unrepresented or underrepresented.

22. The role and consensus-based working methods of the Fifth Committee must be preserved in order to ensure the sound functioning of the Organization. In that connection, her delegation reiterated the regret it had expressed previously with regard to the consideration in the plenary General Assembly of critical matters within the purview of the Assembly's Main Committees, which represented a circumvention of the central role of those Committees and must never be repeated. Her delegation would make every effort to ensure that the Fifth Committee achieved consensus on all items before it in a timely manner.

23. **Mr. Fu Daopeng** (China) said that, in 2020, which marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and was also the first year of the trial of the new annual budget, as envisaged under the Secretary-General's management reforms, the Fifth Committee had a particularly important role to play. Administrative and budgetary matters were essential to the effective operation and performance of the United Nations. All parties should therefore engage in the Committee's deliberations in a spirit of cooperation, consultation, constructiveness, compromise and consensus in order to ensure a successful outcome.

24. Commendable progress had been made in implementing an accountability system in the

Secretariat. However, further work was necessary to adapt the Secretariat to the requirements of management reform, enhance accountability, strengthen comprehensive budget performance management and improve internal control mechanisms. It was also essential to ensure equitable geographical representation in the Secretariat, in particular by addressing the underrepresentation of many developing countries. While United Nations management reforms had reached a critical stage of implementation, the approval by the General Assembly of the proposed global service delivery model continued to be delayed, resulting in ever increasing opportunity costs. All parties should proactively seek to reach consensus on the matter at the current session. His delegation also looked forward to receiving further information on the ICT strategy and the assessment of the Police Division.

25. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that it would be adjusted as necessary, as the first part of the resumed session progressed.

26. *It was so decided.*

27. **The Chair** suggested that a deadline of 4 March be set for the submission of candidacies for appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments, and that the elections be held on 16 March. He took it that the Committee had no objection to the suggestion.

28. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (continued)

Capital master plan (A/74/302 and A/74/573)

29. **Mr. Nye** (Chief, Facilities and Commercial Activities Service), introducing the seventeenth annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the capital master plan (A/74/302), said that all administrative tasks required to close out project contracts had been completed by March 2018, with the exception of a number of invoice payments subject to the resolution of two ongoing arbitration cases brought by the construction management company. The Office of Legal Affairs, with the help of outside counsel, was vigorously defending the Organization's interests in those matters. The project's financial position remained consistent with the projection presented in the annual progress report the previous year. The total approved funding and the final cost of completion for the project amounted to \$2,150.4 million, comprising appropriations for the original project scope of \$1,876.7 million, donations of \$14.3 million, interest income and the plan's

working capital reserve amounting to \$159.4 million, and funding of \$100 million for enhanced security upgrades.

30. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/74/573), said that the Advisory Committee was committed to providing impartial technical guidance in its reports and to ensuring their timely submission. The Advisory Committee noted the completion of the construction work and administrative close-out activities for the project, as well as the two ongoing arbitration cases. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would provide an update on the status of those cases and on the related costs in his next progress report.

31. **Ms. Cheong** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group noted with concern the delay in the financial close-out of the project as a result of the two ongoing arbitration cases. It would seek to learn whether the related proceedings had continued into 2020 and had resulted in additional attorneys' fees and arbitral expenses of \$2 million, as estimated. The Group welcomed the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs to defend the interests of the Organization in those proceedings in order to prevent it from incurring avoidable expenses. The Group also looked forward to receiving an update on the status of the proceedings.

32. The Group attached great importance to accessibility and therefore welcomed the recommendations from the accessibility review of the Headquarters premises conducted in 2018; General Assembly resolution 74/253 on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system should also be borne in mind. Regarding recreational facilities, the Group noted the assessment conducted by the Administration, in which it had been determined that the funds provided by the donor were adequate to ensure the proper maintenance of the facilities and equipment at Headquarters for seven years, until the end of their useful life. Alternative funding mechanisms should be identified in order to ensure that the recreational facilities remained operational beyond that seven-year period and that the related expenses were not transferred to Member States.

33. The efforts made to verify and locate the Organization's missing assets were commendable and should continue. The Group also appreciated the fact that the actual cost of all utilities at the Headquarters complex had been reduced from \$35.9 million in 2006–2007 to \$18.6 million in 2016–2017, and was expected

to be further reduced to about \$18.3 million in 2018–2019. The Group noted that only 5 of the 20 outstanding recommendations of the Board of Auditors relating to the capital master plan had been fully implemented and encouraged the Secretary-General to implement the remaining recommendations.

Agenda item 135: Programme budget for 2020

(continued)

Conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials: members of the International Court of Justice and President and judges of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/74/7/Add.20 and A/74/354)

34. **Mr. Mourato Gordo** (Director, Global Strategy and Policy Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the conditions of service and compensation for officials other than Secretariat officials: members of the International Court of Justice and President and judges of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/74/354), said that part one of the report focused on the salaries and other conditions of service of the members of the Court and the President and judges of the Mechanism and had been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/258, in which the Assembly had decided to re-establish a three-year cycle for the review of the conditions of service and compensation of those officials. Part two contained updated information on the comprehensive review of the pension scheme for the members of the Court, the President of the Mechanism and the former judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/272 A.

35. In part one, the Secretary-General proposed no changes to the current conditions of service of the members of the Court and the President and judges of the Mechanism. There would therefore be no financial implications under the programme budget for 2020.

36. Part two was being submitted in response to the request by the General Assembly for a comprehensive proposal on options for a pension scheme for the members of the Court and the President of the Mechanism, including: possible new scheme scenarios and, if relevant, those presented in the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/68/188); the projected estimated costs to the Organization of each scenario compared with those of the existing pension scheme; and the expected benefits and disadvantages of each scenario, as well as the views and comments of relevant

stakeholders. As specified by the Assembly, the proposal also took into account the integrity of the Statute of the Court and other relevant statutory provisions, the universal character of the Court and the unique nature of its membership, and the principles of independence and equality.

37. The pension scheme options set out in the report before the Committee (A/74/354) represented an update to those outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive review of the pension schemes for the members of the International Court of Justice and the judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (A/66/617). They consisted of a defined-benefit scheme under which benefits accumulated at a flat rate over 18 years of service; a defined-contribution scheme under which investment earnings determined benefits; a cash lump-sum; and the existing defined-benefit scheme, under which benefits accumulated at different rates after 9 and 18 years of service. Updated information was included on the liabilities for the projected benefits for each of those options up to 2058, along with some of the arguments of the Court in favour of preserving the existing pension scheme.

38. Under Article 32 of the Statute of the Court, the salaries, allowances and compensation of the members of the Court could not be decreased during their term of office. Therefore, any changes to the pension scheme that might be approved by the General Assembly as a result of the current review would not affect the pensions of active or retired judges if those changes were less favourable than the existing arrangements. In accordance with previous practice, a draft version of the current report (A/74/354) had been shared with the Court and the Mechanism, and their comments and suggestions had been incorporated into the final version to the extent possible. The Court had expressed a strong preference for retaining the existing pension scheme, which it had deemed to be largely satisfactory and in accordance with its Statute and the principles of equality and independence.

39. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/74/7/Add.20), said that part one of the Secretary-General's report (A/74/354), on the comprehensive review of the conditions of service and compensation for the members of the Court and the President and judges of the Mechanism, contained information on compensation, the special allowance of the President of the Mechanism and its Vice-President when acting as President, the education allowance, survivors' benefits, and travel and subsistence

regulations. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal not to change the current system of remuneration and other conditions of service for the members of the Court and the President and judges of the Mechanism. Regarding part two, the Advisory Committee recommended that the current pension scheme for the judges also be maintained.

40. **Ms. Cheong** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the work of the Court and the Mechanism was essential to the fulfilment of the Organization's mandates within a framework of justice, reliability and impartiality.

41. The Group noted the Secretary-General's proposal not to change the current system of remuneration and other conditions of service for the members of the Court and the President and judges of the Mechanism. Since the Fifth Committee had last addressed that topic, at its seventy-first session, a number of improvements had been made to the conditions of service of those officials. Specifically, the revised education grant scheme for staff members in the Professional and higher categories, which had been approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/244](#), had been extended to the members of the Court and the President of the Mechanism. In addition, the Assembly had decided to update the language of the travel and subsistence regulations applicable to the members of the Court and the President of the Mechanism in line with the new relocation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories, which had been approved by the Assembly in the same resolution.

42. The pension scheme options presented in the report of the Secretary-General ([A/74/354](#)) were the result of an update of a previous comprehensive review. The Group noted that that update had been conducted mainly with in-house expertise and encouraged the continued use of such expertise whenever possible. The Group would seek further information on the pension scheme options presented and their potential impact on the Organization, the Court and the Mechanism, the judges and Member States. The Group supported the principle, enshrined in the statutes of the Court and the Tribunals, that the judges' salaries and allowances should be fixed by the General Assembly. It was also of the view that equality among judges was a basic principle of the system of international adjudication of disputes among States.

Status of implementation of the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations ([A/74/177](#), [A/74/353](#) and [A/74/588](#))

43. **Mr. Carey** (Acting Chief Information Technology Officer), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the ICT strategy for the United Nations ([A/74/353](#)), said that the strategy had been designed to address fragmentation in the ICT landscape, leverage technology to support the Organization's work and protect the Organization from growing cybersecurity threats.

44. Since the strategy's adoption in 2014, significant progress had been made in ensuring coherent, reliable and efficient ICT in the United Nations. For example, the 70 ICT units which had existed across the Organization had been harmonized and linked to the Office of Information and Communications Technology through regional technology centres. In 2014, the Organization's information assets had been housed in 44 data centres and 177 server rooms; now, the enterprise data centres in Valencia and Brindisi were the main data centres for the Secretariat and facilitated disaster recovery, and many systems had been moved to cloud-based platforms. The global "One United Nations" network had unified 594 locations and ensured greater consistency in bandwidth across duty stations. In 2014, there had been approximately 131 help desks across the Secretariat; now, a single platform, the Unite Service Desk, provided services around the clock for key enterprise applications, ensuring faster response and resolution times and higher user satisfaction. Moreover, the number of applications in use had decreased from 2,340 to 988.

45. In addition, ICT governance policies had been strengthened, and choices had been made regarding ICT architecture and standards to enable the United Nations to utilize ICT to facilitate mandate delivery. Operations had been solidified and new structures had been established to make core ICT services more effective, efficient and resilient. Information security had also been strengthened across the Secretariat in the areas of prevention, incident detection and response, governance, risk and compliance.

46. The Office of Information and Communications Technology had leveraged emerging technologies to develop innovative tools and solutions in the fields of big data, analytics and artificial intelligence. Frontier technologies had also been applied to support the substantive work of the Organization. Furthermore, the progress made in modernizing and transforming ICT across the Secretariat had paved the way for the

development of innovative solutions and analytics to facilitate the Organization's core work.

47. Decisions taken by the General Assembly in late 2018 in connection with the Secretary-General's management reform proposals had also advanced the objectives of the ICT strategy. Specifically, the Assembly had decided to consolidate the functions of the Information and Communications Technology Division of the former Department of Field Support into the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the former Department of Management. The integrated Office of Information and Communications Technology had become operational on 1 January 2019, resulting in a significantly more coherent ICT landscape across the Secretariat. A dual reporting line from the Chief Information Technology Officer to the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support and the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, and close partnerships between the Office of Information and Communications Technology and other departments and offices, had been established, enabling more effective and efficient delivery of ICT support to the Secretariat, including through innovative technology solutions.

48. Nevertheless, given the increasing importance of ICT for the global operations of the Secretariat and for mandate fulfilment, there was a need to invest more consistently in the required infrastructure and to stay abreast of ICT equipment replacement cycles. Greater compliance with ICT policy directives was also essential to reduce the Organization's information security vulnerability and increase interoperability. The Office of Information and Communications Technology would continue to count on the valuable support of the Committee in strengthening the ICT capacity of the United Nations.

49. **Ms. Sen** (Chair of the Audit Operations Committee of the Board of Auditors), introducing the third annual progress report of the Board of Auditors on the implementation of the ICT strategy (A/74/177), said that the strategy was focused on strengthening the governance and leadership framework; promoting modernization in support of organizational priorities; transforming the delivery of ICT services; advancing innovation to foster new, long-term technological solutions; and ensuring the optimal use of ICT resources.

50. The decision-making bodies responsible for ICT strategy and policies had not met regularly in 2018, the period examined in the report. The Information and Communication Technology Executive Committee had

held no meetings, while the Information and Communications Technology Board had met only twice. Of the 22 ICT technical procedures identified for review as at 1 January 2018, only 12 had been revised during that year. As part of the annual review and self-certification exercise initiated in August 2018, entities had been requested to report on compliance with just 2 of the 42 ICT policies in force. The response rate had been very low, with only 5 of 70 entities having submitted completed self-certification forms.

51. The Board noted that critical actions related to information security, such as network segmentation and classification of information assets, remained pending. Moreover, the disaster recovery exercise conducted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/254 A had exceeded the envisaged time frame and had highlighted a number of problem areas flagged in the past. Further such exercises had been postponed.

52. As at 31 December 2018, there had been 740 Secretariat websites, 360 of which had not been built with approved technologies. Although multiple issues regarding website consolidation remained to be addressed, that activity had been taken out of project mode and mainstreamed as an ongoing activity. The Enterprise Network Operations Centre project, aimed at establishing an enterprise-level operations centre responsible for event and incident management, had been temporarily suspended in view of the Secretary-General's management reforms. The November and December 2018 progress reports for the project indicated that it had been fully completed, although the project objectives had not been fulfilled. The Board had been informed that additional funds would be requested for that purpose in 2021.

53. The aim of the Unite Service Desk project was to establish an efficient global shared services model. The Board noted that, while the Office of Information and Communications Technology had designated the project as fully completed, the consolidation of the service-desk resources, assets and field-level operations of the former Department of Field Support into the Unite Service Desk had been postponed. The application consolidation project had been closed before the proposed completion date because the number of applications had been reduced to less than 1,000. However, scope for further consolidation had been identified. The Board was of the view that the premature closure or mainstreaming of projects could lead to reduced attention to their implementation and completion. The Board also noted that, even by March 2019, the ICT units of 27 United Nations entities, offices and departments at Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions had yet to be harmonized.

54. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/74/588), said that the Advisory Committee noted the progress made in the implementation of the ICT strategy during the period from 2014 to 2020 and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a final progress report for the Assembly's consideration at the main part of its seventy-fifth session. That report should include full and accurate information on the status of implementation of the current strategy, as well as proposals for the establishment of a successor strategy applicable to all parts of the Secretariat, including field missions, and incorporating the field technology framework developed by the former Department of Field Support. Effective ICT governance, leadership, coordination and collaboration were essential to preventing fragmentation and duplication. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the Secretary-General be requested to establish, before implementation of the successor strategy began, a comprehensive baseline of ICT expenditures, assets, services and applications, as well as ongoing and planned ICT projects and initiatives.

55. With regard to specific aspects of the current ICT strategy, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to promulgate delegation of authority and related procedures for ICT matters within the comprehensive framework for delegation of authority in effect as from 1 January 2019; include in his final report a review of compliance by all Secretariat entities with ICT policies; ensure the full implementation of his 10-point action plan to strengthen information security; provide details on the status of harmonization of ICT units; cooperate with Member States in establishing United Nations Technology Innovation Labs and sharing best practices; and provide more information on cooperation and harmonization among United Nations system entities on ICT matters, as well as on arrangements for cost sharing and recovery.

56. **Ms. Austin** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group appreciated the importance of ICT in strengthening oversight and accountability in the Organization, in accordance with ongoing reforms, and in facilitating the deliberations of intergovernmental bodies. The Group welcomed the progress made under the strategy in respect of ICT infrastructure and architecture; ICT operations and service delivery; support for the deployment of the Umoja enterprise resource planning project, including its Extension 2 functionality; the security of other

enterprise systems; the reduction of the number of legacy applications; the global "One United Nations" network; and the deployment of solutions to advance the Organization's substantive work and of critical systems to support peacekeeping operations.

57. The Group noted that, in its report (A/74/177), the Board of Auditors recommended that the Administration operationalize the governance framework for the implementation of the ICT strategy and, if envisaged, immediately establish a new governance framework to strengthen the governance mechanism; give priority to the preparation and implementation of the Umoja mainstreaming plan; and enhance the information security programme. The Board had made 50 recommendations since its first audit, conducted in 2012. As at 31 December 2018, 36 recommendations had been accepted and 1 had been partially accepted. Of those recommendations, 10 had been fully implemented and 1 had been overtaken by events. Thus, 39 recommendations had either been contested or had remained under implementation. The resulting implementation rate of 20 per cent was abysmal. There was an urgent need to implement the Board's recommendations, in particular those related to governance, delegation of authority, performance management, information security and Umoja mainstreaming. The Group looked forward to receiving further updates in that regard.

58. In line with the key objectives of the ICT strategy, the persisting fragmentation in the ICT environment must be reduced as a matter of priority in order to enable the Office of Information and Communications Technology to improve interoperability and simplicity, and to address information security issues in a comprehensive manner. The potential of ICT must be harnessed to support the Organization's work in the areas of peace and security; development, including sustainable development; human rights; and international law. The Group was therefore fully committed to the implementation of the ICT strategy.

59. The Group welcomed the framework for the delegation of procurement authority established by the Secretary-General, which was aimed at bringing decision-making authority closer to the point of delivery. The Secretary-General should increase procurement of ICT goods and services from developing countries while ensuring cost-effective use of resources and economies of scale. Given the need to establish a clear record of the situation at the beginning and end of the implementation of the ICT strategy, the Secretary-General should conduct an inventory to establish a baseline of all ICT resources in order to inform future decisions by Member States.

60. **Ms. Levin** (United States of America) said that her delegation welcomed the progress made in reducing the number of applications; consolidating ICT units; implementing security mechanisms to address cyberattacks; modernizing important functions in the areas of peacekeeping, human resources management and documents management; and implementing features to facilitate access by persons with disabilities to the United Nations Careers portal.

61. Challenges nevertheless remained. In its resolutions [69/262](#) and [72/262](#) C, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all Secretariat entities complied with the ICT strategy and, in the latter resolution, with the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the Office of Information and Communications Technology ([ST/SGB/2016/11](#)). In the interests of preventing fragmentation and duplication, and of facilitating global sourcing opportunities and strong asset management, her delegation supported the Secretary-General's decision to include in the bulletin a requirement that all ICT budgets be reviewed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology before their submission. Her delegation looked forward to the revision of the bulletin in line with the reforms approved in General Assembly resolution [72/266](#) B on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations. In addition, the consolidation and integration of ICT, a key objective of the management reforms, remained incomplete.

62. While information security had improved significantly, persistent non-compliance with ICT policy directives made the Organization vulnerable to increasing cyberattacks. The Chief Information Technology Officer must therefore exercise full control over information security throughout the Secretariat. Furthermore, the Umoja project team should be fully mainstreamed into the Office of Information and Communications Technology as the project reached completion.

63. Her delegation appreciated the report of JIU entitled "Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system" ([JIU/REP/2019/45](#)) and looked forward to discussing the Unit's timely recommendations on the benefits and risks of cloud computing, and on the system-wide synergies that could be achieved by maximizing the potential of the United Nations International Cloud Computing Centre.

Agenda item 141: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2019 and programme of work for 2020 ([A/74/34](#) and [A/74/657](#))

64. **Ms. Cronin** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU for 2019 and programme of work for 2020 ([A/74/34](#)), said that, in 2019, JIU had completed seven system-wide reviews and two single-organization reviews, and issued one management letter. The mix of the Unit's products reflected its distinctive mandate to apply a system-wide perspective while supporting individual legislative bodies through the conduct of organization-specific management and administration reviews, as it had done for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

65. The thematic diversity of the reviews conducted by JIU in 2019 demonstrated its versatility in addressing an array of topics critical to strengthening the ability of the United Nations system to: enhance accountability, as attested in the review of audit and oversight committees; carry out reforms, as evidenced by the reviews of organizational change management and inter-agency mobility; harness the opportunities presented by technological progress, as reflected in the reviews of cloud computing and of the external outsourcing of services to commercial service providers; and support the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals on gender and climate change, as demonstrated by the reviews of the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system entities.

66. The programme of work of JIU for 2020 included a management and administration review of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), as well as five system-wide reviews covering the ethics function, cybersecurity, the use of blockchain applications, environmentally sustainable facilities, policies and practices in United Nations system organizations, and the support provided by the United Nations system to landlocked developing countries. Seven reviews had been carried over from 2019. The relevance of the topics covered in the programme of work had been enhanced as a result of extensive consultations with participating organizations.

67. The General Assembly had requested JIU to consider carrying out reviews on priorities of participating organizations and Member States, and JIU stood ready to do so. The Assembly had also requested JIU to take into consideration its own programme of work so that the Unit's thematic reports could be used

to maximum effect. While JIU would continue to produce relevant and high-quality reports, the real impact of its work depended on legislative bodies' compelling organizations to implement the recommendations made in its reports. Such efforts could be advanced by encouraging governing bodies of participating organizations to ensure that all JIU reports were adequately disseminated and taken up in a timely manner, and by recommending that JIU inspectors be invited to present their reports at relevant meetings. As JIU was a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, it was in the interests of Member States to maximize the value they derived from the Unit. By way of example, the Assembly had recently adopted resolution [74/253](#), in which it had urged the Secretary-General to implement all 10 recommendations contained in the report of JIU on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2018/6](#)), and to submit to it a report on the implementation of the resolution for consideration at its seventy-fifth session.

68. The strategic framework of JIU for 2020–2029 built on lessons learned from the implementation of the strategic framework for 2010–2019, and responded to the request of the General Assembly that JIU focus its work on the priorities of participating organizations and Member States. Five key targets set in the strategic framework for the previous period had been fully met: the web-based system for tracking the acceptance and implementation of recommendations had been fully operationalized; the rate of acceptance of recommendations had exceeded 70 per cent; all reports produced had related to the objectives established under the framework; over 80 per cent of the reports had covered multiple entities; and visits to the JIU website had exceeded 100,000 per year.

69. The strategic framework for 2020–2029 reflected five fundamental work principles identified by JIU, four long-term goals anchored in the guidance of the General Assembly, and four thematic areas of work. The framework also set out criteria and targets to be used as the basis for the preparation of annual reports on the performance of JIU. An assessment would be conducted in 2024, on the basis of which those criteria and targets might be updated. To strengthen the quality of its products, JIU had supplemented its internal working procedures with guidance to enhance rigour at all stages of the project cycle. In response to the request by the General Assembly to focus on the impact of implemented recommendations, JIU would, in the medium term, update its web-based tracking system to facilitate analysis, validation and verification of related data.

70. **Ms. Petrova** (Director, United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the report of JIU for 2019 ([A/74/657](#)), said that, in accordance with the statute of JIU, the Secretary-General, through the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), performed functions that supported the Unit's work, mainly in connection with the preparation of reports that concerned more than one organization. Throughout 2019, the secretariats of CEB and JIU had worked together to ensure the timely preparation of notes by the Secretary-General containing responses to reports addressing system-wide concerns, and had engaged in dialogue to ensure the smooth preparation of such reports.

71. The Secretary-General, in consultation with members of CEB and in accordance with the statute of JIU, had reviewed the qualifications of three inspectors proposed for appointment in 2020 and of one inspector proposed for reappointment, also in 2020. The Secretary-General remained committed to maintaining a close working relationship with JIU and encouraged all organizations to respond in a timely manner to its requests.

72. **Ms. Austin** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the average rate of acceptance of recommendations made in single-organization and system-wide reports, as well as the rate of implementation of accepted recommendations, must be improved. Coordination among JIU, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Board of Auditors needed to be enhanced, in particular with regard to those bodies' programmes of work and the avoidance of overlap. In that regard, the Group noted the bodies' annual tripartite meeting, held in December 2019, and encouraged the continuation of initiatives to enhance oversight work.

73. The Group noted that, in 2019, JIU had worked on 16 projects, 8 of which had been carried over from 2018, and had made specific, actionable recommendations aimed at improving mandate implementation. The Group looked forward to discussing the basis on which projects were carried over from previous years. It also looked forward to discussing the evaluation by JIU of the effectiveness of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as a tool for performance monitoring and accountability.

74. The Group acknowledged the work of JIU in the area of change management and stressed that staff buy-in was essential to successful change management. It noted with appreciation that several United Nations

system organizations had paid close attention to staff culture, behaviour and attitudes as an integral part of their reforms. The Group wished to learn more about the impact of the Unit's recommendations regarding change management.

75. With regard to the review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations, the Group had been interested to learn that inter-agency mobility policies were not an adequate response to current needs in the area of human resources management. Inter-agency mobility could nevertheless offer critical support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ongoing workforce transformation, and could address the need expressed by organizations for exchanges with other United Nations system actors. The Group looked forward to receiving information on how the relevant recommendations contributed to improving data to support decision-making and enhance accountability to Member States.

76. With regard to the programme of work of JIU for 2020, the Group welcomed the diversity of the projects envisaged, as well as the focus on issues of importance to the entire United Nations membership, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Group encouraged JIU to continue to improve its working methods and carry out its programme of work in a timely manner, while ensuring the quality of its work.

77. A well-functioning web-based system for tracking the acceptance and implementation of recommendations was critical. The Group therefore appreciated the fact that a functionality offering simplified access to the system had been developed and would be implemented during the first half of 2020. Lastly, the Group called on Member States to assist JIU inspectors with consular and other travel requirements to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

78. **Ms. Hochhaus** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that JIU was to be commended for the work it had conducted in 2019 and for the reports it had produced on topics of system-wide interest. As an important independent external oversight body of the United Nations system, JIU was uniquely positioned to provide Member States and participating organizations with a comprehensive overview of pressing issues and challenges. In particular, the European Union welcomed the review of change management in United Nations

system organizations, in which JIU had identified critical elements required to ensure the successful implementation of the Secretary-General's reforms. The European Union noted with satisfaction the consensus reached by the Fifth Committee on the draft of General Assembly resolution [74/253](#), in which the Secretary-General had been urged to implement all the recommendations contained in the report of JIU on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2018/6](#)). Moreover, the European Union appreciated the programme of work of JIU for 2020 and its strategic framework for 2020–2029.

79. While the European Union welcomed the efforts by JIU to improve the quality of its reports and address relevant topics, it noted with regret that the timing of the issuance of many of those reports had not been aligned with the consideration of the corresponding topics by the General Assembly, preventing Member States from fully benefiting from the valuable insights that the reports contained. In that regard, JIU was to be commended for taking into account, in its strategic framework for 2020–2029, the request made by the General Assembly, in its resolution [73/287](#), for JIU to be agile in aligning its work with the evolving needs and strategic priorities of legislative bodies and organizations. The European Union particularly appreciated the priority given, in the strategic framework, to topics such as support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and assessment of reform initiatives. More attention could nevertheless be paid to topics arising from recent decisions on United Nations reform and to monitoring efforts to address cross-cutting issues. JIU should therefore improve its annual planning and include in its programmes of work projects more closely aligned with intergovernmental processes.

80. While the rates of acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations had increased in recent years, more ambitious targets in that regard should be established under the strategic framework for 2020–2029. The European Union welcomed the continued coordination among JIU, OIOS and the Board of Auditors, and encouraged them to continue to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned in order to achieve further synergies and enhance their cooperation, effectiveness and efficiency. The European Union would seek to ensure that JIU harnessed the full potential of its unique mandate and role.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.