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Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Nomination of Carmen Lapointe as the Under Secretary General for the Office of Internal Oversight Services

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations

U.S. Mission to the United Nations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The United States welcomes the Secretary General’s nomination of Ms. Carmen Lapointe as the Under Secretary General for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), a critical position responsible for independently investigating fraud, waste and mismanagement at the United Nations and enhancing oversight and transparency in its work. We hope the General Assembly will act swiftly to approve this appointment. We look forward to the Secretary General and his senior management team establishing a constructive working relationship with Ms. Lapointe in order to implement the mandates of the Office, consistent with its operational independence.

As the largest contributor to the United Nations, the United States has consistently and aggressively supported OIOS to be a strong and independent watchdog so that U.S. taxpayers’ money is spent wisely and UN programs are managed effectively.

OIOS, through its Inspection and Evaluation, Audit, and Investigations Divisions, has provided valuable recommendations to improve the UN’s effectiveness and served as a deterrent in the area of waste, fraud, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Unfortunately, we have been frustrated by the recent direction of the Investigations Division, which must more vigorously pursue fraud and misconduct. We again urge that significant and much-needed changes in the Investigations Division be instituted swiftly and effectively.

If confirmed by the General Assembly, Ms. Lapointe should move expeditiously to fill openings in OIOS with highly qualified professionals. The current vacancy rate of nearly 20 percent is unacceptable. Senior level positions such as the heads of the Investigations and Inspection and Evaluation Divisions need to be filled quickly so that their offices can operate at their full potential in providing advice on improving the UN’s work, and protecting it from fraud and abuse. In particular, the unit within the Investigations Division created to handle procurement and other financial crimes must be fully staffed and provided sufficient resources. We urge Secretary General Ban to support Ms. Lapointe in swiftly making these much needed appointments.

We encourage Ms. Lapointe to continue to affirm the importance of transparency throughout the UN. In that vein, we expect that OIOS reports will continue to be made available to Member States in a timely manner in accordance with the mandates of the General Assembly.

Strong, independent oversight will support and strengthen the vital work of the UN to resolve conflicts, respond to disasters, build peace, address poverty, prevent the spread of disease and increase global cooperation to address transnational threats. We will continue to closely monitor the work of OIOS, support its operational independence, and ensure that it has the resources and support to fulfill its critical role. We expect, in turn, to see concrete improvements as OIOS moves forward under new leadership.

We wish Ms. Lapointe every success and stand ready to support her fully in this critical role.