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Agenda item: ADM 8

Document C14/62-E  
22 April 2014  
Original: English

**Note by the Secretary-General**

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF REPORTS OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

I have the honour to transmit to the Member States of the Council a contribution received from the **United States of the America**.

Dr. Hamadoun I. TOURE  
Secretary-General

## Contribution from the United States of America

### PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF REPORTS OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

#### Summary

This document proposes that the ITU Council decide to instruct the Secretary-General to publish the annual reports of the External Auditor on ITU's publicly accessible website, which is a demonstrated best practice across the UN system.

#### Action required

The Council is invited to **consider** the issue and **instruct** the Secretary General to follow best practice and sound management principles by publishing the reports of the External Auditor, starting with reports from the previous biennium through to the current report, on a publicly accessible website without delay.

#### References

1. Financial Regulations and Financial Rules
2. External Audit ([Document C13/8](#)) Financial Regulations and Financial Rules

## 1 Summary

1.1 The United States proposes that the ITU Council decide to instruct the Secretary-General to publish the annual reports of the External Auditor on ITU's publicly accessible website, which is a demonstrated best practice across the UN system.

## 2 Background

2.1 The Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources discussed Document CWG-FHR-3/15 on Access to ITU Documents at their session in March 2014, at which time the United States requested that reports of the Internal and External Auditors be made public. The chairman concluded that Council should further consider this issue.

2.2 Public disclosure of external audit reports is a common practice across the UN system. For example, the United Nations Board of Auditors (BoA) produces some 30 reports over a 2-year cycle for review by the General Assembly. These reports are available to the public, and reports dating back to 2000-2001 can be accessed through the BoA public website.

2.3 The International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), which is an umbrella organisation for the external government audit community that includes External Auditors in the UN system, has repeatedly affirmed that as the funds allocated to the international organizations often come from public funds, national authorities are accountable for the use of these funds. As taxpayer dollars are the source of public funds, the general public should be reassured that organizations are being managed in an effective and financially disciplined manner. Similarly, industry stakeholders should feel confident that their contributions are managed efficiently and transparently.

2.4 In 2003, the INTOSAI Auditing Standards Committee acknowledged that relevant audit findings should be made public, either in individual performance reports or in the annual report

from the External Auditor. Members agreed that it is an advantage if the reports are available for public discussion and criticism.

2.5 The Committee's views echo the popular opinion expressed in 2001 at the XVII INCOSAI, which is the supreme organ of INTOSAI. Delegates argued for more transparency, with more audit reports made available to the public. The general consensus was that public reporting would add to the credibility of the institution.

### **3 General Views**

3.1 The United States is of the view that public access to reports of the External Auditor is a demonstrated best practice across the UN system, and ITU remains one of the few organizations that has not adopted this practice.

3.2 The United States is of the view that the External Auditor is the ultimate independent source of information on whether the ITU performs economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve the purposes for which it was established. All stakeholders in the organization, including the general public and partners in industry, should be able to access all relevant documents on the financial management practices of ITU.

3.3 The United States is of the view that transparency of financial management practices builds confidence among all stakeholders and ensures continued support of the organization and its mandates.

### **4 Proposal**

4.1 The United States proposes that the ITU Council instruct the Secretary-General to publish the reports of the External Auditor, starting with reports from the previous biennium through to the current report, on a publicly accessible website without delay.

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