UNON DG REMARKS –17 MAY 2016

Your Honor, Judge Vinod Boolell, President of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal,

Your Honors, the Judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal in Nairobi, New York and Geneva,

Ms. Linda Taylor, Executive Director, Office of the Administration of Justice,

Principal Registrar and Registrars of the Nairobi, New York and Geneva registries,

UN Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,,

Welcome to the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

Thank you for coming to this luncheon today.

I am very pleased that you have once again chosen Nairobi as the venue for your plenary meeting. It is an honour to host all of you here at UNON.

This is a very fitting venue for your meeting. Nairobi is one of the UN system’s most important duty stations. From this compound alone, over 3,500 staff members work on daily basis to advance the goals and values of the UN – in Kenya, in the region and around the world. UNON remains the only UN headquarters in Africa, and indeed in the entire global South.

Nairobi is home to the global headquarters of UNEP and UN-Habitat, two very important UN programmes. UNON also hosts sixty different offices representing 27 UN agencies, funds and programmes, as well as Special Political Missions and peace support operations, including the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and the UN Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS).

This magnificent compound is arguably the most beautiful and serene UN campus in the world – a conductive environment for your discussions this week on issues crucial to the UN’s internal justice system, and therefore crucial to the Organization as a whole. UNON has had a very positive and constructive relationship with the UNDT. I believe it is no coincidence that the world’s first permanent courtroom of the UNDT was established here at UNON three years ago. It reflects our shared commitment to improve the UN’s internal justice system.

It is a fundamental right of staff at all levels to have recourse to an effective internal justice system.

Indeed, the United Nations, which advances the rule of law around the world, has an obligation

to uphold justice in our own sphere.

As international civil servants, all of us -- from General Service staff to senior officials, and from team members to supervisors and managers -- have a role to play in promoting internal justice. We should all do our utmost to build a harmonious working environment, act in accordance with UN rules and regulations, respect each other, behave with integrity, and seek informal resolution of work-place disputes whenever possible before resorting to the formal litigation process at the UNDT.

As the Director-General of UNON, I wish to assure you of my full support to the UNDT in its endeavor to carry out its mandate.

I myself have had the “pleasure” of being summoned to appear before the UNDT. It was an interesting experience, which I will remember for quite some time.

I would like to thank Judge Boolell for his invaluable contributions to the UNDT in Nairobi, and to the UN’s internal justice system as a whole, over the past seven years. It has been a distinct honour and a real pleasure working and interacting with you.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Judge Thomas Laker and Judge Coral Shaw for your distinguished service to the United Nations. I wish all three of you all the best in your future endeavors. [We will have more to say about the three departing judges later].

I would also like to thank Judge Izuako, Abena and all the staff of the UNDT here in Nairobi for all your hard work and efforts.

Finally, I wish the Judges, Registrar and all the staff of the administration of justice system every success in the very important work you carry out, and all the best in your deliberations here this week.

Thank you for your kind attention.