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**Report to Congress on  
The activities of the United Nations and of the participation of the United States therein for  
2018**

**September 2019**

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2018**

This report is submitted consistent with section 4 of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945 (P.L. 79-264), which provides, in part: “The President shall from time to time as occasion may require, but not less than once each year, make reports to the Congress of the activities of the United Nations and of the participation of the United States therein.”

What follows is a brief treatment of key activities of the United States in the United Nations and its agencies during 2018. Current year’s activities will be reflected in the 2019 version of this report. It illustrates the scope of U.S. engagement at the United Nations, discusses key successes and shortcomings, and highlights how U.S. goals were significantly advanced.

Upon submission to Congress, this report (as well as previous years’ reports) will be available online at <https://www.state.gov/reports-bureau-of-international-organization-affairs/>.

In 2018, U.S. leadership was evident in a wide range of UN activities in pursuit of U.S. national interests, including global peace and security, humanitarian response, economic development, and international health. The United States continues to be instrumental in shaping the international system in a way that supports our vision of a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous world, including in the UN Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO), among other organizations.

U.S. efforts in international fora are often instrumental in driving important initiatives, organizing coalitions, and spurring efforts to block counterproductive measures, including persistent anti-Israel bias. For the purposes of this report, U.S. priorities at the UN are presented under broad categories: Peace and Security; UN Peacekeeping; Human Rights, Humanitarian Response, and Development; Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies; and Budget, Reform, and Administration.

### **Peace and Security**

In 2018, the United States successfully used the UN Security Council to address critical national security threats, defend Israel, improve UN mission performance, and elevate the role corruption plays in fueling conflict.

North Korea: A top priority for the Department of State’s multilateral diplomacy remains addressing North Korea’s nuclear program. The United States in 2018 worked to leverage three resolutions adopted in 2017 that imposed the strongest ever sanctions against North Korea. These sanctions included prohibitions on the use of North Korean laborers, strict restrictions on the supply, sale, or transfer of crude oil and other refined petroleum products, and authorizations for member states to seize and inspect any vessel in a member state’s port suspected of prohibited activities. The implementation and enforcement of these sanctions formed a key foundation for subsequent talks on North Korea’s nuclear program. The United States nominated more than 40 entities and individuals for designation by the 1718 Sanctions

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Committee, of which the Committee listed three vessels for deregistration and port entry ban under the measures adopted in 2017.

Middle East: The United States worked to address the UN's bias against Israel, advance political solutions to the crises in Syria and Yemen, as well as highlight Iran's malign influence in the region. The United States worked to orient the Security Council's monthly meetings on the Middle East to focus on pressing threats, including Hizballah and Hamas, rather than solely on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which had been the focus of other members.

The United States continued to push back against anti-Israel bias in the UN, in particular during the General Assembly where up to 20 resolutions biased against Israel are introduced annually. The United States, while in the minority, voted against each of these resolutions. The United States successfully reduced votes in favor of two resolutions with budget implications by delivering demarches to 24 members who had demonstrated increasing voting coincidence with the United States on other biased resolutions. In addition, the United States introduced the first-ever resolution in the General Assembly condemning Hamas in December 2018, and sought support from specific members based on previous voting patterns on other anti-Hamas amendments. The resolution gained a plurality of votes (86 in favor, 57 against, and 33 abstentions) but failed to pass due to a successful Kuwaiti procedural push to require a two-thirds majority for passage. There were no UNSC Resolutions on Israeli-Palestinian issues in 2018.

Meanwhile, the United States worked closely with likeminded partners to apply a maximum political and economic pressure campaign on Iran, including for its continued missile testing in defiance of UN Security Council resolution 2231. In December, the United States coordinated with partners in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to protest a December 1 Iranian medium-range ballistic missile launch. The U.S. public statement warned that Iran's launches were destabilizing the Middle East and leading to Iran's international isolation, and that the United States would not stand by and watch Iranian malign behavior continue to encroach on the security of U.S. partners and allies.

Syria: As Russia continued to repeatedly shield the Assad regime from accountability for violations of international law, including use of chemical weapons in Syria, and the devastating impacts of their campaign on civilians and humanitarian actors, the United States worked with our partners to pursue meaningful consequences for the Assad regime and to call out Russia for its unconscionable obstruction. On July 30, the United States joined a UK-led demarche to the Secretary-General to express grave concern about continued attacks by the Assad regime and its allies that have impacted civilian objects, including schools and hospitals. Ten members of the Council joined the demarche calling for investigations into attacks against facilities on the UN's de-confliction list, a mechanism administered by the UN humanitarian affairs office on the coordinates of civilian infrastructure to prevent attacks by parties to the conflict. The demarche also called for an investigation into the failure of the UN's de-confliction mechanism to deter attacks. The Secretary-General on August 1, ultimately established a Board of Inquiry to investigate these incidents. The United States continued to emphasize that cross border humanitarian aid remained the most effective, transparent, and essential way to bring assistance to those who need it most.

Yemen: The United States has consistently supported the UN-led peace process in Yemen and strongly backs the efforts of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. The United States is one of the

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largest donors to humanitarian assistance in Yemen, and has urged others to step up their financial contributions and disburse unfulfilled pledges. In 2018, the United States voted in favor of UN Security Council resolutions supporting the outcomes of the December ROYG-Houthi talks in Sweden (UNSCR 2451) and establishing the UN Mission to support the Agreement on the City of Hudaydah (UNMHA) (UNSCR 2452). The United States has provided funds supporting travel and expansion of the UN Special Envoy's team. It has consistently encouraged parties to cooperate with the UN-led peace process, to cease hostilities and to pursue de-escalatory measures and has advocated for the full resourcing of UNMHA to perform its monitoring duties in Hudaydah. The United States partially funds the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) for Hudaydah, preventing the entry of weapons shipments in line with UNSCR 2216.

Burma: UN Security Council members were able to witness conditions on the ground resulting from the refugee crisis firsthand during a mission to Bangladesh and Burma in late April 2018. The United States has supported the International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar and its successor, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, to ensure the collection, preservation, and analysis of information and evidence for future prosecutions or other actions to promote justice and accountability. The United States continued to be at the forefront in publicly identifying Burma's military and security services as the main perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses throughout the country, and especially in Rakhine State. The United States continued to be vocal about the need for security sector reform and civilian control over the military, and the need for continued humanitarian assistance to Rohingya forced to flee to Bangladesh. In Fiscal Year 2018, the United States was the world's largest donor of humanitarian assistance to the Rakhine State crisis, providing more than \$355 million to refugees and host communities in Rakhine State and Bangladesh.

Anti-corruption: When the United States held the Presidency of the Security Council in September 2018, we convened the first-ever thematic meeting of the Council on the connection between corruption and international peace and security. Despite the objections of some Council members, the United States succeeded in pressing members to explore the role corruption plays in fueling instability, violence, and criminal activity. The United States also hosted a companion Arria-Formula meeting focused on the toll that corruption in Venezuela has taken on its people and the threat it poses to international security.

Counterterrorism: On counterterrorism, the United States continued to promote the implementation of Resolution 2396 (2017), a landmark resolution on the threat of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) relocating from the battlefield. Resolution 2396 established new requirements for member states to disrupt the travel of FTFs, including developing and utilizing certain advanced screening technologies and improving border controls. The resolution also calls for the development of comprehensive strategies to reintegrate, prosecute, and rehabilitate FTFs who return to their home countries. The United States continues to use the Security Council's 1267 Sanctions Regime as an important tool in the fight against ISIS and Al-Qaida, as designations of individuals and entities through the Council result in binding asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo-related obligations on all member states. In 2018, the 1267 Committee designated nine individuals and four entities. Among those designated were Salim Mustafa Muhammad al-Mansur, Umar Mahmud Irhayyim al-Kubaysi, and the Al-Kawthar Money Exchange, all part of an ISIS financial facilitation network; Anjem Choudary, a British preacher

who has recruited individuals to ISIS; and Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), an Al-Qaida affiliate in West Africa.

Cyberspace: Russia took a more aggressive posture on cyber issues last year in UNGA First Committee, introducing a cyber resolution that contained a number of unacceptable flaws, including authoritarian principles on content control and the threat of information. Russia also attempted to rewrite well-established nonbinding norms of responsible state behavior in cyberspace articulated in the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) reports and affirmed by all UN member states. Once it was clear that Russia did not intend to pursue consensus on these proposals, the United States drafted and proposed a new, competing cyber resolution in response. The U.S. text was built upon previous consensus language and called for a new GGE based largely on the mandate of previous GGEs, with a few updates in the spirit of increasing the possibility of a consensus report. Ultimately, both resolutions were approved (with several delegations simply voting yes for both), but the U.S. resolution was more broadly accepted than the Russia proposal. As such, U.S. efforts helped demonstrate that Russia's vision for cyberspace is not shared by the international community and reasserted U.S. leadership on these important issues.

Other UNSC Action: Other significant Security Council Resolutions adopted in 2018 focused on: the establishment of an arms embargo in South Sudan (Resolution 2428); the Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (Resolution 2439); and the role of youth in peace agreements (Resolution 2419). Throughout all negotiations, the United States pushed for language on women, peace, and security; sexual violence in armed conflict; and human rights. Planning, directing, or committing acts involving sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan was added as standalone targeted designation criteria to the South Sudan targeted sanctions regime.

The Security Council also adopted a number of significant Presidential Statements in 2018. Major statements focused on the full implementation of the arms embargo and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance in Yemen (March); the importance of countering international terrorism and transnational organized crime (May); the recognition of Somalia's recent security, economic and political reforms (June); condemnation of ceasefire violations in Ukraine (June); concern over persistent violence perpetuated by armed groups in the Central African Republic (July); support for Afghanistan's parliamentary elections process (July and October); and concern over civilian casualties in armed conflict (September).

## **UN Peacekeeping**

UN peacekeeping missions remain of vital interest to the United States because they fulfill a difficult but necessary role in sustaining peace, protecting civilians, and promoting the conditions necessary for political resolution of the associated conflicts. Many peacekeeping missions, such as those in Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo, faced increasingly complex operating environments over the course of the year.

The United States has contributed significantly to efforts over the past several years to make UN peacekeeping a more effective tool in meeting these challenges. We continue to work closely with the UN and other UN member states in this effort. The United States has developed the following five principles for evaluating UN Peacekeeping Missions: (1) peacekeeping

operations should support political solutions; (2) strategic consent of the host government is critical; (3) mandates must be realistic and achievable; (4) there must be clear sequencing and exit strategies at all stages; and (5) we must be willing to adjust when Security Council objectives are not met.

In 2018, the United States supported reforms in three key areas: (1) enhancing peacekeeping forces' abilities to perform the tasks mandated by the UN Security Council (performance), (2) designing and operating UN peacekeeping missions that are able to achieve their mandates (planning), and (3) adopting mandates that support active political processes (political solutions). The United States wrote and championed UNSC Resolution 2436 on improving peacekeeper performance and accountability. This resolution calls on the UN to evaluate mission operations based on clear and well-identified benchmarks, and ensure that relevant decisions are based on objective performance data, including decisions regarding recognizing and incentivizing outstanding performance, deployment, remediation, training, withholding of financial reimbursement, and repatriation of uniformed or dismissal of civilian personnel. The United States was successful in requesting that the UN examine performance of troops in several peacekeeping operations and to report to the Security Council on identified performance failures.

At the end of 2018, there were 14 peacekeeping missions around the world with more than 100,000 deployed peacekeepers. The United States deployed 49 military personnel and nine police officers to seven peacekeeping missions. In 2018, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) successfully completed its mandate and closed.

In addition to reform, the United States continued to press for preserving critical human rights functions within UN peacekeeping operations, resisting efforts from other member states to substantially reduce or eliminate funding for these activities during peacekeeping budget negotiations. The United States was able to ensure peacekeeping operations retained these essential resources while still achieving the substantial budgetary savings outlined above.

The United States continued to advocate for rigorous enforcement of the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. The United States continued to push for improved support for victims and greater accountability for UN peacekeepers who commit these acts, including through swift and credible investigations. The UN continued to review troop and police performance, per the terms of UNSCR 2272 (2016), which requests the UN Secretary-General to hold troop- and police-contributing countries accountable for taking appropriate steps to investigate allegations of and hold accountable those responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse. To ensure efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse are centered on victims, the United States supported the creation of a Victims' Rights Advocate by the Secretary-General and deployment of field-based victims' rights advocates in peacekeeping operations with a high instance of sexual exploitation and abuse. The United States also supported the establishment of a pilot mapping exercise by field-based victims' rights advocates to identify best practices, gaps, areas of overlap, and lessons learned in victims' rights approaches and available services.

### **Human Rights, Humanitarian Response, and Development**

In 2018, the United States continued its engagement at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, and other UN bodies to advance human rights priorities.

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The United States withdrew its elected seat on the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on June 19, 2018, because the Council's membership included human rights violators and the agenda demonstrated bias against Israel. Prior to our withdrawal, the United States successfully advocated for the renewal of key UN human rights mandates including the Syria Commission of Inquiry (COI), the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, and the Special Rapporteurs on human rights situations in Burma, DPRK, and Iran. The United States opposed a special session of the UNHRC on the situation in "the Occupied Palestinian Territory", including East Jerusalem.

In the UNGA, the United States advocated successfully for the adoption of resolutions on Burma, Crimea, DPRK, Iran, and Syria. The United States was also a sponsor of a successful resolution on the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.

Through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, the United States participated in the review of the human rights situations in 42 countries, including Burundi, China, Cuba, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.

The United States participated in the annual UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD), UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), and UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Ageing.

On women's empowerment, the United States participated in negotiating the UN Commission on the Status of Women spring 2018 Agreed Conclusions on "Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls." The United States participated in negotiating UNGA 2018 recurring resolutions on child, early, and forced marriage; female genital mutilation; trafficking in women and girls; and violence against women and girls: sexual harassment. As a UN Women Executive Board member, we participated in its three annual Executive Board sessions and negotiations of UN Women Decisions.

The United States was a leader in ensuring the visibility and voice of civil society in the United Nations system, including through its seat on ECOSOC's Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO Committee). The United States led efforts for the successful accreditation of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center and the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea. The United States continued to serve on the Advisory Board of the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) to support the Fund's mission and ensure effective use of contributions by member states.

In the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United States advocated successfully with other countries and with employer and worker representatives to identify and bring to bear, through the operation of the ILO's supervisory system, international pressure to address significant labor rights violations in countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, Guatemala, and Burma. The United States also played a key role in encouraging Qatar, as it prepares to host the World Cup in 2022, to dismantle its *kafala* system, and worked with the ILO to eliminate and prevent forced labor, increase the capacity of its labor inspectorate, and protect workers. The USG also worked closely with the ILO to combat exploitative child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

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On development matters, the United States provided critical support through institutions like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) among others. The FAO promotes economic growth and agricultural development through investment policies, technical support, and internationally recognized standards for food safety and animal and plant health. In 2018, the FAO received \$1.3 billion from all donors in combined regular program funds and voluntary contributions. The United States, as the largest donor, contributed \$237 million, split between assessed contributions of approximately \$111 million, and voluntary contributions of \$126 million. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions, UNDP operates in almost all developing countries with an annual resource envelope of nearly \$5 billion. Beyond traditional development programs in poverty reduction, UNDP contributes to core objectives to promote stability in order to sustain peace and security. In FY 2017 and FY 2018, the United States provided \$80 million per year to UNDP's core budget to support UNDP's work in these important areas.

The United States has long been the world's leading supporter of the UN's humanitarian response capacity. In 2018, U.S. funding for and leadership in humanitarian agencies played an essential role in providing life-saving assistance and protection to millions of people in conflicts and crises around the world. U.S. leadership was instrumental at organizations such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the World Health Organization (WHO), which play indispensable roles in responding to humanitarian crises around the world.

The United States worked closely with OCHA to strengthen and support its critical work to mobilize and coordinate the international humanitarian response to crises and natural disasters in many countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. UNHCR has provided international protection, life-saving assistance, and solutions for forcibly displaced people, including providing shelter, access to education, health care, and livelihoods. UNHCR has also helped displaced persons locally integrate, voluntarily repatriate, or resettle in a third country. In addition, UNHCR served vulnerable displaced populations in Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, and Yemen, where conflicts have threatened governments and regional stability and triggered historic levels of forced displacement. UN humanitarian agencies helped mitigate the impact of these crises and supported host countries and communities, such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, as they strained to cope with supporting refugees from Syria. WFP extended their emergency plan in Yemen as the food security situation worsened, and increased the budget from \$1.17 billion to \$2.04 billion; USAID provided \$2.5 million in logistics funding and \$315 million for in-kind food. The total USG contribution to WFP in 2018 was \$2.54 billion. The United States led support for a UN humanitarian response, led by UNHCR and IOM, to protect and assist vulnerable Venezuelans across the Western Hemisphere, the most recent large-scale forced displacement.

In 2018, the United States also led efforts to implement new approaches in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. This included joint needs assessments and analyses that underpin prioritized, need-based response plans, reduction of management costs, continued support for the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, strengthened responses for internally displaced persons, and calls for greater efficiencies and effectiveness in the humanitarian system, including by advancing implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments and UN reforms. In October

2018, the United States became co-chair of the Grand Bargain Facilitation Group to steer stronger reporting and prioritization of progress on commitments that will increase effectiveness and efficiency in the humanitarian system. The United States has also continued to push for improved effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance in the executive boards of UN organizations, and worked to reposition humanitarian assistance on the UNICEF Executive Board agenda to facilitate appropriate oversight and engagement, as this pillar of the agency's work continues to grow.

### **Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies**

U.S. participation in UN specialized agencies and other bodies is critical to our multilateral engagement efforts, as the United States works to strengthen the alignment between U.S. national interests and UN activities. As other member states, including China and Russia, seek to increase their stature in the specialized agencies, the United States must focus on maintaining influence on issues relevant to our nation's security and prosperity. As in years past, the United States actively engaged across a broad spectrum of issues related to health, transportation, telecommunications, intellectual property, economic growth and employment; combatting exploitative child labor, forced labor and human trafficking, the commercial use of outer space, drugs and crime, energy, nonproliferation, and arms control.

In 2018-2019, the United States has continued to provide active and sustained leadership in the specialized and technical agencies that address this wide range of issues. These bodies include high-profile institutions addressing critical national security issues such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); and institutions which can promote greater international cooperation on issues that can fundamentally affect U.S. domestic growth and commercial and economic activity, such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); the Universal Postal Union (UPU); the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The United States withdrew from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), effective December 31, 2018, due to continuing anti-Israeli bias at the organization, U.S. concerns with mounting arrears, and the need for fundamental reforms.

As the central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field, the IAEA continued in 2018-2019 to maintain and strengthen the international nuclear nonproliferation regime by implementing and verifying safeguards to prevent the diversion of nuclear material from peaceful uses in an environment of increasing reliance on nuclear power facilities. Amid the proliferation of such facilities, the IAEA's role in assisting member states to improve nuclear safety standards and implement measures to strengthen nuclear security also continued to grow. The IAEA continued to play a critical role in monitoring and reporting on nuclear programs in Iran and Syria.

In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) and its regional arms, including the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), responded to more than 50 emergencies in 47 countries and territories, with the most significant being the Ebola outbreak in the eastern DRC. Other emergencies included measles outbreaks in South and Central America; yellow fever and cholera in African and South American countries; Nipah virus in India; cholera and other infectious outbreaks in Yemen; and other complex health and humanitarian crises, natural disasters, and emergencies. The WHO Health Emergencies Program brings operational capabilities and a

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standardized approach across the WHO's regional and country programs; they span the entire cycle of health emergency management, from prevention and detection to response and recovery. The Health Emergencies Program, as just one prominent work stream of WHO's broader public health mandate, supports a broad range of U.S. global health priorities in relation to the International Health Regulations and the domestic health security priorities.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 (PP-18) concluded on November 16, 2018, in Dubai with the U.S. delegation having achieved all of its primary objectives. The conference agreed to a four-year work plan for the ITU that includes appropriately-scoped work on cybersecurity, Internet issues, digital economy, and over-the-top (OTT) services, which were high priorities for the U.S. government and U.S. industry. Importantly, the final cybersecurity resolution did not include a call to develop a new treaty on cybersecurity, as proposed by some delegations. A new resolution on Artificial Intelligence was not approved after some delegations refused to accept U.S. proposed limitations on the work of the ITU in this space. The United States successfully defeated efforts to convene a renegotiation of the International Telecommunication Regulations, one of the ITU's treaty instruments. The U.S. delegation facilitated a successful compromise between Israel and Arab countries, as well as the Palestinians, on appropriate revisions to resolutions addressing the ITU's work in support of Palestinian telecommunication development. The United States successfully defeated efforts by Sudan and Cuba to seek changes to a resolution on non-discriminatory access to telecommunications and services intended to challenge certain U.S. sanctions. The U.S.-nominated candidate, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, was elected to be director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, and the United States was re-elected to ITU Council.

The United States announced its intention to withdraw from the Universal Postal Union (UPU) on October 17, 2018, after the Second Extraordinary Congress of the UPU in September 2018 failed to address U.S. concerns over economic distortions caused by the low rates postal operators of certain countries, including China, pay to the U.S. Postal Service for the delivery of small packets. Noting that the UPU Constitution stipulates a one-year period from notice for withdrawal to take effect, the United States said it was prepared to rescind the notice of withdrawal and remain in the UPU should its diplomatic efforts resolve its concerns.

In 2018-2019, ICAO continued to move forward an effort to standardize the collection and exchange of passenger data in order to counter terrorism in the aviation space. ICAO members also furthered their work with the aviation industry to implement a mechanism to offset carbon emissions from international aviation and worked in cutting-edge areas such as aviation cybersecurity and autonomous aircraft.

Other UN fora continued to offer the United States important opportunities to advance international cooperation on national priorities related to drugs and crime. At the request of the United States, in March 2018 the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) voted to place carfentanil, a fentanyl analogue contributing to the opioid crisis, under international control. Also in March 2018, the CND adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution to enhance international cooperation to combat threats posed by synthetic opioids. In May 2018, U.S. efforts at the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) helped advance the U.S. agenda to address cybercrime, highlighting best practices from a multilateral law enforcement operation in 2017 that brought down two of the largest criminal marketplaces on the darknet. Also at the

CCPCJ, the United States guided directives to combat trafficking in persons facilitated by criminal misuse of information and communication technologies.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) promotes national security by providing free, real-time, unrestricted exchanges of weather-related data, products, and services that are critical to U.S. interests in public safety and the protection of life and property. The WMO also sets international standards for weather, water, climate, and related environmental information. The WMO supports disaster preparedness and mitigation by facilitating real-time access to weather data, forecasts, and warnings that enable the United States and other nations to predict and prepare for weather-related natural disasters. Cooperation through the WMO enabled NOAA's National Weather Service to provide accurate forecasts and warnings within the United States during the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season, including for hurricanes Florence and Michael. The United States relies on WMO coordination for information critical to global, multi-model ensembles which produce all local, regional, and national forecasts and warnings.

### **Budget, Reform, and Administration**

Amounts of funds appropriated by Congress for contributions to international organizations in FY 2018 were similar to prior years. The appropriation for the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO) account, which funds assessed contributions to the UN regular budget, specialized agencies, and other international organizations, was \$1.47 billion, including \$1.08 billion for UN entities; the appropriation for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account, which funds U.S. assessed contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, was \$1.38 billion; and the appropriation for the International Organizations and Programs (IO&P) account, which funds U.S. voluntary contribution to many UN funds and programs, received \$339 million, including \$296 million for UN entities.

As the result of budget negotiations that occurred in 2017, the levels of the UN regular budget and the assessed budgets of major UN specialized agencies remained stable in 2018. The level of the UN regular budget decreased by 3.2 percent to \$2.69 billion. The levels of the assessed budgets at the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labor Organization remained flat. The budgets of the World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency increased 3.0 and 1.6 percent, respectively.

The UN negotiates a regular budget scale of assessments every three years based on a country's capacity to pay. Negotiations in 2018 led to agreement on scales of assessment at the UN for 2019-2021. Many UN specialized agencies base their scales of assessment on the UN's. Despite U.S. diplomatic efforts to persuade other countries to contribute a greater share to the UN regular budget, "burden sharing" negotiations were not successful in 2018. The General Assembly agreed to preserve the status quo methodology for the UN regular budget scale of assessments that lowers the regular and U.S. peacekeeping assessment rates by 5 percentage points. The regular budget ceiling rate of 22 percent, agreed to in 2000, remains.

The U.S. peacekeeping assessment rate decreased from 28.4 percent to 27.9 percent. The Department and U.S. Mission to the United Nations were unsuccessful in getting agreement to changes in the methodology for the peacekeeping scale of assessments that aimed to establish a 25% ceiling on peacekeeping assessments. While the new U.S. peacekeeping assessment is 27.9%, without the [regular budget] ceiling, the United States would be assessed at 33 percent.

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Comprehensive U.S. efforts to identify cost savings, efficiencies, and other means of restraining UN budget growth were not as successful in 2018 when compared to the past four biennial budget cycles. Despite the United States working closely with other major UN contributors to reduce the 2018-2019 UN regular budget, in December 2018 UNGA agreed to increase the level of the regular budget for 2018-2019 to \$5.8 billion, an increase of \$415 million or 7.7 percent compared to the initially adopted level of \$5.4 billion in 2017. The increase is largely to pay for increased mandates by member states, especially for UN special political missions.

Due to a sustained effort in 2018 by the U.S. and likeminded missions, it is worth noting that there were several proposals that were not agreed to and therefore did not further increase UN budget levels. Those included an “end of service” grant for UN staff; a \$200 million increase in the level of the working capital fund; \$50 million in proposed additional funding for “recosting” in the 2018-2019 budget; \$35 million in other proposed increased to the UN regular budget; and the transfer of \$28.6 million in UN regular budget funds to a special account that the UN secretariat utilizes to deal with cash-flow problems.

The United States continued to lead efforts aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency, oversight, transparency, and accountability of the UN with a view to fostering a culture that embraces modern management practices. Some progress was made since 2017, when Secretary-General Guterres launched an ambitious and system-wide UN reform agenda in the three pillars of peace and security, development, and management.

The U.S. Mission and likeminded missions to the United Nations were successful in getting General Assembly agreement to reaffirm the need to preserve the mandate of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the integrity of the UN Common System standards for compensating staff. U.S. diplomatic efforts expressed concern about deviations from common system standards, for example, with the provision of organization-wide staff bonuses at a UN specialized agency. There was agreement to call upon UN System organizations to complete implementation of the UN System-wide mandatory retirement of 65. The General Assembly called for continued zero tolerance for fraud, corruption, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse, including through a specialized team to investigate complaints of sexual harassment.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations successfully pushed for approval of several reforms to improve oversight and management of the \$60 million UN Joint Staff Pension Fund. The reforms include provisions to increase protections against potential conflicts of interest inherent in the Pension Board, including by separating the roles of the Pension Benefits Administrator and the Secretary of the Board. The U.S. Mission continued to call for establishment of a working group to examine the composition and working methods of the Board, increased diversification of investments, expedited completion of a critical fraud risk assessment, and reconstituting and realigning the Executive Office of the Pension Funds.

On development reform, the U.S. Mission engaged constructively to advance the Secretary-General’s initiative to reposition and strengthen the development system through establishment of a new Resident Coordinator System. The UN approved funding to enable the UN Secretariat to meet its share of the financial cost-sharing that is distributed across the UN System in this joint undertaking, with the anticipated result of better coordination at the country level.

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As part of the Secretary-General's efforts to streamline management process, in 2018, the General Assembly endorsed his preferred option of retaining dual human resource management structures in the new Department of Operation Support and the new Department of management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance. The dual structure distinguishes the strategic (headquarters) and operational (field) components of the United Nations, and is consistent with the overall objective of increasing authority delegated to mid-level managers for decision-making on resources and personnel, with the field retaining autonomy on the hiring of operational staff.