

6 November 2020

**Statement to the Fifth Committee**  
**by Shireen Dodson, United Nations Ombudsman**

Report of the Secretary-General  
on the Activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services

(A/75/160)

*Distinguished Chair and Committee Members,*

It is my pleasure to appear today before the Committee to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS), A/75/160.

Allow me to acknowledge right from the start that the past eight (8) months have been an extremely challenging time for the global community, including for the staff of the United Nations Secretariat. As ombudsman, we are hearing from staff about the tremendous challenges and sacrifices that are posed working fully remotely and juggling many tasks on the personal and professional fronts.

Staff are working harder and longer with few boundaries between work and home. Many have spoken of experiencing a deep sense of loss, of loved ones who have succumbed to COVID-19, of the support and camaraderie which going to the office had provided, and of a way of life which many fear will never be the same again. Some staff are expressing anxiety at the uncertainty of what lies ahead in the new work environment and about

Now, let me turn to the report before you which describes the

As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 74/258 (para. 2), the report also offers further details on the pilot project to provide informal conflict resolution services to non-staff personnel. 2019 showed a further increase of non-staff cases to 332 compared to 304 in 2018. In this regard, it would be beneficial to extend the d