

Statement of Ambassador Michele J. Sison
Nominee for Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations, with the
rank of Ambassador, and Deputy Representative of the United States in the Security
Council of the United Nations
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 29, 2014

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations. I am grateful to the President, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for their faith and confidence in my ability to represent the American people at the United Nations.

I know my daughters Allie and Jessica are watching this hearing out in Arizona on their laptops, and I'd like to give them a heartfelt shout-out in recognition of the many years they spent accompanying me around the globe as Foreign Service kids. My two girls truly are my pride and joy.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to advancing America's interests at the United Nations at a time of unprecedented challenges. President Obama has stressed that the global nature of the threats facing the world today cannot be adequately addressed by one nation alone. For that reason, America depends upon -- and must continue to demonstrate leadership within -- an effective, responsive, and responsible international system.

I have been privileged to serve our country three times as U.S. Ambassador: in the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka and Maldives. Throughout my career, I've worked with our international partners on issues as varied as nonproliferation, counterterrorism, climate change, and post-conflict transition. Representing our nation in challenging posts around the world -- from Haiti to Cote d'Ivoire, and Pakistan to Iraq -- I have seen that the United Nations, for all its shortcomings, has the ability to complement and amplify U.S. efforts to achieve a number of our foreign policy goals, including to prevent and end armed conflicts, ensure accountability, and build the conditions for a lasting peace.

On the ground, I've worked alongside UN colleagues to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to communities wracked by conflict and natural disaster, and I've coordinated closely with UN personnel on efforts to aid refugees and internally displaced persons. As U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, I witnessed how UN peacekeepers contribute to allaying tensions along the "Blue Line" between Israel and Lebanon.

I have vigorously promoted U.S. interests by urging our partners overseas to adhere to UN Security Council Resolutions designed to deter the proliferation efforts of Iran and North Korea, Al Qaida-linked terrorism, and other grave threats to peace. Of course, there can be no sustainable peace without justice and the rule of law. I've worked closely with the UN throughout my career to promote accountability and respect for human rights, as well as to address the issue of sexual or gender-based violence in conflict. And, while I believe no country can lead as effectively as the United States, it is not our nation's job to solve every crisis around the world; the UN is an important forum for sharing that burden internationally. If confirmed, I

will seek to expand the number of capable and willing partners working with us at the UN on each of the issues I've mentioned, and will seek to unite them in common cause in tackling our many common challenges.

Finally, although I recognize the UN's potential to advance critical U.S. priorities, I am also well aware of the UN system's limitations and the challenges it faces to ensure that its important work is performed efficiently and effectively. Some of these challenges are internal to the UN system, and some reflect the competing priorities of its member states. If confirmed, I will actively pursue our shared priority of ensuring that American taxpayer resources are used effectively to advance U.S. goals and objectives. I pledge to work to ensure UN fiscal discipline, transparency, ethics, oversight, and reform. I will also continue this Administration's firm commitment to fight any unfair bias against Israel at the UN.

Mr. Chairman, I've worked closely with this Committee throughout my career, and I greatly respect the active role of the Committee in shaping American foreign policy. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with you to advance U.S. national interests at the United Nations.

I am honored to appear before you today and I appreciate your consideration of my nomination. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me. Thank you.