

Testimony of Christopher P. Lu
Nominee for Permanent Representative to the United Nations
for Management and Reform
July 27, 2021

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear today as the nominee to be the Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform.

I would like to thank President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield for their confidence in me. Most importantly, I would like to thank my family, especially my remarkable wife Katie Thomson, for their steadfast support.

I am the proud son of immigrants who came to this country more than 60 years ago to start a new life. Government service is literally in my blood. My father was a civilian employee at the Department of Defense because he believed that working for the federal government was the best way to repay the country that had been so good to him.

I have tried to follow my father's example during my 20 years of federal service, where I have focused on improving how the government addresses the needs of the American people.

As the Deputy Chief Counsel of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, I conducted investigations to improve the effectiveness of federal programs. During my tenure as the legislative director for then-Senator Obama, we worked with former Senator Tom Coburn to pass legislation to improve the transparency of federal spending and reduce no-bid contracts. As the White House Cabinet Secretary, I coordinated dozens of federal agencies to ensure the effective delivery of services during the Great Recession.

At the Department of Labor, an agency with 17,000 employees and a \$12 billion budget, I was the chief operating officer and oversaw the budget, personnel, procurement, and IT functions. We utilized an extensive performance management system, incorporated best practices from outside the federal government, and focused on employee morale. In the annual survey of federal employee engagement, the Labor Department rose from 17th place before I arrived to 6th place when I left.

If confirmed for the role of Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform, I look forward to applying my management experience to this critical position.

Since its founding, the United Nations has been an indispensable force for advancing peace and security, improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable people, and confronting global problems like economic inequality, climate change and human rights. As Secretary Blinken said to the UN Security Council in May: "No period in modern history has been more peaceful or prosperous than the one since the United Nations was created."

The events of the past year have highlighted how interconnected our world is and how complex problems often can only be addressed in collaboration with other countries. A well-managed United Nations is in the best interest of the United States. It is also a smart investment for the American people, who are the largest funders of the UN budget. Indeed, a 2018 GAO report found that it would cost the United States eight times as much money if we were to undertake unilaterally the UN's peacekeeping missions.

Despite its many successes, the UN has struggled at times to live up to its founding ideals. In order to address the complex issues of the 21st century, the UN needs to operate more like a 21st century organization. In recent years, Secretary-General Guterres has implemented important operational reforms. But more can and should be done, and U.S. leadership is critical to driving UN reform.

If confirmed, I will push for greater transparency and accountability in how the UN spends its funds, makes its decisions, and operates its programs. The performance of programs should be evaluated using data. Waste, fraud and abuse should be rooted out and eliminated. Anti-Israel bias must be rejected wherever it exists. Instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers and staff must end. And constant vigilance is needed of those nations, such as China and Russia, that seek to undermine the UN and the rules-based international order.

I am fully cognizant of the challenges of driving change in an organization where the United States is just one of 193 members. However, as Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield told this committee in January: "We must have the courage to insist on reforms that make the UN efficient and effective, and the persistence to see reforms through."

In the 75 years since its founding, the UN has endured, expanded its mission, and transformed itself because of American leadership. If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing my two decades of federal management experience to ensure that the United Nations moves closer to reaching its full potential.

Thank you for considering me for this position, and I look forward to answering your questions.