

A MESSAGE FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

February 27, 2002

I am pleased to submit the Department of Justice's *Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2001*, prepared under the aegis of the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Bulletin No. 01-09. This *Accountability Report* contains the Department's audited consolidated financial statements, as required by the Chief Financial Officers Act (CFO Act) and the Government Management Reform Act; a selection of the Department's performance information, as required by the CFO Act; and a report on the Department's material weaknesses, as required by the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (Integrity Act).

The information provided in this document serves as a mechanism for fiscal and programmatic accountability. It is a report to the American people on our stewardship of the funding we received from them in FY 2001 to enforce the law and fulfill our mission.

The Department of Justice is accountable for meeting the highest standards of effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity. Whether preventing and disrupting terrorist activity, patrolling a remote border area, arguing a legal point in the courtroom, or investigating drug crime, Justice employees have earned a reputation for skill, dedication, and integrity.

With the submission of the FY 2001 consolidated financial statements, Justice earned its first Departmentwide unqualified audit opinion on all its statements. This achievement caps an extensive effort by Department components to produce timely, reliable, and auditable financial reports. Importantly, several components overcame limitations in their financial systems or operations in order to earn FY 2001 unqualified opinions. These accomplishments are evidence of the Department's ongoing dedication to superior performance. Continuing to improve the Department's financial management performance, including our core financial systems, is one of my announced goals for the Department, and one that we will pursue aggressively.

The financial and the performance data presented in this report are fundamentally complete and reliable, as outlined in guidance from OMB. The Department's managers routinely use these data to carry out their responsibilities. (A complete report of the Department's performance can be found in the Department's *FY 2001 Annual Performance Report and FY 2003 Annual Performance Plan*.)

I am also pleased to provide reasonable assurance that our management control and financial systems, taken as a whole, met the objectives of Sections 2 and 4 of the Integrity Act. While we still have a number of material challenges to resolve, the Department is steadily improving in this area.

Although it occurred late in FY 2001, I must reference the effect the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, have had on the Department. Counterterrorism had already been a serious focus of the Department. However, the events of September 11 caused us to further re-prioritize our activities: the fight against terrorism is now the first and overriding priority of the

Department of Justice. To fulfill this mission, we will devote all necessary resources to disrupt, weaken, and eliminate terrorist networks, to prevent or thwart terrorist attacks, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts. We have revised our Strategic Plan to more clearly identify our efforts and goals in this area.

The men and women of the Department of Justice, with our commitment to the defense of freedom and the principles of justice for all Americans, will meet the challenges and mission laid out by the President both prior to and after September 11. We will not rest in the pursuit of these priorities, and we will not fail in our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ashcroft", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Ashcroft