

Assembly's budget committee authorizes \$100 million for UN refurbishment

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24 April 2006 – Aiming to tackle the myriad environmental, health and security problems associated with the dilapidated United Nations Headquarters complex, the General Assembly budget committee today recommended authorizing over \$100 million for a massive refurbishment that is widely considered to be long overdue.

The seven buildings and 17-plus acres of the UN complex employs systems that are well past their useful life as well as hazardous materials, including asbestos. Standards of building safety in key areas, like sprinklers, are not up to code and energy goes wasted as a result of poor efficiency.

The “capital master plan” aims to address what Secretary-General Kofi Annan has termed the “unacceptable deterioration, building and fire code deficiencies, deficiencies in modern security requirements and standards and environmental problems” that plague the New York Headquarters.

Approving a draft resolution for adoption by the Assembly, the Administrative and Budgetary (Fifth) Committee appropriated \$23.5 million for financing the design and pre-construction phases of the plan.

For the whole 2006-2007 biennium, the Secretary-General would be authorized to enter into commitments of up to \$77 million to provide for the construction, fit-out and related requirements of a conference “swing space” building – the facility to be used during construction – on the North Lawn of the Headquarters complex. That allocation would also fund the leasing, design, pre-construction services and related requirements of library and office swing space.

The General Assembly has not yet decided on how the refurbishment will proceed but further action on the issue is expected next month.