

BOARD OF AUDITORS
NEW YORK
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Opening Statement to the Fifth Committee
on the report of the Board of Auditors on the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) of the
United Nations Office at Geneva (SHP) (A/77/94)
December 2022

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Board of Auditors, it is my privilege to present our fourth report on the implementation of the SHP in Geneva.

The SHP serves as a framework for both the renovation of the Palais des Nations and the construction of a new building to meet the requirements of the Organization and address health, safety and working conditions.

First of all, I would like to highlight that the new building was completed in October 2021 and is now in use. Moreover, renovation works of the Palais des Nations were ongoing during our last visit in February 2022.

According to reports of the independent risk management firm, the likelihood to deliver the SHP programme within the available budget had declined almost continuously from 66 per cent to 2 per cent down by January 2021 but had ever since shown an upward trend, having increased to 20 per cent by December 2021.

Although we see a slight increase in the chance of delivering the SHP project within the budget, we are of the opinion that the upward trend may not be sustainable. Further improvements are needed.

Let me highlight some of the key findings in more detail:

Substantial completion means the stage at which the whole of the works or the relevant sections or part of the works are complete, except for minor omissions and minor defects, which are listed in a punch list. Management should ensure that the punch list works are carried out as expeditiously as possible and closely supervise the operation and maintenance of the contractor.

A policy on employment and accessibility for staff members with disabilities in the United Nations Secretariat entered into force in June 2014 (see ST/SGB/2014/3). We assessed to what extent the new building was designed in accordance with the international standards, especially

ISO 21542 “Building construction – Accessibility and usability of the built environment” and found some issues that need to be addressed.

In addition to the actual SHP implementation, we also reviewed the benefits management approach, which defines the management actions that will be put in place. In order to ensure more efficient building maintenance, management needs to track maintenance costs resulting from the SHP starting with the new building and continuing with each building being renovated after its completion.

Building information modelling is a method for a profound use of computer technology in the design, engineering, construction and operation of built facilities. When data has not been completely transferred, an enormous effort would be required for the subsequent entry of the data into the facility management systems, which may also lead to additional costs. Management should start the data import tests at short notice.

In construction projects, a request for information seeks the clarification of any aspect on which the contractor is not clear including design plans, drawings, specifications, site conditions, agreements, etc. In January 2022, the monthly reports on the status of the renovation of the historic building state a total of 797 requests for information and 27 design variations (both approved and in progress). Management should improve its oversight of the work of the design services firm and its quality control procedures.

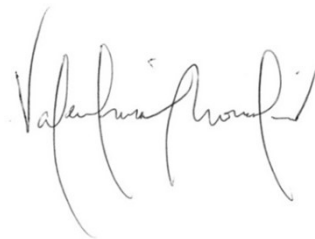
The Board noted that the procurement procedure for the building E works had started significantly later than scheduled in 2020. We see the risk of further delays in the procurement of the building E works. Management should monitor whether the internal human resources and communication processes for the further procurement and the pre-construction, early works and renovation contract processes for the office tower dismantling and the renovation works on building E are sufficient and timely enough to avoid further delays.

Out of the 43 recommendations made in the Board’s previous reports on the SHP, 39 (91 per cent) have been implemented, and 4 were under implementation (9 per cent).

The Board has made 22 recommendations in its current report.

This concludes my introductory statement. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer any questions and provide any information the Committee may require.

Thank you.



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Chairwoman of the Audit Operations Committee