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Seventy-second session main part: Agenda item 136

**Fifth Committee of the General Assembly
11 December 2017**

Second progress report on the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters

Remarks by Mr. Patrick Carey, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Central Support Services, Department of Management

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to introduce to you today the Secretary-General's second Progress Report on the implementation of flexible workplace strategies at United Nations headquarters (A/72/379). This report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/272](#) and provides an update on the status of the project since the first annual progress report ([A/70/708](#)) was issued in January 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the issuance of the last progress report the project has further developed and matured. It is increasingly transforming the Secretariat building into a truly modern work environment. It is doing so in a manner which has created efficiencies in the project implementation itself and also in terms of the Organizations lease portfolio.

Within the project, tailored contracts have been put in place which had reduced the estimated unit costs for project implementation. In addition, as detailed in the report, the additional capacity created by the project in the Secretariat building enabled us, earlier this year, to vacate our lease in the Daily News building. In 2018, subject to approval for the plan before you, we will be able to vacate two further leases, namely, in the UNFCU building in Long Island City and in 300 East 42nd street (generally referred to as the "Innovation Luggage" building). In doing so, by this time next year the project will have delivered a reduction in annual recurrent rental costs of \$16.3 million for the Organization.

The report before you presents a schedule and plan for implementation of flexible workplace on 26 floors in the Secretariat Building which would be completed in 2020. The overall project cost from its' initiation in 2015 through completion in 2020 is estimated at \$54,981,400 and would create additional capacity in the Secretariat Building of 1,154 staff. Through the recurrent savings from vacating the three leases already mentioned, it would achieve a financial breakeven in early 2021.

One of the characteristics of the project to constantly seek feedback from managers and staff on its implementation and to feed these back into the ongoing work. In this regard, the report also provides details of the last survey and observations from staff working in a flexible workplace environment. While the surveys highlighted areas where more efforts are needed, the staff surveyed report a higher level of overall satisfaction with their workplace improvement when compared to the baseline study conducted in 2014 before the project was started.

While this report provides a detailed plan through 2020, we remain cognizant of other reforms including the global services delivery model which have yet to be considered by Member States. We will continue to review the plan in the context of any decisions the General Assembly may take to the extent they impact on accommodation needs at Headquarters. Any impact on the project plan would be presented in a third annual progress report on flexible workplace to the seventy-third session.

In this report, the General Assembly is requested to take note of the project plan and its revised estimated cost; to approve the continuation of the project as well as the three temporary positions for the project team; and to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount of \$25,401,200 in respect of the project costs in 2018-2019 and appropriate the amount of \$6,586,600.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, the flexible workplace project provides the Secretariat with an opportunity not only to modernize the working environment and increase collaboration and team cohesion among staff, but also to achieve substantial recurrent monetary savings to the Organization. Your continued support for the project will ensure that these positive outcomes continue to be delivered.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.