



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY MS. LOURDES PEREIRA STOMAYOR, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF
ECUADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 137: PROPOSED PROGRAMME
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019 ON PROPOSAL FOR REPLACEMENT OF OFFICE
BLOCKS A-J AT THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT NAIROBI AT THE MAIN SESSION OF
THE 72ND SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(NEW YORK, 11 DECEMBER, 2017)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 137: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 in particular on the proposal for the replacement of the office blocks A-J at the United Nations office at Nairobi.
2. The Group of 77 wishes to thank Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, for her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/72/375 and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for his introduction of the report of the Committee contained in document A/72/7/Add.28.
3. The Group attaches great importance to the provision of conducive accommodation facilities and related services to all the United Nations staff, delegations and visitors.
4. The Group is pleased to note that the Secretary-General has developed and presented for the General Assembly's consideration a project proposal on replacement of the office blocks A-J at the United Nations office at Nairobi estimated to cost approximately US\$69.88 million. It is noted that this is one of the most important short-term construction and maintenance projects articulated in the Strategic Capital Review, which stipulates long-term maintenance framework developed by the Secretary-General to ensure a comprehensive assessment of accommodation needs in order to mitigate the risk of huge expenditures resulting from cost escalation in the future.
5. As stipulated in the capital reviews, this project proposal will be instrumental in contributing towards proper management of the organization's property by promoting issues of safety and security as well as general improvements of working conditions. Further, implementation of the project will address issues of compliance with seismic mitigation codes, life-cycle replacements, space utilization as well as efficiency optimization.
6. The Group trusts that the project design will incorporate the possible impacts of the on-going as well as the proposed business transformational initiatives to give a clear picture of the real accommodation needs at UNON. These initiatives include implementation of Umoja, flexible workplace strategies and the global service delivery model. The Group will be interested to learn more through the informal consultations about these initiatives and proposals contained in the Secretary-Generals report.
7. Further, we note the Secretary-General's report has incorporated proposals to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities regarding physical, communication and technical barriers. In addition, included also are sustainability initiatives with focus to increasing efficiency, reduction in energy consumption, reduction in greenhouse gas emission, increased water efficiency, improvement of

air quality and removal of hazardous materials. All these issues will form part of our discussions later in the informal consultations.

8. The Group believes that for the project to be completed in time and within budget as well as to adhere to its scope of work, the role of project governance and oversight arrangements cannot be over-emphasized. This includes ensuring effective management, accountability and transparency measures. In this regard, the Group notes that the report contains specific proposals on establishment of clearly defined coordination with the Office of Central Support Services and team in Nairobi, project management team, steering, stakeholder committee, change management and corporate support as well as consideration to establish an advisory board. Equally important is establishing a collaborative environment to bring onboard pertinent authorities of the host country whose roles facilitate success of the project. It is the responsibility of the Secretary-General to ensure that these mechanisms are effectively facilitated and operationalized.

9. It is the Group's considered opinion that the Secretary-General will continue to reflect on lessons learnt and best practices on matters of project governance in the implementation of this proposed project. We therefore emphasize the need for the organization to use its existing in-house capacity and avoid as much as possible the use of consultancy in this project.

Mr. Chairman

10. The report also contains an assessment of space utilization which the Group believes it is crucial regarding the current and future space requirements for the secretariat agencies and non-secretariat entities either currently accommodated or to be accommodated. We welcome the study undertaken in this respect and urge the Secretary-General to continue incorporating the implementation of the flexible workplace strategies that shall take into account the tailored requirements of the place especially with regard to exploring the possibility of additional office space requirements for those entities that exists tenants and those prospective.

11. The Group recalls that in previous resolutions related to construction, the General Assembly has impressed upon the Secretary-General on the need to use local capacity including local material content in construction projects. It is therefore hoped that during the design and implementation stages of the project all efforts will be made to use locally manufactured or available materials as well as knowledge and technology.

12. The report indicates that determination of the project costs has been based on assessment of three possible options for the replacement of the office blocks A-J. These costs were based on the alternative ways of addressing the identified issues as well as alternatives for sequencing the construction activities. The feasibility study done revealed that based on the second option which would yield highest benefits and which is least expensive, the project would cost US\$69.88million. The initial required funds are US\$604,000 for the necessary preparatory works. The group believes that the Secretary-General will put all the appropriate arrangements for the project to be completed within scope, timelines and budget.

13. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively in the upcoming informal consultations with the aim of concluding this agenda item in a timely manner.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.