

Proposal for the Replacement of Office Blocks A-J at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

Fifth Committee

Introductory statement

By

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**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,**

The progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the project for the replacement of office blocks A-J at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/75/331) highlights the progress achieved following our last report (A/74/343) and its subsequent approval by the General Assembly in resolution 74/339.

The project's objective is to address the significant safety and compliance issues associated with several aging buildings at the UNON Gigiri complex. The project scope continues to comprise three main components:

1. Early Works to repurpose and better utilize the existing Publishing Services building and construction of an Annex;
2. Introducing Flexible Workplace Strategies across all remaining offices on the complex to ensure that UNON can fully utilize existing space;
3. Construction of a new building, to replace the fully depreciated office blocks A-J.

During this reporting period, the project has focused on the early works component and flexible workplace strategies, but has also made progress on the third component, the new building.

The Early Works component has introduced innovative and

sustainable technologies, a key criterion for the project. The new primary data centre reduces emissions through technology that uses fresh filtered air for cooling purposes. The new logistics and operational facility will be net zero, meaning that it will sustainably generate a greater or equal amount of energy on site than is consumed.

The Flexible Workplace schedule has been adjusted to incorporate best practice in terms of the post-coronavirus workplace and to factor in lessons from pilot projects. Although the outcomes from the recent office space survey determine the ‘right-sized’ building to replace blocks A-J, the General Assembly is not being requested to approve the full scope, maximum overall cost and implementation strategy of the project at this time. A unique opportunity for the UNON Gigiri complex resides in the mild year-round temperate climate in Nairobi. Planned indoor/outdoor work integration will promote increased health, well-being, creativity and productivity for staff and visitors.

The new building component will take into consideration the findings from the recent office space survey included in the Secretary-General’s progress report and will feature a ‘modular and scalable’ design.

Beyond the current scope of this project the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have expressed strong interest in moving to the UNON Gigiri complex, potentially representing greater opportunities for the UN to deliver as one in Kenya and the region.

UNON provides common services to the offices and staff of over 70 agencies, funds and programmes and provides operational support to UN entities and activities in over 150 locations globally. The UNON complex hosts global programmes such as UNEP and UN-Habitat, the regional offices of most of the large programmes in Africa, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, UNODC and others, as well as political missions, a peace-support operation, the UN Resident Coordinator, a Country Team and a large number of country and project offices.

Nairobi’s criticality, and reliability, for UN operations has been demonstrated most recently during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. In support of the Secretary General’s global medevac appeal, the UN in Nairobi worked closely with DOS and OLA to establish a public/private partnership with the Government of Kenya

and the Nairobi Hospital to build, equip and staff a medical facility to augment the medical capacity in the host country. The 100-bed medical facility was opened officially last week by His Excellency Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya and will serve as a showcase for the UN in Africa and globally.

We are sincerely grateful for the support and confidence this Committee and Member States have shown in UNON, and I hope that this Committee will provide a favourable recommendation to the General Assembly for the continued investment in UNON through the A-J project and in this regard appropriate an amount of \$7,974,500 for 2021.

I thank you.