21 December 2021

Dear Mr. President,

I write to provide an update on the COVID-19 situation at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

As you may have heard, a decision was made recently to allow New York-based United Nations personnel to work remotely, where functions allow, for the period of 20 December 2021 to 9 January 2022. This decision was made as a precautionary measure based on a surge of positive COVID-19 cases both in New York City and amongst United Nations personnel.

Of even more concern is a trend where United Nations personnel identified as essential workers are testing positive, which may soon impact our ability to support the work of Member States on our premises.

Consequently, after careful consideration and consultations, and in order to ensure intergovernmental meetings can continue to be held in a safe manner, our recommendation would be that you consider reducing the footprint of delegations in the General Assembly Hall by limiting the size to 1 +1, and in the combined Conference Rooms 1-2-3 — to one representative per delegation.

I wish to assure you that we will continue to make every effort to mitigate the risk to delegates and personnel, while ensuring that the work of the Organization is conducted as effectively and safely as possible. To this end, we will continue to monitor the situation and will provide further recommendations as appropriate.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti
Chef de Cabinet

His Excellency
Mr. Abdulla Shahid
President of the General Assembly
New York