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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

25 May 2022

Dear Mr. President,

I write to provide you with a further update regarding COVID-19-related mitigation measures at United Nations Headquarters. As you will recall, effective Monday, 28 March 2022, a full return to pre-pandemic conference servicing with interpretation has been accomplished. Given the improvements in case numbers at the time, and in accordance with local guidance, a decision was taken to make mask use voluntary throughout the premises from Monday, 14 March 2022.

On 16 May 2022, the New York City Commissioner for Health and Mental Hygiene, reporting a rise in new cases and hospitalizations, issued an advisory that all individuals, regardless of vaccination status or past COVID-19 infection, should wear a mask at all times when indoors and when in a public setting, including common or shared spaces where individuals may interact, such as restrooms, hallways, elevators and meeting rooms. On 17 May 2022, the alert level in New York City changed from MEDIUM to HIGH.

Given that since the beginning of the pandemic, the posture at United Nations Headquarters has been informed by the guidance provided by the City, the Secretary-General, on the recommendation of the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health, strongly recommended the use of masks by United Nations personnel in common spaces at United Nations Headquarters, effective immediately. Additionally, in order to protect delegates and staff alike, all meeting participants are encouraged to consider wearing a mask while indoors, including in the General Assembly Hall and in conference rooms. Furthermore, given the large number of in-person meetings, a mandatory mask policy has been instituted in common areas and meeting rooms in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. It would be appreciated if visiting delegations were to abide by this policy.

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

The Organization will continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 metrics in New York City, as well as the impact to capacity and operations, especially by those Departments which service intergovernmental meetings. In the event that the situation worsens, the Secretariat will communicate any additional risk mitigation measures to Member States as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure that the work of the Organization is conducted as safely and effectively as possible.

I wish to assure you of our continued firm commitment to supporting the work of the General Assembly and all intergovernmental meetings taking place at United Nations Headquarters.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Rattray", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

E. Courtenay Rattray
Chef de Cabinet