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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

6 February 2024

Dear Mr. President,

I write further to the letter from the Secretary-General of 25 January 2024 addressed to all Member States regarding the liquidity crisis in the regular budget, and following the informal meeting of the United Nations General Assembly which you convened last week to hear a briefing on its possible impact on the Organization.

As noted at the meeting, in order to avoid a payment default throughout the year, while dealing with the unpredictability of intrayear collections, the Organization is forced to slow down and reduce spending from the regular budget until there is certainty that we have enough cash to meet our obligations each month.

Until the situation improves, the hiring restrictions that were implemented in July 2023 will continue throughout the year; official travel will be limited to the most essential activities; purchases of goods and services will be postponed, unless absolutely critical; the hiring of consultants and experts will be minimized to the extent feasible; most construction and maintenance projects will be suspended, except where the slowing down of major construction projects would result in significant future additional expenses; energy-saving and other measures to reduce utility bills and to curtail expenses on managing facilities will be implemented and non-essential security expenses will also be curtailed. Furthermore, all Secretariat entities must manage their programme of work within a reduced regular budget spending ceiling.

I wish to assure you that the Secretariat will make every effort to mitigate the potential impact on its ability to support Member States and implement its mandates. We will continue to closely monitor the cash situation and the impact on our efforts to deliver our mandates and will adjust our spending restrictions as the situation improves, or worsens.

His Excellency
Mr. Dennis Francis
President of the seventy-eighth session of the
United Nations General Assembly
New York

The attached Annex outlines a consolidated overview of the measures that the Department of Operational Support, Department of Safety and Security, Department of Global Communications and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management will have to take in order to execute their work within the reduced spending ceiling. The list is not exhaustive and highlights those measures that may have a potential impact on the support provided to Member States and their access to the Headquarters premises in New York, as well as to the intergovernmental deliberations of the Organization across all duty stations. The relevant United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi will communicate further on the implementation of any other measures that may have an impact on the support provided to Member States in their respective duty stations.

Irrespective of these measures, which are necessitated by the current financial situation, I wish to assure you of our firm commitment to supporting the work of the General Assembly and all mandated intergovernmental meetings taking place at United Nations Headquarters.

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

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

E. Courtenay Rattray
Chef de Cabinet

Access to United Nations Headquarters Complex

- As of 12 February 2024, the hours of operation for the vehicular gate located at 42nd Street (Post 2) will be changed to 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. (currently open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
- Delegates' Entrance on 46th Street (Post 105) – pedestrian and vehicular – to be closed. Delegates to access through 46th Street entrance (Post 106) or 42nd Street (Post 100). Vehicles to exit through 43rd Street vehicular gate (Post 103) (currently open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.).
- Staff Entrance on 42nd Street (Post 100) to open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Exit will be via the revolving door after 6 p.m. (currently open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.).
- Pass and ID Office to open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily (currently open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

General Building Operations

- Reduction in heating (72 to 70 °F).
- Postponement of all planned works for the bike park at United Nations Headquarters Complex.
- All equipment purchases or replacements will be stopped, with the exception of operationally critical requirements, e.g., ICT equipment, building infrastructure equipment and other necessary supplies.
- All overtime needs required in order to maintain the compound are under review with a potential shift to regular working hours, which could cause disturbances due to construction during regular working hours.
- Reduced delivery of the language classes available to Delegates.

Meetings

- Time slots of 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. for meetings with conference services will be strictly applied (in line with General Assembly resolution 56/242, annex).
- No more than a total of 60 to 65 meetings a week with services can now be provided, of which 10 meetings are of the General Assembly.

- In order to manage within these limitations, no parallel meetings of the same body can be accommodated and servicing of informal consultations or working groups, or meetings of regional or other groups of Member States, will also have to be accommodated within these numbers.
- For non-calendar meetings, use of virtual ICT self-service platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams), and use of intergovernmental rooms without services or an alphabet room only will be available.
- Any intergovernmental decision to implement a new mandate within existing budgetary resources will be subject to the availability of adequate cash resources.

Side Events

- Requests for meetings and events taking place in conference rooms before 10 a.m., after 6 p.m. or on weekends can no longer be accommodated.
- Lunchtime events in conference rooms can be accommodated only if they use automatic self-service sound and no physical, technical or structural changes to the conference room are required.

Special Events (Exhibits, Receptions)

- Special events not part of the intergovernmental process outside of working hours at United Nations Headquarters, such as exhibit installations and openings or functions in the Delegates' Dining Room, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and can only be supported on a full cost-recovery basis.

Interpretation Services

- Interpretation services are only available for calendar meetings held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- All "as required" bodies will be provided with interpretation strictly on an "if available" basis, using unused entitlements or cancellations of programmed calendar meetings.
- All "if available" meetings, including the meetings of regional groups or major groupings, will be considered for interpretation only after "as required" meetings have been accommodated.
- In line with the reduced provision of interpretation, only self-service (e.g., computer projection and microphones/ear-shells only) to non-interpreted closed calendar meetings without remote participation (e.g., "informals" for drafting) will be provided.

Documentation

- Overnight processing will continue to be minimized and the timeline to turn around draft resolutions of the General Assembly will be extended up to 96 hours.
- The verbatim records of the General Assembly and Security Council and other bodies with such entitlements will continue to be processed but may incur longer delays.
- Summary records will be processed as capacity permits throughout the year though a delay in issuance is anticipated.
- Timely and simultaneous issuance of parliamentary documentation in the mandated languages, in compliance with the six-week rule, will be negatively impacted. Notwithstanding, every effort will be made to have documents issued before the respective meeting.
- Agreed word counts will be strictly enforced and no waiver requests will be accommodated.
- The annexes of letters and other communications submitted by Member States for issuance as official documents will be processed as funding and capacity allow.
- Treaties and publications will be processed if funding is available.

Journal of the United Nations

- All inputs to the *Journal of the United Nations* must be received for processing by 4 p.m. Information received after that deadline will be published during the working hours of the Journal Unit on the following working day.

Registration

- Registration of diplomatic mission staff will occur only during normal working hours which may result in delays during peak change times.

Meetings Coverage

- Limited or no coverage of some meetings (applicable to all meetings covered by UNTV and UN Photo): When multiple concurrent meetings are taking place, DGC may not be able to cover all the meetings speaker-by-speaker but with “one-shot” summaries only (one shorter story summarizing a meeting without quoting all the speakers). All six Main Committees of the General Assembly can only be covered by “one-shot” summaries.

- UNTV will operate with reduced core capacity. There will be no cutaways or wide shots, for example, of a General Assembly meeting when a Security Council meeting is being held concurrently. Security Council Stakeouts will not be automatically staffed whenever a Council meeting takes place but through a new, advance booking arrangement only. Weekend Council consultations that go on to unexpected open meetings may not be covered by either UNTV or UN Photo.
- Reduced services to Member States and media on the provision of audiovisual materials and support. Photos and videos may not be captioned, published or distributed to the requesting parties on the same day when there are multiple meetings/events occurring that day.
- Meetings coverage will be in English and French only. There will be no provision of newly-mandated coverage in the other 4 official languages (20 newly-approved positions will not be filled).

United Nations Digital Library and Research Resources

- Reduced access to all users globally to the electronic resources of the United Nations Digital Library.
- United Nations Data Diplomacy platform and United Nations Research Commons project by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL) will be postponed.
- There will be a decrease in subscription-based databases and resources which will affect Delegates, resulting in reduced access to 49 main service providers (for example, Wiley and *Jeune Afrique*).
- Services in the DHL Library offered to Delegates will be reduced, including assisting in access to resources and research support.
- DHL Research Guides and UN FAQs online, with a record of 2.5 million views per year, will not be available in all 6 official languages.

6 February 2024