



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
BY MS. SONDR CHEONG, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
ON AGENDA ITEM 141: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2021:  
CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT IN RELATION TO THE  
PROGRESS ON THE REPLACEMENT OF OFFICE BLOCKS A -J AT THE UNITED  
NATIONS OFFICE AT NAIROBI (UNON) AT THE MAIN PART OF THE FIFTH  
COMMITTEE DURING THE SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Group would like to thank Mr. Chandru Ramanathan, Controller, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, and Mr. Abdalla Bachar Bong, Chair of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing their respective reports.

From the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to express its gratitude to the Government of Kenya as the host country of UNON for its continued support to the work of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the only UN headquarters in the global south. In addition, the Group acknowledges the Government of Kenya for its substantial infrastructural investments made over the years around the wider Nairobi area where UNON is located. In addition, the host country agreement continues to provide for privileges and immunities, including duty exemptions on entering contracts, construction materials, and equipment, which will lead to significant cost savings for the project.

The Group recognizes the progress in the replacement of office blocks A–J at the United Nations Office at Nairobi presented in the current report which is the third

progress report since the inception of the project. The implementation status reveals that there has been a slippage in progress on the early works design and tender phases which are attributed largely to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, similar delays have affected the other project components. This has resulted in an overall delay estimated at six months for the entire project. The Group is concerned that the project may not be implemented within the set timelines, subsequently delaying the expected benefits accruing from a modern office that addresses the most pertinent and pressing concerns for which the project was conceptualized namely; the significant health, safety, and code compliance issues associated with the existing office blocks A-J. The Group requests the Secretary-General to closely monitor and mitigate project risks, apr.006 T.1

o f f e

technologies with a focus on reducing energy consumption, reduction of emissions, increased wastewater management, and improvement of air quality. All these issues will form part of our discussions during informal consultations.

Mr. Chair,

8. On the introduction of the flexible workplace strategies, the group has taken note of the proposal by the Secretary-General to introduce the work “pods” concept. The Group reiterates that a flexible workplace should never simply be a matter of space management, but a holistic arrangement of physical space, information communication technology and human resources, with the overall goal of supporting mandate implementation. The successful implementation of the flexible workplace requires not only reconfiguration of workspace but enhanced information technology support and other critical considerations. The Group of G77 and China will be seeking further details on this concept during the informal consultations.
9. The Group believes that close collaboration and coordination with the relevant stakeholders is crucial to the success of the project. The Group welcomes the efforts made in sharing lessons learned and best practices with other United Nations duty stations especially regarding the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic including collaboration with the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Facility in Valencia, regarding the adoption of energy-efficient free cooling technologies for the new primary data centre.
10. The Group also acknowledges with appreciation the coordination and oversight provided by the Global Asset Management Policy Service in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance in the project implementation.

Mr. Chair,

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 knowledge and capacity in construction projects. The Secretary General has reported that priority has been given to resources available or manufactured locally and where local materials are not an option, products will be imported. The Group continues to emphasize that all efforts should be made to use of locally

manufactured or available materials as well as local knowledge, skills and technology.

12. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively in the upcoming informal consultations to conclude this agenda item in a timely fashion.
13. I thank you Mr. Chair