

Statement on behalf of Kenya by H.E Ambassador Koki Muli Grignon, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations on agenda item 137: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019: Proposal for the replacement of office blocks A-J at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

(New York, 11th December 2017)

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you Chairman for this opportunity to make our intervention. I would also, like to thank the representatives of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Budget and Administrative Questions for their respective reports.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

It is worth noting that, Kenya has been committed to the objectives of the United Nations since December 1963, when it joined the organization a few days after independence. Kenya is fully committed as a host country, and has demonstrated this commitment not just by hosting of the Nairobi based United Nations Headquarters for Environment and Human Settlements; but by allocating, free of charge, a very large piece of land on which UNON stands and continues its committed contribution in the activities of the organization.

My delegation welcomes the efforts by the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, for the funding of activities at UNON and in particular appreciates the 2009 Decision by the General Assembly to have the financial resources of UNON to be brought to a level similar to those of the other UN Headquarters, a decision which has been reflected in the subsequent budget proposals. These resources relate funding of operations and associated administrative expenses.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya believes that, to ensure suitable working environment for the United Nations staff, the availability of appropriate office accommodation with requisite facilities is imperative. In this regard, it is noted with satisfaction that, to address the accommodation needs within the organization the Secretary-General in the recent past developed the Strategic Capital Revenue which is a 20-year long-term maintenance framework of the buildings owned or leased by the United Nations starting from 2018 until 2037.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya welcomes with appreciation the Secretary-General's proposal to replace office blocks A-J at UNON at a cost of \$69.9 million within a period of seven years with an initial requirement of \$604,000 in 2018 to cover the necessary preparatory work. According to the Secretary-General's report, the UN owned buildings and related infrastructural assets in Nairobi were constructed at various times between 1975 and 2010. The useful lifetime for the oldest, which had been constructed as temporary swing space is almost over. We are happy that this is the building proposed for replacement. Due to the age of the buildings, some have become so dilapidated and no longer comply with the health and safety requirements, everywhere, local, international or United Nations own standards. The proposed replacement of the prefabricated of blocks A-J is therefore considered very useful in making the buildings comply with the necessary buildings codes, accommodate additional staff members and bring efficiency through adoption of sustainable strategies.

We believe that the Secretary-General will continuously assess the conditions of buildings and infrastructural facilities at all locations including at UNON and schedule those which require attention and action as appropriate. We also hope that Nairobi's capacities will be enhanced to bring it at par with other headquarters facilities.

Mr. Chairman,

This construction proposal by the Secretary-General has been made possible through the \$500,000 feasibility study which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2015 and fully funded by the member states. Accordingly, we thank the member states for their support in this regard.

We believe that successful execution of this project will require the United Nations to put in place an effective governance and oversight mechanism in accordance with previous General Assembly resolutions on construction. This is critical to ensure that the project is completed within the proposed timelines and within budget and, that, the project will be of good or superior quality.

Further, to adapt United Nations buildings to local conditions and to minimize the construction related costs, the General Assembly decided that local knowledge, technology and capacity, be used to the extent possible in all construction works. In this regard, it is our understanding and conviction that the United Nations will take advantage of the quality building materials available in Kenya.

Mr. Chairman,

The Kenya delegation wishes to inform that the Government of the Republic of Kenya is committed, in line with the host country agreement, to collaborate with the United Nations in the implementation of this proposed construction as appropriate. The assistance by the Kenya Government will be among other things through facilitating access and movement of materials and relevant persons, tax exemptions and customs clearance, applicable diplomatic privileges and immunities and provision of relevant services and facilities.

In conclusion, the Kenya delegation supports the recommendations of the ACABQ and trust that the General Assembly will approve the scope of project as proposed with the requested staff and resources.

I thank you for your kind attention.