



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations

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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

**AGENDA ITEM 137:
"PATTERN OF CONFERENCES"**

DURING THE

**66TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during this session at the Fifth Committee, allow me to congratulate you most sincerely on your appointment as Chairman of the Fifth Committee for the 66th Session. I also congratulate the other members of the bureau on their appointment. We have every confidence that with your wisdom, vast knowledge and experience in the work of the UN and particularly the Fifth Committee, you will be able to successfully steer our work to a successful outcome during the entire session. I assure you of my delegation's support.

My delegation thanks Mr. Shaaban Muhammad Shaaban, Under Secretary-General for the General Assembly and Conference Management for introducing the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/66/118. We would also like to thank Mr. Collen V. Kelapile, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing the report of the committee contained in Document A/66/397. Further, we thank Ms. Woinshet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, Chairperson of the Committee on Conferences, for introducing the report of the Committee contained in document A/66/32.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and that delivered by the distinguished representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group, on agenda item 137: Pattern of Conferences.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya attaches great importance to the work of the Committee of Conferences in facilitating the intergovernmental process in the United Nations. We highly value the recommendations of the Committee and believe it will give impetus to our deliberations in this session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to briefly outline a number of issues that are of particular interest to my delegation. The issue of ensuring that UNON is at par with the other three duty stations, in terms of resource allocation and staffing levels is a matter of interest to my delegation. We therefore believe that it is high time that the perennial problem of high vacancy rates is resolved. The Division of Conferences in Nairobi should therefore continue to consider all possibilities to fill current and future vacancies at UNON.

In this regard, my delegation notes with appreciation the programme initiated by UNON to provide on-the-job training for young translators and interpreters who have yet to pass the United Nations Exam. We welcome the African project which aims at enhancing training programmes of potential professional interpreters and translators in African. Members will recall that in February 2009, UNON organized a Conference of stakeholders, whose key output was the development of a Masters Degree Programme for potential professional Interpreters and Translators in the African Continent. My delegation is keen to learn the progress that has been achieved to date in implementing the recommendations of the Conference.

My delegation is convinced that developing partnerships with Universities would provide a solution in the long-term on the issue of high vacancy rates in the language services at the UN and particularly, in Nairobi which has faced an acute problem over the years. At the 65th Session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General was asked to enter into memoranda of understanding with the Universities participating in the African Project or any that wished to join. We would appreciate an update on this.

My delegation is happy to note that pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/245, the Secretary-General has proposed the upgrading of 11 language posts at UNON from P-4 to P-5. This upgrade when effected will enhance monitoring and effective quality control, and most importantly ensure parity for staff performing similar roles or functions across the UN duty stations.

Mr. Chairman,

We are still concerned that the utilization rate of conference facilities at ECA is still below the 80 per cent established threshold. The General Assembly has previously called on the Secretary-General to consider innovate ways to increase the utilization rate. We strongly urge that the necessary steps are taken to address this problem.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, my delegation looks forward to working closely with other delegations to achieve a successful outcome on this agenda item.

Thank you.