

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement by Mr. Abbas Yazdani (Islamic Republic of Iran),
Vice-Chair, Committee on Conferences, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Lewis
Brown (Liberia), at the Seventy-second session of the General Assembly**

6 November 2017, Conference Room 3

Agenda item: Pattern of conferences

Mr. Chairman, distinguished colleagues,

It is my privilege to introduce the Report of the Committee on Conferences for 2017 in my capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee, on behalf of the Chairman, Ambassador Lewis Brown of Liberia, who could not attend the meeting today. The CoC report, as contained in document A/72/32, covers the work of the Committee in 2017 and was adopted at its substantive session held from 5 to 11 September 2017.

The report, together with a draft resolution in Annex I and the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2018 and 2019 in Annex II, are being transmitted through the Fifth Committee and recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

During its substantive session of 2017, the Committee on Conferences considered the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/72/116) together with the statistical data presented as supplementary information. The CoC report effectively reflects the discussions on all the items in its annotated agenda (A/AC.172/2017/1). The CoC's substantive session afforded Member States an opportunity to engage actively with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) on all matters related to meetings and documentation services and to seek additional information and clarification, as necessary, in order to provide direction, guidance and support to the Secretariat in carrying out the mandates entrusted to it by Member States.

Allow me to highlight some of those issues.

On organizational matters, you will note that two seats remain vacant, one to be filled from among the Asia-Pacific States and the other to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean

States. Both its organisational and substantive sessions were attended by Member States that were interested in the work of the Committee as Observers. In total, 14 Member States participated as Observers in the work of the CoC in 2017.

On matters related to the calendar of conferences and meetings, the Committee reviewed the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2018 and 2019, and recommended it for adoption by the General Assembly. In addition, the Committee made recommendation to the General Assembly to approve six meetings bodies to meet exceptionally during its main part of the 72nd session. The Committee also approved intersessional departures requested for 2017 and 2018.

On meetings management, the Committee reviewed the statistical data on the utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities at the four duty stations and at the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

During the substantive session, the Chair of the CoC presented an oral report on the implementation of the mandate to consult those

bodies that have consistently utilized less than the applicable benchmark of their allocated resources for the past six years, from 2011 to 2016, with a view to monitoring and reporting on the utilization statistics for a three-biennium period and to make appropriate recommendations on achieving the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources.

In this regard, letters were sent in June 2017 to the presiding officers of each of the fourteen calendar bodies that have consistently utilized less than 80 per cent of their allocated meeting services for each of the past six years, drawing their attention to the underutilization of resources. Furthermore, consultations at the working level were held in the first half of this year with the representatives of eight New York-based bodies on ways to improve their utilization factor.

By providing guidance and encouragement, and by suggesting methods for improvement, the list of meeting bodies which underutilize conference-servicing resources in the future can hopefully be significantly reduced.

Mr. Chairman,

On documents management, the Committee suggested the General Assembly to urge^s author departments to fully adhere to deadlines for document submission

The Committee discussed the simultaneous distribution of documents, and received clarification from the Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman,

On staffing, the Committee suggests the General Assembly to note the updates provided by the Secretary-General on the pilot project related to the outposting to Vienna of translators from the French Translation Service in New York, and requests the Secretary-General to provide further updates on this matter.

Mr. Chairman,

On the improvement of facilities and accessibility, the Committee suggests the General Assembly to welcome^s the measures taken to

ensure access to and use of conference services and conference facilities for persons with disabilities, including the establishment of the Accessibility Centre, and to request the Secretary-General to continue to address issues related to the accessibility of conference facilities as a matter of priority.

The use of UN premises was also discussed.

On measuring the quality of conference services, the Committee sought inputs from the Secretariat on the actions taken to improve the response rate.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Bureau and the members of the CoC, as well as the observers, for participating actively and constructively during the CoC's substantive session, which enabled the Committee to have meaningful and productive discussions, in an open and friendly manner. I would also like to express our gratitude to Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, Mr. Movses Abelian, Assistant Secretary-General, the Secretariat of the CoC and all the staff of DGACM, including the conference management staff at other duty stations, for providing substantive and

technical support to the Committee throughout the year, and especially during its substantive session.

I hope and believe that we can continue to work in the same spirit during the Fifth Committee's consideration of the item on the pattern of conferences.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.