

12 March 2019

**Agenda Item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Report of the Secretary-General on  
Standards of accommodation for air travel (A/73/705)**

**Mr. Patrick Carey, Director  
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Department of Operational Support**

Madame Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel (A/73/705). The present report provides information on standards of accommodation for air travel for the two-year period ended 30 June 2018 and comparative statistics for the two-year period ended 30 June 2016 as well as trend analyses for the past ten years.

In its resolution 72/262 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on standards of accommodation for air travel at the first part of its resumed seventy-third session and requested the Secretary-General to continue to limit the use of exceptions, to strengthen internal controls in this regard, and to report thereon in his next report. As requested by the Assembly, the Administration has continued to limit the use of exceptions to the standards of accommodation for air travel and the overall number of requests decreased from 1,293 for the July 2014 – June 2016 period to 1,204 for the July 2016 – June 2018 period. Detailed analyses and explanations of the movements in

the number of the exceptions and the related additional costs for the different categories are provided in sections II, III and IV.

Section V of this report presents Secretariat-wide travel statistics for the two-year period ending June 2018 which is based on data extracted from the Umoja travel module using business intelligence reporting and reflecting the travel types/categories as defined in Umoja.

The General Assembly also requested in its resolution 72/262 B that the Secretary-General:

- continue to monitor industry best practises in the area of frequent flyer miles and report to the General Assembly any new trends for making use of frequent flyer miles to improve the administration of travel;
- and present the results of the comprehensive analysis by the Secretary-General of the implementation of the home leave lump-sum payments option, including collection and analysis of Umoja travel information, as well as the rate of acceptance of the lump-sum option by staff. The Secretary-General has reported on these matters in sections VI to VII of the present report.

The General Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to include, in his report an analysis and recommendations concerning a single threshold for the use of business class by staff below the level of Assistant Secretary-General (and eligible family members) that should, in most years, be expected to maximize the use of limited travel budgets.

In response to the Assembly's request, an enhanced analysis and more detailed recommendation concerning a single threshold is presented in section VIII

of the present report. In this regard, the Secretary-General proposes to further simplify and improve the existing Secretariat travel policy by implementing a single-threshold, total travel time model for the use of business class. Based on the Secretariat's historical travel pattern over the past two years, the detailed data analysis demonstrates that the overall impact (measured by several factors including estimated costs) of a single threshold model set at 10 hrs, is essentially cost neutral, while still achieving significant process efficiencies and simplifications.

If adopted, this change would enable the Secretariat to further streamline the travel administration process, thus paving the way for the Organization to more fully utilize the enabling nature of technology and benefit from its related efficiencies. A great deal of analysis and data modelling has been produced to support this proposal.

Madame Chair, the Secretariat is ready to respond to any questions from the Distinguished Delegates during the informal consultations.

Thank you, Madame Chair.