

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. KATLEGO
MMALANE, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF BOTSWANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 135: UNON CONFERENCE
FACILITIES, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE, MAIN PART OF THE 74th
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

13 DECEMBER 2019

Mr. Chair

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 135: Proposed Programme budget for 2020; **addressing the deteriorating conditions and limited capacity of the conference services facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.**
2. The Group wishes to thank (.....), for introducing the report of the Secretary-General. We also thank Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing its related report.
3. At the outset, the African Group aligns itself with the Statement just delivered by The State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chair

4. The Group welcomes the Secretary General's report on the preliminary findings of the review of the deteriorating conditions and limited capacity of the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. This report, which has been submitted pursuant to paragraph 29 of General Assembly resolution 73/270 on the Pattern of Conferences, has been long overdue. The report has revealed the sad state in which the UNON conferences facilities are - and the statistics are there for all of us to see.
5. It has been our desire as member states to have the UNON conferences facilities upgraded to not only address the immediate risks, but to bring the Nairobi duty station up to par with New York, Geneva and Vienna as a centre for multilateralism. In addition, the upgrade would bring the

conference facilities into full compliance with prevailing building and life safety codes and provide a modern and multipurpose conferencing.

Mr. Chair

6. Member States made a decision that the two UN entities headquartered in Nairobi namely; the UN-Habitat and UNEP, should have universal membership, and have adopted several resolutions requesting the United Nations to ensure conformity with the headquarters rule, under which all meetings of the Nairobi-based United Nations bodies be held in Nairobi. The growing participation in the events of these two organizations is essentially a sign of the growing importance of environmental and urban-related multilateralism.
7. From the analysis and projections provided by the Secretary General in the current report, it is evidently clear that this upward trajectory is likely to continue, if not accelerate, in the foreseeable future. In this regard, there is need to anticipate the future requirements of the holistic needs of current entities with headquarters, in Nairobi.
8. The Group is deeply concerned to note that the conference management and simultaneous interpretation system currently installed at the conference centre has been in place since 2009 and has been experiencing failures thus affecting the servicing of large meetings. This calls for urgent investments in state-of-the-art technology and conferencing systems in order to bring the facility up to acceptable international standards and best practice.
9. The group looks forward to receiving a detailed needs assessment and an expanded analysis of the options for the consideration of the General Assembly.
10. In conclusion, the Africa Group would like to assure you of our continued commitment to work and to engage constructively with all delegations on this item in order to reach a positive outcome.

Thank you