



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

by

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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank Mr. Pedro Guazo, Director, Finance Division, Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget, DMSPC, and Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports.

Mr. Chairman,

The Member States of the European Union have always recognised the importance of refurbishing the Palais des Nations to ensure that structural deficiencies are addressed and necessary renovations can take place.

The Member States of the European Union would like to thank the Government of Switzerland for the continued material and financial support provided to the project.

The Strategic Heritage Plan has now reached the midpoint of its planned duration. A significant amount of work has been accomplished in recent years, and we commend the Secretariat for that. In this regard, let me emphasize the efforts to enhance accessibility. We would also like to stress the importance of flexible workplace strategies to accommodate more United Nations entities at the Palais premises, and we continue to support the overall efforts to promote sustainability and reduction of energy consumption.

Mr. Chairman,

The refurbishment of the UNOG headquarters is a unique opportunity to make all the buildings of the Palais des Nations campus fit for the future. We therefore look forward to discussing in greater detail the concrete steps taken by the Secretariat, while taking into account the comments of the ACABQ, on the next phases of the project.

We are concerned by delays that would extend completion of the project into 2024, the considerable increase of costs as well as the steady decrease of the contingency fund. According to the most recent risk model, completing the Strategic Heritage Plan is now more likely to exceed the approved budget. In this context, we will pay particular attention to the funding of the SHP with a view to securing its needs. To mitigate cost slippage and reduce the risk on the Member States assessment, we will investigate possible alternative funding mechanisms; we will look for increased rental income from other UN entities to be hosted on the renovated buildings; and we will closely look at the efforts undertaken with regard to the valorisation exercise.

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

In order to ensure that the project proceeds on target, on time and on budget, a good governance structure continues to be crucial. The project requires strong internal oversight and independent external control mechanisms to prevent delay and possible cost escalation. We trust that the recommendations of the BoA will be implemented fully and expeditiously and we urge the Secretary-General to put all necessary measures in place to mitigate those increases and reduce all further risks and vulnerabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

Rest assured that the Member States of the European Union are mobilized for the success of the Strategic Heritage Plan and are looking forward to discussing these issues further with all other Member States as well as the Secretariat in the upcoming informal consultations.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.