

**Statement by Ms. Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General  
for Human Resources, to the Resumed 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Fifth Committee**

**Agenda item 141 Programme budget for 2021  
Standards of accommodation for air travel (A/75/654/Rev.1)**

**11 March 2021**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates of the Fifth Committee,

I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel (A/75/654/Rev.1) which was prepared in accordance with previous General Assembly resolutions. As requested by the General Assembly in decision 57/589, the report is submitted on a biennial basis.

The report provides information on standards of accommodation for air travel for the two-year period from July 2018 to June 2020.

As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary General has continued to limit the use of exceptions to the standards of accommodation for air travel. Detailed analysis is provided in section IV of the present report.

Section V of the report presents Secretariat-wide travel-related statistics and information for the two-year period July 2018 to June 2020.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/262 B and previous resolutions, section VI of this report contains information about the monitoring of industry best practices in the area of frequent flyer miles and any new trends.

In sections VII and VIII, the Secretary-General makes two proposals to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of travel management in the Secretariat.

The first proposal relates to the home leave lump-sum option. In its resolution 67/254 A, the General Assembly decided that as an interim measure, the lump-sum for home leave

shall be 70% instead of 75% of the least restrictive economy class fare and eliminated granting travel days when the lump-sum option is chosen. In its resolution 72/262 B, the General Assembly re-introduced travel days for the lump-sum option but kept 70% for determination of the lump-sum payment. To incentivize the use of the home leave lump-sum option, the Secretary-General proposes discontinuing the remaining part of the interim measure (i.e. determining the lump-sum payment at 70 percent of the least restrictive economy ticket) and reverting to the normal 75 per cent for the lump-sum option.

The second set of proposals relates to the establishment of a single threshold for the use of business class by staff members at the D-2 level and below and their eligible family members. The proposal will apply to air travel for official business, appointment, change of duty station and separation. The proposal does not affect air travel standards for members of organs and subsidiary organs of the General Assembly whose travel will continue to be in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions as reflected in ST/SGB/107/Rev.6.

The Secretary-General proposes to establish that the standard of accommodation for air travel will be business class if the total flight time is over 9.5 hours. The use of total flight time for determination of business class travel is the best practice in most public and private organizations. The proposed single threshold would replace the existing dual threshold for business class travel, which has resulted in complexities for staff and travel processing offices

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates of the Fifth Committee,

The Secretariat stands ready to constructively support the Committee in its deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel.

Thank you.