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**Agenda item 137
Programme budget 2022**

**Final report on the implementation of a
flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters**

(A/76/669)

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan
Assistant Secretary-General, Controller
17 March 2022

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

1. I would like to introduce to you today the Secretary-General's sixth progress and final report on the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters. This report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/253 C. The report provides an update on the close-out activities of the project, a summary of what was achieved, and lessons learned to take into consideration in potential similar projects. I am pleased to inform the committee that all close-out activities have been completed, with the exception of the post-occupancy surveys for the floors converted in 2019 and 2020.

2. The flexible workplace project has created an updated and modern working environment for over 3 100 staff at the United Nations Headquarters. The changes in work practice necessitated by the shift to unassigned seating in flexible workplace spaces contributed to the transition to remote working and by extension, to the continued implementation of mandates, during the pandemic. The project has also provided, and will continue to provide, added flexibility for the Organization to absorb and adapt to organizational changes and evolving workplace requirements.

3. In terms of space efficiency, flexible workplace increased the Secretariat's building capacity by approximately 1,290. This enabled the Organization to end leases valued at \$18.8 million annually (at the time they were vacated) resulting in significant ongoing savings. As such, when comparing the final project cost with the cost avoidance from vacating leased space, the breakeven point was reached in 2021.

4. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleagues and I will be pleased to address any questions from the Committee.