



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
BY AMBASSADOR BOUBACAR DIALLO, G-77 COORDINATOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 138:  
PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2022: EIGHTH ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE  
STRATEGIC HERITAGE PLAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA,  
AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY- SIXTH SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(New York, 2 December 2021)**

**Mr. Chair,**

1. I have the honour to submit this written statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 138: Programme Budget for 2022: Eighth annual progress report on the Strategic Heritage Plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva.
2. The Group would like to thank Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, for introducing the eighth progress report of the Secretary-General as contained in the document A/76/350. We also thank Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for presenting the Advisory Committee's related report.
3. The Group welcomes the eighth annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the Strategic Heritage Plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva contained in document referenced A/76/350.
4. The Group also welcomes the voluntary financial contributions by the Government of China, as well as other countries to the project. We encourage the Secretary-General to strengthen his efforts in soliciting contributions from other member states towards other packages of work within the scope of the Strategic Heritage Plan, including those that will effectively be applied to reduce Member States' assessed contributions to the strategic heritage plan project.
5. The Group notes that several progress has been made in the key project activities, including the completion of the new permanent building H, the completion of the temporary conference building, the completion of the pre-construction phase for the renovation of the main 1930s and 1950s historic buildings, and the launch of the request for proposal tender for the renovation of the 1970s building E.
7. The Group notes that there are 32 recommendations of the Board of Auditors, which are with a target date of end 2021, were considered implemented by the Administration but the Board of Auditors had yet to confirm implementation. The Group reiterates that all pertinent and approved recommendations of the Board of Auditors must be implemented expeditiously to help business transformation.
8. The Group notes with deep concern on the successive delays in the overall implementation of the project, which is more likely to extend the final completion date into early 2026. We also express our great concern that the confidence level of completing the strategic heritage plan within the approved budget as projected in the most recent risk model is only 16%. Though the Group notes with appreciation the continuous efforts of the Secretary-General in conducting value engineering and optimizations to meet the approved project scope objectives at a lower cost, we are again significantly concerned that the probability of achieving the full baseline scope within the approved budget is still under significant challenges.
9. The Group reemphasizes that close monitoring, rigorous project management, effective internal control and comprehensive risk mitigation measures are key to ensuring the progress and completion of the project within the approved scope, timeline and budget. In this regard, we request the Secretary-General, the project owner

and the Steering Committee to shoulder special responsibilities in guiding and overseeing the management of the implementation of the project, facilitating decision-making and the prompt resolution of issues and ensuring the project's progress with the aim of not exceeding the approved scope, budget and timetable.

10. The Group is looking forward to learn about the measures of value engineering to meet the approved project scope objectives at a lower cost. However, such measures should not be at the expense of the quality, both technical and esthetic.

11. With regards to the procurement in the future, the Group is confident that the Office at Geneva will incorporate lessons learned and implement from the outset, contracting strategies that are balanced in an appropriate way, so as to enable potentially qualified contractors to participate in the tendering process and submit competitive bids, while not taking on excessive risk to the United Nations, as recommended by the Board of Auditors. Moreover, the Group trusts that all possible means will be used to ensure that contractors from the developing world participate fully and equitably in all procurement activities related to this important project.

12. The Group recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 75/253, decided to revert to the questions on the establishment of an assessment scheme and the currency of appropriation and assessment for the strategic heritage plan at the main part of its seventy-sixth session. The General Assembly also reserved its review on the annual repayments of the loans. The Group reiterates its support to the Secretary-General's recommendation that the scheme of appropriation for the project be a one-time upfront appropriation, with a mix of onetime and multi-year assessments. It is high time that the General Assembly took a decision on this long-standing issue, especially considering the size and complexity of the project.

13. On the issue of the valorization strategy, though the Group appreciates the merits of this strategy, we recall that the ACABQ advised to separate valorization income from the SHP as valorization was not related to the nature of a construction project. The General Assembly has consequently decided several times in its resolutions to have all valorization income reflected under income section 2 of the programme budget. The Group notes that future reporting on valorization of UN land in Geneva will be captured under the aforementioned income section.

14. Last but not least, the Group of 77 and China reiterate the need to preserve the historical and cultural value of the building during renovation. The Group also notes the project's objective to lower energy consumption of the Palais de Nations by at least 25% as compared to the 2010 baseline. We look forward to have an update on the environmental impact and cost saving in this regard.

15. The Group stands ready to engage constructively during the informal deliberations on this agenda item.

I thank you. Mr. Chair.