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Proposed programme budget for 2021

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

Fourteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for 2021

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the fifth annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters ([A/75/342](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met online with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 13 November 2020.
2. The report of the Secretary-General is submitted pursuant to section IX of General Assembly resolution [74/263](#) and provides an update on the status of the project since the fourth annual progress report ([A/74/345](#)).

II. Safety and health considerations in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

3. In paragraph 26 of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, based on the information available on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), general infection patterns and public behaviour, the Administration has concluded that, from an occupational safety and health perspective, it is safe to use flexible workspaces, cubicles and enclosed offices. According to the report, the conditions for safe operation are physical distancing, reduced maximum space occupancy, adjustments to ventilation, and the adoption of safe and hygienic behaviours. He further indicates that all measures related to a safe return to Headquarters have been applied consistently to flexible and traditional workplaces. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that “safe to use” referred to the workplace requirement to provide reasonable safety to personnel, and was provided with additional information



on the measures implemented for a safe return to Headquarters, including the following:

(a) With respect to reduced occupancy and physical distancing, the maximum building occupancy was currently set to ensure a maximum density of one person per 4 m². The current floor occupancy in the office area averaged between 30 and 40 per cent of the original capacity. Between 50 and 60 per cent of the desks on floors for which the flexible workplace project had been completed had been blocked off and all workspaces were at least 2 m apart and did not directly face each other;

(b) All planned adjustments to the ventilation systems had been made, including the following: (i) the volume of outside air had been maximized, while maintaining acceptable indoor air temperature and humidity; (ii) all building spaces were being flushed with 100 per cent outside air overnight for one hour and, if the outside temperature allowed, for 30 minutes during the day; (iii) the air handler fan speed had been increased; (iv) a regular filter changing schedule was maintained and the air quality was tested proactively; and (v) all filters in the HVAC systems in both owned and leased Headquarters premises had been upgraded to the maximum extent possible, and met or exceeded New York State recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as local industry and New York City Department of Buildings standards. The Secretariat estimated that 70 per cent of virus-size particles that reached the air handlers would be trapped in the filters and would then travel from 1 to 10 floors through a supply duct before being reintroduced into the office space. It considered that, owing to the long vertical distances that water droplets would need to travel, the high level of efficiency in filtering small particles, and the diluting effects of outside air and the supply air distribution, the risk of the virus spreading through the HVAC system was very low;

(c) Other measures included the placement of signage to regulate the flow of traffic and the implementation of a strict clean desk policy. Furthermore, in addition to professional cleaning, personnel were responsible for sanitizing their own workspaces.

4. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, compared with enclosed office spaces or cubicles, a flexible workplace provided greater versatility to accommodate changes in occupancy ratios in the context of social distancing measures and was easier to clean. Enclosed offices would be safer than cubicles or an open space, only where equipped with a separate ventilation system. At Headquarters, the conversion to enclosed offices with separate ventilation would be impractical and uneconomical.

5. The Advisory Committee acknowledges the measures implemented to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 within United Nations Headquarters premises and stresses that the health and safety of staff, delegates and other persons in the workplace must be given the utmost priority. The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will continue to monitor closely and apply, as appropriate, relevant regulations, recommendations, standards and best practices, while ensuring business continuity. Given the paramount importance of ensuring a safe workplace in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request that the Secretary-General arrange as soon as possible an independent technical evaluation to assess that the Headquarters premises are safe to use and recommend any adjustments. The Committee also recommends that the Assembly request that the Secretary-General provide detailed information on all measures implemented to ensure the safe use of the premises during the pandemic and their costs in the context of the next regular budget submission.

III. Status, schedule and scope of the project

Status

6. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, as at August 2020, 21 out of the 27 planned floors of the Secretariat building had been reconfigured to a flexible workplace, accommodating a total of approximately 2,300 staff, which has resulted in an additional capacity of 1,234, exceeding the original estimate of 1,200 for all planned floors (A/75/342, summary). In annex I to his report, the Secretary-General shows the number of floors completed, including their designed capacity, number of posts assigned and actual occupancy, as well as the capacity of flexible workplace floors before and after the implementation of the project. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the reconfiguration of one additional floor, floor 35, had been completed since the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General.

7. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the remaining floors were at the user engagement phase, a consultative process whereby generic floor plans were adjusted to meet specific requirements of the floor occupants. User engagement was at the preliminary stage for floor 36, occupied by the Office of Legal Affairs. For other floors, its completion had been deferred by the relevant departments and offices, including the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, until more information and clarity on the impact of COVID-19 on the flexible workplace became available. The Committee was informed that no design modifications specific to COVID-19 were currently envisaged for the remaining floors. However, the Secretariat considered that the COVID-19 experience might alter the office space requirements of the departments and offices that would occupy the remaining floors and their final design. For instance, if telecommuting were to become more prevalent in the post-COVID-19 workplace, the building could accommodate an even higher occupancy than originally envisaged.

8. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, in addition to the general benefits that the flexible workplace was intended to provide, specific benefits resulting from the completion of the project included: (a) making available additional floors in leased spaces (i.e., one floor in the FF Building, one floor in the DC-2 building, part of a floor in the Albano building); (b) enabling further consolidation on the same floor of staff working in the same department; (c) sufficient space for the creation of a new legal library; and (d) a significant reduction in demand for temporary office space to support special mandates.

Schedule

9. The General Assembly, in its resolution 74/263, requested the Secretary-General to ensure completion of the flexible workspace project in the third quarter of 2020 (section IX, para. 9). In his report, however, the Secretary-General indicates that the project has been delayed owing to the liquidity situation and COVID-19. The schedule started to slip in 2019, when implementation of the project on floor 35 was postponed to the first quarter of 2020, owing to the liquidity constraints. Subsequently, construction works to complete floors 26 and 35 were placed on hold from 20 March to 6 July, owing to COVID-19 restrictions (A/75/342, paras. 16–17). Taking into account the evolving pandemic, the reopening plan and the uncertainties about the workplace landscape after COVID-19, the Secretariat decided to complete floors where construction had already started and put on hold the implementation of the remaining floors until the situation was sufficiently clear to reassess the project scope, if warranted (ibid., para. 18).

10. In view of the above, the schedule for conversion of the remaining floors was reconsidered and project completion date was extended to the end of 2021 (ibid., summary and figure 1). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Secretariat expected four floors to be completed by the end of 2021, and the remaining floor to be substantially completed with all required funds fully obligated. The finalization of the last floor could be managed by the Facilities and Commercial Activities Service with no additional cost to the flexible workplace budget (see also para. 11 below).

Scope

11. In paragraph 24 of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, owing to the extended timeline, the Secretariat is re-evaluating the scope of the project and considering options for cost reduction in order to maintain the cost of the project against potential contract escalation and additional project management costs. Options for reduction include the following:

(a) Maintaining the original scope of the project (27 floors) and performing a value-engineering review on the remaining floors. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that this could include: (i) reducing the number of enclosed spaces (e.g., offices, meeting rooms), which would, in turn, lower the cost of HVAC modifications; and (ii) reducing the number of desks and adjusting the seating ratios to maintain the same efficiency gain on the floor, which would decrease the cost of furniture installation, Wi-Fi strengthening and overall construction requirements;

(b) Removing one of the five remaining floors from the scope of the project, with the agreement of the affected department(s), considering that the project, at its current level of implementation, had already exceeded the estimated target of space efficiency for all 27 floors (see para. 6 above).

12. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the overall scope reduction should achieve a cost reduction of at least \$400,000 to cover the project supervision and management cost in 2021. The Secretariat estimated that the elimination of one floor from the project would reduce the project cost by \$1.23 million, which was the average final cost per floor. It considered, however, that it was not possible to provide an accurate cost-benefit analysis of the proposed scope reductions, pending the renegotiation of the project's construction and furniture contracts which expired at the end of the year (see para. 17 below) and the completion of the design for the remaining five floors, given the uncertainties surrounding the post-COVID-19 workplace and the intention of some users to resume consultations when there was more clarity on the impact of COVID-19 on the flexible workplace.

13. The Secretary-General states in his report that the Administration will determine, in close consultation with the relevant departments, which approach to project completion delivers the highest value for the Organization, considering the benefits of implementation on each of the remaining floors and taking into account possible post-pandemic working arrangements ([A/75/342](#), para. 25).

14. The Advisory Committee recognizes the fluid situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and notes the high degree of uncertainty surrounding the remaining part of the project. While the Committee notes that the flexible workplace project is supposed to address all user and workspace requirements, current and potential post-COVID-19 pandemic considerations on staff safety, health, well-being and productivity, as well as the related financial impact may have implications on the intended benefits of the project. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to prepare an assessment of the project, proposing detailed options, including on the remainder of its scope and their anticipated costs, for the consideration of

the Assembly during the second part of its seventy-fifth session. The assessment should take into consideration, inter alia, challenges and opportunities, including related to risks, emerging user requirements and evolving flexible working arrangements (see also [A/75/7](#), paras. XI.10.a and XI.15; [A/74/7/Add.18](#); and General Assembly resolution [73/279 A](#), section VI) (see also para. 21 below).

IV. Project costs

15. The Secretary-General provides a detailed year-by-year breakdown of the expenditures and estimated project cost in table 4 of his report. Expenditures in 2019 amount to \$11,301,900, against an appropriation of \$13,049,200. Owing to the liquidity situation, the full amount approved for 2019 could not be made available for commitment until the end of the year, which resulted in the delayed implementation of the project on floor 35 ([A/75/342](#), para. 41; see also para. 9 above). Expenditures in 2020 are estimated at \$743,800, against a \$7,931,700 appropriation, which would result in a projected unspent amount of \$7,187,900 at the end of 2020 (*ibid.*, para. 42). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the low level of expenditures, which related mostly to project supervision and management, was due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the cost for the floors implemented in 2020 was largely committed in 2019. The Committee was also informed that there was no opportunity to reduce the project management cost, nor to reassign the staff to potential vacancies owing to the recruitment freeze under the regular budget. **The Advisory Committee notes the significantly low expenditures in 2020 and trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

16. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the estimated costs for the completion of the project activities in 2020 and 2021 amount to \$7,931,700, comprising planning and design services (\$116,600), Secretariat building reconfiguration (\$6,939,800) and project management (\$875,300). The total project cost of \$54,981,400 remains unchanged from previous estimates (*ibid.*, paras. 43–45).

17. The Advisory Committee was provided with information showing that the base costs for the remaining five floors were estimated at \$3,625,900. That amount was premised on preliminary generic designs that did not take into account specific user requirements, which, on average, entailed a cost variance of 15 per cent between the base price and the final cost of a floor. Furthermore, the provided costs were based on the fixed unit prices of the 2017 construction and systems furniture contracts which will expire at the end of 2020. Contract extension negotiations had not yet taken place owing to the uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic and might result in an escalation of costs (see para. 21 below). The Committee was informed that there were no anticipated financial implications if the contracts were not extended. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the requirements for the reconfiguration of the remaining floors should be clarified further and their amount should be fully justified in the context of the assessment of the flexible workplace project (see para. 14 above). The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information to the General Assembly on the extension of the construction and furniture contracts at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

18. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the costs for supervision and management of the project relate to the continuation of three positions comprising the project team: one Project Manager (P-5), one Design and Construction Manager (P-4) and one Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) ([A/75/342](#), para. 48). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that owing to the advanced stage of the project, and in order to reduce the financial impact of its delayed completion, the Secretariat envisaged absorbing some of the management costs

through the intended reassignment of the P-4 position to an office space management position within the Facilities and Commercial Activities Service. To the extent possible, the Design and Construction Manager (P-4) would also continue to assist with the project. However, the Administration could not absorb the P-5 and General Service (Other level) positions, which were considered the minimum full-time capacity necessary to bring the project to completion. **The Advisory Committee considers that the Secretary-General should explore further opportunities for the reassignment of the remaining members of the project team, as they continue to work on project tasks as necessary (see para. 21 below).**

19. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the estimated resource requirements for 2021 would amount to \$7,187,900, which corresponded to the approved resources that would not be utilized in 2020 and would enable the project to remain within its envelope of \$54,981,400. Cost escalations arising from contract extensions and extended project management requirements would be offset by scope adjustments, such as those described in paragraph 24 of the report of the Secretary-General (see also paras. 11–12 above).

20. For the completion of the project, the Secretary-General requests in his report that the General Assembly exceptionally suspend financial regulation 5.2, under which appropriations are required to be available for commitment during the budget period to which they relate, and approve the rollover to 2021 of the unspent balance of funds as at the end of 2020, currently estimated at \$7,187,900, for commitment during 2021, including for the continuation of two temporary positions (1 P-5 and 1 General Service (Other level)) for the project team ([A/75/342](#), para. 54 (b)). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposal of the Secretary-General was based on the fact that the resources required for the implementation of the project in 2021 were in the same amount as the funds that would not be utilized in 2020. The Committee was also informed that the Secretariat did not have records of previous suspensions of financial regulation 5.2.

21. **The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General estimates that the project requirements for 2021 amount to \$7,187,900, at the same level as the projected unspent funds in 2020, and that reductions in the project scope would offset cost escalations. The Committee, however, is of the view that, at this stage, the remaining resource requirements of the project are unclear and that the proposed estimates do not adequately take into account the financial implications related to, inter alia, the potential impact of any COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 scope adjustments, additional delays in the construction schedule, other risks and the unknown outcome of the negotiations of expiring contracts. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include updated and refined estimated requirements in his assessment of the flexible workplace project (see para. 14 above). Pending that assessment, the Committee recommends that the Assembly appropriate an amount of \$145,700 for 2021, for project supervision and management for a period of up to six months, which would enable, inter alia, the preparation of the assessment.**

22. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes that the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations must be strictly adhered to. The Committee is of the view that the proposal for the exceptional suspension of financial regulation 5.2 has not been justified. The Committee notes that the approval of this suspension would result in the Secretariat holding the project's funds and deciding autonomously on the final scope of the project. The Committee therefore recommends against granting an exceptional suspension of financial regulation 5.2 and recommends that the unencumbered resource balance at the end of 2020 be credited to Member States.**

V. Rental obligations

23. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the Organization currently rents space in the DC-1, DC-2, Albano, FF and Falchi buildings, with a total contractual obligation for 2021 of approximately \$48.8 million to be funded from the regular budget, the support account and extrabudgetary contributions. He also states that, in 2015, the rental obligations for the entire office space portfolio at Headquarters amounted to \$55.2 million, or 12 per cent above current levels, and that the implementation of the flexible workplace has enabled the United Nations to reduce its rental obligations despite escalating rental costs ([A/75/342](#), para. 51).

24. The Secretary-General further indicates in his report that the project cost of \$54,981,400, when compared against the rental cost of \$61,449,800 that would have otherwise been incurred if the flexible workplace project had not been implemented, resulted in a total savings of \$6,468,400 (*ibid.*, table 5). According to the report, the project cost would be recovered by the third quarter of 2021, with an annual recurrent cost avoided of \$18.8 million (*ibid.*, para. 50). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that in 2022 the cost avoided would be the same as in 2021, as the next opportunity to release leased space would be in March 2023. Savings in 2023 would depend on: (a) the achievement of additional capacity in the Secretariat building from the completion of the project; (b) overall long-term office accommodation requirements; and (c) the outcome of the negotiations of the DC-1 and DC-2 leases that were due to expire in March of that year.

25. With respect to the DC-1 and DC-2 buildings, the Advisory Committee was informed that, owing to the special nature of the United Nations Development Corporation, the Organization had benefitted from a base rental price that had remained significantly lower than prevailing market rates over its 30-year lease. The lease agreement stipulated that only upon the departure of United Nations Headquarters from its current location in New York City, would the Organization have the right to terminate its leases for those buildings. Early stages of the negotiation process for the renewal of the DC-1 and DC-2 leases had already begun and would take into account the changing needs of the United Nations, including in a post-COVID-19 context, modern office space requirements and current market conditions. Regarding other leased premises, the Committee was informed that the early termination of the lease of the FF building could only be exercised in December 2024, with a 24-month prior notice period and a termination fee of \$25 million, whereas the early termination for the Albano building lease could be exercised in 2026, with a \$12 million fee.

26. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the Secretary-General should monitor closely its real estate portfolio and assess space utilization against the changing needs of the Organization and market price fluctuations. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General prepare a strategic assessment and cost-benefit analysis of its real estate portfolio, including early termination of current leases and estimates of the payback period, also taking into account utility costs, previous experiences, lessons learned and the present and projected impact of flexible working arrangements and flexible workplace strategies, as well as expected efficiencies, and report thereon in his next programme budget submission (see also [A/75/7](#), para. VIII.42).

VI. Staff survey and independent evaluation of the project

27. As part of the ongoing engagement with users, surveys of staff occupying flexible workplace floors have been conducted yearly during the implementation of

the project. Workplace satisfaction is used as a proxy for productivity and the overall score for staff satisfaction, and workplace effectiveness is measured through the workplace performance index (A/75/342, para. 20; see also A/74/7/Add.18, para. 15). The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the 2020 survey, which was intended to cover floors 22, 23, 24 and 33, and had been scheduled for April 2020, was deferred until the occupancy of the Secretariat building would return to a level comparable with previous years to enable on-site observations and focus group discussions (A/75/342, para. 21).

28. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the Administration made further efforts to approach an internal independent entity for an evaluation of the flexible workplace project, but that the Board of Auditors and the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services did not have the requisite capacity and availability to take on the task (*ibid.*, para. 27). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Administration had again contacted the Office of Internal Oversight Services to request that an evaluation of the project be undertaken after its completion in 2022.

29. **The Advisory Committee recalls that, notwithstanding repeated requests of the General Assembly, the project has progressed to near full implementation without an assessment of the project pilot or an independent evaluation of the project itself (A/74/7/Add.18, para. 21). Taking also into account the implications for flexible workplace strategies in other duty stations (see para. 32 below), the Committee stresses the importance of an independent and comprehensive evaluation by the Board of Auditors or the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The Committee also trusts that the Secretary-General will compile a list of best practices and lessons learned in this project and will include it in its final project report.**

VII. Other matters

Utility costs

30. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the consolidation of staff in the Secretariat building has not significantly affected the requirements for utilities (A/75/342, para. 51). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that utility costs for the main campus had remained fairly constant since the commencement of the first phase of the project in 2016, with a pattern of reduction in electricity costs, offset by increases in steam and water-related costs which were directly correlated to the number of building occupants (see table below).

Cost of utilities per year for the main campus

(United States dollars)

<i>Cost^a</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
Electricity	6 589 100	5 776 500	5 582 165	5 063 082
Steam	1 899 800	2 526 700	2 400 926	2 650 722
Gas	9 300	15 500	20 354	16 578
Water	423 723	622 267	847 544	1 067 471
Total	8 921 923	8 940 967	8 850 989	8 797 853

^a Cost based on monthly invoices. Cost of water related to domestic water use, excludes steam condensate discharge costs.

31. The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information on expenditures for utilities in 2020, reflecting, inter alia, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report (see also [A/75/7](#), para. VIII.42). The Committee also trusts that the Secretary-General will continue to closely monitor utility consumption, optimize energy usage and report on any efficiency gains as a result of the implementation of the flexible workplace project (see also [A/75/7](#), para. XIII.3).

Flexible workplace in offices away from Headquarters

32. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the project team, in coordination with the Global Asset Management Policy Service, has continued to liaise with offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions that are implementing or plan to implement flexible workplace strategies, in particular regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic ([A/75/342](#), para. 13). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that various projects had incorporated temporary modifications to the designs of the flexible workplace strategies interior office layouts components, without changes to the building infrastructure. The minor modifications, which varied slightly across projects, included spaced seating, rerouting foot traffic and the use of materials and finishes that were easy to clean. **The Committee encourages further coordination and sharing of experiences as well as best practices in relation to COVID-19 risk mitigation measures among duty stations that are implementing or plan to implement flexible workplace strategies.** The Committee discusses this matter further in its reports on the relevant construction progress reports of the Secretary-General ([A/75/7/Add.10](#), paras. 13–14; [A/75/7/Add.11](#), paras. 14–16; and [A/75/7/Add.16](#), paras. 11–13).

33. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that consultations were under way to establish a model contract that could serve as a basis for developing furniture contracts for open workplan layouts in various duty stations. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide additional information on the model contract for furniture in open office spaces, including how it will promote the use of locally sourced and manufactured materials, labour and expertise.**

Flexible workplace and flexible working arrangements

34. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the complementary relationship between flexible working arrangements and a flexible workplace proved successful as full-time, large-scale working-from-home arrangements were implemented at Headquarters owing to the pandemic ([A/75/342](#), para. 30). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that staff working in the flexible workplace were provided with office laptops and were accustomed to telecommuting, which helped to ensure business continuity during the pandemic. The Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that, while it was not expected that telecommuting during COVID-19 would create additional legal implications for the Organization, the Administration recognized that more clarity was needed on certain aspects of insurance coverage with respect to flexible working arrangements. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will assess and address, as required, any legal implications as well as insurance coverage considerations arising from flexible working arrangements.**

35. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the flexible working arrangements policy ([ST/SGB/2019/3](#)) was under review and that lessons learned from the current experience of large-scale remote working would be incorporated therein, as appropriate. A potential amendment to the existing arrangements could be

an expansion of the applicability of telecommuting at the duty station beyond the current limit of three days per week. **The Advisory Committee looks forward to receiving information on the review of the flexible working arrangements policy, including any potential financial implications. The Committee emphasizes that lessons learned during the ongoing large-scale remote working experience and the needs of the Organization should be duly incorporated in the revised policy.**

Accessibility

36. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that several aspects of the flexible workplace helped to address the needs of people with disabilities, such as fewer obstacles, more natural light, height-adjustable work surfaces, lockers and shared shelving at different heights. Furthermore, tailored adjustments for specific needs could be made, and had been made, in the course of the user engagement process. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will include in its final report lessons learned and best practices related to accessibility.**

VIII. Conclusion

37. Information on the actions requested of the General Assembly is contained in paragraph 54 of the report of the Secretary-General. **Subject to its recommendations and observations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the progress made in the implementation of the flexible workplace project to date and request the Secretary-General to submit a report containing an assessment of the project during the second part of its seventy-fifth session (see para. 14 above).**
