



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR CONROD HUNTE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM
118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009 -
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN VIENNA, ADDIS ABABA AND NAIROBI
(New York, 26 November 2008)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of Group of 77 and China on this important agenda item.
2. We thank the Assistant Secretary General for the Capital Master Plan, Mr. Michael Adlerstein for providing the answers to our questions. The Group of 77 and China, wishes to reaffirm the crucial importance of the speedy completion of the construction projects in Nairobi and Addis Ababa.
3. However, on 20 November 2008, we took the extra-ordinary step of requesting that this item ought to be brought back to the formals, owing to the inadequate, contradictory and inconsistent answers provided to Member States on this important issue. The unacceptable situation, which we saw was a clear demonstration of lack of accountability and commitment regarding the construction project at UNON.
4. We recall that the Director-General of UNON indicated that she was not consulted in the preparation of the SG's report on the construction project in Nairobi, and that the DG did not receive any guidance or advice on the project. The Group is particularly concerned that the highest-ranking official in Nairobi appears not to have the required delegation of authority over the project and is not consulted about it.

We furthermore, note that the DG made the following recommendations:

- 1) She stated that the project needs a dedicated on site unit within UNON, which would be in charge of the project to ensure adequate capacity and ability.
- 2) Daily supervision of this project should be with the managers in Nairobi, and Headquarter (NY) to provide guidance and support as required.
- 3) Delegation of authority needs to be given to the Director-General and the involvement of the Board (ESMB) as per ST/SGB/2008/7 as appropriate.
- 4) Establishment of an independent oversight mechanism for the project.
5. From the foregoing, we believe that there is a need for an alignment of the delegation of authority with the proposed new structure, including, full delegation of authority to the DG of UNON, which will enable her to exercise authority as outlined in the bulletin. Maintaining the status quo at UNON is not an option. We believe the DG should as a matter of urgency assume full responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the project.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Following consultations with other Groups and delegations, on our planned submission of a concise summary, which relates to the remarks of the Director General of UNON, Ms. Ana Tibajuka during the informals in late October, the G77 and China is ready to return to the informals on this

