



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. LYLE DAVIDSON, COUNSELLOR OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, ON AGENDA ITEM 132: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015: CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE APPLICATION OF FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE STRATEGIES AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 13 March 2015)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 132: Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015: Construction and Property Management: Comprehensive business case for the application of flexible workplace strategies at the United Nations.

2. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank Mr. Stephen Cutts, Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budget Questions (ACABQ), for his introduction of the related report.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China recognises the importance of organisational transformation initiatives that contribute to a modern, adaptable and effective United Nations. However, major transformation processes currently being implemented renew our belief in the necessity of careful and thorough consideration before embarking on such new endeavours.

4. The Group takes note of the summary of the main findings of a flexible workplace study undertaken during the year 2014 which also includes the results of a pilot of flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters and the findings of a review by external consultants.

5. The Group further takes note of the detailed cost-benefit analysis and the implementation proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General. While the Group acknowledges the stated benefits of the proposal of enhancing staff satisfaction and cooperation, as well as reducing space use and real estate needs, the Group concurs with the Advisory Committee on the difficulty in measuring overall productivity across the different functions performed in the Organisation with the implementation of flexible workplace arrangement.

6. The Group of 77 and China concurs with the Advisory Committee that a flexible workplace would have a significant impact on the working environment of the Organisation. We will, therefore, seek clarity on the human resources management approach to the implementation of flexible workplace. Considerations related to human resources policies and specific requirements of different departments within the Organisation are critical elements to determine if such proposals can be successfully implemented in the United Nations.

7. Furthermore, the Group will seek further information on the necessary steps to be undertaken by

the Organisation before being able to implement a flexible workplace strategy, in particular relating to information technology; robust internal communications and training programs.

Mr. Chairman,

8. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China recognizes that the implementation of flexible workplace at the United Nations would represent a significant shift in the evolving organisational culture of the United Nations and its working methods.

9. The Group of 77 and China would like to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively in the upcoming discussions with the aim of concluding this agenda item in a timely fashion.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.