



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. SIRITHON WAIRATPANIJ, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 131: FINANCIAL REPORTS AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND REPORTS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS IN PARTICULAR ON STRATEGIC HERITAGE PLAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA AND PROGRESS IN THE HANDLING OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AFFAIRS IN THE SECRETARIAT, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 29 February 2016)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 131, entitled "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors" in particular on the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) of the United Nations Office at Geneva and progress in the handling of information and communications technology (ICT) affairs in the Secretariat.
2. At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to thank Mr. Salhina Mkumba, Director of External Audit of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the Audit Operations Committee of the Board of Auditors for his introduction of the reports of the Board.
3. The Group further wishes to thank Mr. Mario Baez, Chief, Policy and Oversight Coordination Service, Department of Management, and Ms. Atefeh Riazzi, Chief Information Technology Officer / Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Information and Communications Technology, for introducing the reports of Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the related reports on the matter.
4. The Group of 77 and China continues to attach great importance to the strong oversight related to implementation of the major projects in particular the SHP and the ICT in the Secretariat. In this regard, we value the observations, comments and recommendations of the Board of Auditors and the related comments of the Advisory Committee as the fundamental guidance to ensure projects are implemented in most efficient and effective manner.

Mr. Chairman,

5. With regard to the finding of the Board on the Strategic Heritage Plan, the Group notes the timing gap between the presentation of the report of the Board and the consideration of the agenda item has posed some challenges in terms of the alignment on the decision making. We would like to encourage all efforts be made to ensure the future reports of the Board are presented at the same time the Committee considers the progress on the SHP.
6. The Group has taken note on a number of findings, comments and recommendations presented by the Board on the SHP in particular those related to activities planned and accomplished during 2015; delay in project design; lessons learned from the Capital Master Plan and other projects; preliminary budget and cost estimates and governance structure. The Group has also taken note

on the observations of the Board related to internal controls; risk management as well as procurement and contracting.

7. With regard to the cost estimates for the project, we acknowledge the efforts made to derive the numbers to ensure the accuracy, and will be pleased to see a completion of the project, to the extent possible, within the agreed maximum overall cost. The Group concurs with the ACABQ in requesting the Secretary-General to include all voluntary contributions in the total project budget and in recommending that voluntary contributions should be used to defray the costs of the project, and be documented and reported to the General Assembly as part of the annual progress reports of the Secretary-General.

8. With regard to the lessons learned, the Group would like to emphasize that, lessons learned from other capital project should be carefully studied and applied to the project, as appropriate, taking into account local particularities. Care should be taken not to repeat the serious mistakes in particular those identified from the Capital Master Plan.

9. Turning to the governance structure, the Group shares the observation of the Board and we would like to encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to prepare and present the detailed information related to scope, composition, technical expertise and decision making mechanisms as well as functional arrangements, in particular clear and distinct roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee and Advisory Board in the overall governance framework.

Mr. Chairman,

10. With regard to the report of the Board on the management of the ICT in the organization, like the case of the SHP, the Group also believes that the future report will be presented along with the consideration of the agenda item on the ICT. The Group, however, values the comments, observations and recommendations by the Board which remain valid despite the timing gap.

11. The Group has taken note with encouragement the steps taken to implement the previous recommendations issued by the Board on the management of the ICT strategy and we would like to encourage the continued efforts in this regard.

12. Turning to the current report, the Group of 77 and China has taken a good note of the findings in the key areas related to standardization and harmonization of the ICT policies, applications and procedures of various support structures; expected benefits of the revised strategy; governance and management for ICT affairs; information security; as well as schedule and budget projection for the revised strategy.

13. The Group would like to emphasize the need for timely and full implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors in particular the need for a comprehensive assessment of the expected benefits of the revised ICT Strategy.

14. The Group would also like to stress the need to undertake a comprehensive and accurate budget projection for the entire ICT expenditures including those related to the field offices and peacekeeping operations as well as presenting the assurances for the implementation of the revised strategy within the budget and schedule.

15. With regard to the governance and management structures for the ICT affairs, we are concerned that the delay related to the updates on accountabilities and authorities and we would like to encourage continued efforts in this regard.

16. On the information security, the Group concurs with the Board's views on the need to expedite the updates of existing policies to reflect Chief Information Technology Officer's central authority for the information security. The Group will seek specific information on this matter during informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

17. In conclusion, the Group would like to assure you of our readiness to engage in constructive deliberations on this important agenda item with the aim of concluding this agenda item in a timely manner.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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