



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. KAREN LOCK,
PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 124:
CAPITAL MASTER PLAN, TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New
York, 19 June 2006)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 124: Capital Master Plan. The Group expresses its appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Reuter for his introduction of the Secretary-General's report (A/60/874). We are saddened by the prospects of his departure and wish to thank him for his professionalism, dedication and commitment to the United Nations and the Capital Master Plan project. We also thank the Chairman of the ACABQ, Mr. Rajat Saha, for presenting the report of the Advisory Committee (A/60/7/Add.38) on this item.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group continues to fully support the comprehensive plan for the refurbishment of the United Nations Headquarters complex and, as pointed out in our statement after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 60/256, we were very disappointed that the Secretariat was deprived of the funds that were necessary for the refurbishment to proceed expeditiously. Resolution 60/256 requests the Secretary-General to present a more detailed business analysis on the possibility of constructing a new permanent building on the North Lawn. The report before us, A/60/874, is presented to the Committee as a response to this request. The Group notes, however, due to the lack of sufficient time and resources, that many details, which would allow facilitate the debate on the proposal for constructing a new permanent building on the North Lawn, have not been taken into account in the report. For example, the analysis excludes the important aspects of security and architectural concerns and used the assumption that the new building would be exclusively for long-term planning purposes. No further information or analysis was provided in respect of swing space requirement.

The Secretary-General, in his report, has recommended that the matter of a permanent building be considered independently from the renovation. We note this recommendation and given the urgency of the situation, realize that this may be the choice we have at the moment. The ACABQ, in its report, also pointed to this fact. Where we disagree, however, is with the statement of the ACABQ that the two issues, that is, swing space and a permanent building, are not linked.

Mr. Chairman,

While Member States may have to de-link these issues based on the situation with which we are faced, it must be clearly recalled that the concept of a new building on the Robert Moses playground, which would provide swing space and then subsequently be utilized as a consolidation building, were integral to the Capital Master Plan when it was approved by Member States. Therefore the matter cannot be simply dismissed as it would appear from some statements, that it is separate from our consideration of the CMP. Much of the additional cost with which we are currently faced is due to the reneging on commitments by the Host country and collapsing of many of the assumptions that initially underpinned it, including the availability of a swing space. The Secretary-General's report has pointed to many factors that merit consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group reiterates its commitment to the Project and does not wish to see any further delay in its implementation. While strategy 4 may seem to be the immediately most feasible option, we believe that the option of having this additional capacity in terms of a new building should remain open and concerted efforts should be made to undertake a more detailed, thorough and objective analysis of the idea of constructing a new permanent building on the North Lawn.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the urgent issues that has to be decided at this session is that of the financing of the CMP. There are certain questions which the Group would need to have clarified in our consideration of this issue and we expect that these would be addressed during the informal consultations. We agree with Assistant-Secretary-General Reuter that the time has come to move from a "Plan" to a "Project" and we stand ready to do so.

