



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 October 2019

Original: English

Seventy-fourth session

Agenda item 135

Proposed programme budget for 2020

Addressing the deteriorating conditions and limited capacity of the conference services facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 29 of General Assembly resolution [73/270](#) on the pattern of conferences, contains the findings of a review of the deteriorating conditions and limited capacity of the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. In response to the request of the Assembly, the initial options for possible renovation and new construction works aimed at addressing the current situation are set out.

The present report contains a detailed analysis of the conditions of the existing facilities and the impact that they have on the ability of the United Nations Office at Nairobi to provide conference services, together with an overall assessment of the conference-servicing capacity of the Office. In this context, the Office has undertaken a business needs assessment, the results of which are presented in the present report. The results include an analysis of the expected benefits of a possible renovation and new construction works project and an overview of the initial options. The report also contains the proposed next steps to be undertaken to develop a detailed needs assessment and an expanded analysis of the options for the consideration of the General Assembly.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General on the proposed actions to be taken by the General Assembly are set out in section IV of the report; they include approval of the proposed next steps and an appropriation of \$470,000 for 2020 to undertake those activities and to report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.



I. Introduction

1. In his 2018 report on the pattern of conferences ([A/73/93](#), paras. 10–12 and 14), the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly of the deteriorating conditions and limited capacity of the conference centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which are affecting the ability of the Secretariat to service the regular calendar meetings of United Nations bodies headquartered in Nairobi and the other major international meetings and conferences held there. Delegations from Member States participating in large intergovernmental conferences in Nairobi have to meet in substandard temporary rooms, which hampers negotiations. The conditions became evident to senior managers of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management at a retreat at the Office in 2018, which prompted the inclusion of the above-mentioned information in the report. Further consultations between the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as well as the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, confirmed the seriousness of the situation.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution [73/270](#) on the pattern of conferences, requested the Secretary-General to provide detailed information regarding the possible renovation work aimed at addressing the deteriorating conditions and the limited capacity of the conference services facility at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and to present that information to the Assembly during the main part of its seventy-fourth session in the framework of the proposed programme budget. The present report provides the requested information.

II. Objectives, assessment of conditions, needs assessment, benefits and options

A. Objectives

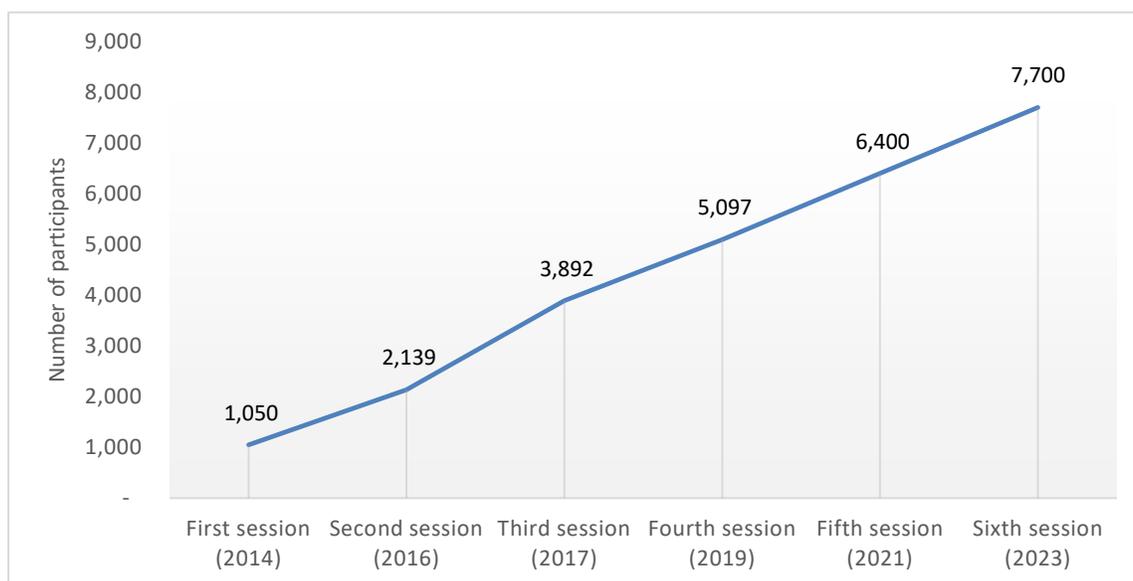
3. The United Nations Office at Nairobi is mandated to provide conference services to the two United Nations programmes headquartered in Nairobi. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is responsible for guiding conference management at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, with a view to achieving the highest possible level of cohesion, synergy and efficiency, and for the allocation of resources required for provision of the documentation, meeting and planning services at the above-mentioned locations under the relevant budget section. In addition, the conference centre in Nairobi provides a full range of conference facilities to the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Nairobi. Both the United Nations Environment Assembly and the recently instituted United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme have universal membership, in contrast to their previous Governing Councils, which comprised only 58 members each. The participation in and the complexity of hosting the Environment Assembly have increased at every session, with attendance surpassing 5,000 accredited participants at the fourth session, held in March 2019, and the trend is expected to continue. During the Environment Assembly, over 150 meetings were held in a period of five days in the 12 available formal meeting rooms, while 109 meetings were held in temporary structures or other spaces adapted for use as meeting rooms. The inaugural UN-Habitat Assembly, held in May 2019, drew more than 4,000 accredited participants. During the UN-Habitat Assembly, 116 meetings were held in the 12

available formal meeting rooms, while 43 were held in temporary structures or other spaces adapted for use as meeting rooms.

4. Figure I below shows historical participation statistics from the sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly over the past five years and a projection of that growth trend into the near future. This conservative projection shows that participation in those sessions will exceed 7,000 in four years. Meetings and conferences held under the auspices of UN-Habitat have also grown in terms of size and number of participants in recent years, including the inaugural UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2019, as outlined above. The Executive Directors of UNEP and UN-Habitat have confirmed their assessment that this growth is essentially a sign of confidence and appreciation on the part of Member States and reflects the growing importance of environmental and urban-related multilateralism, and that the trend is likely to continue, if not accelerate, in the foreseeable future.

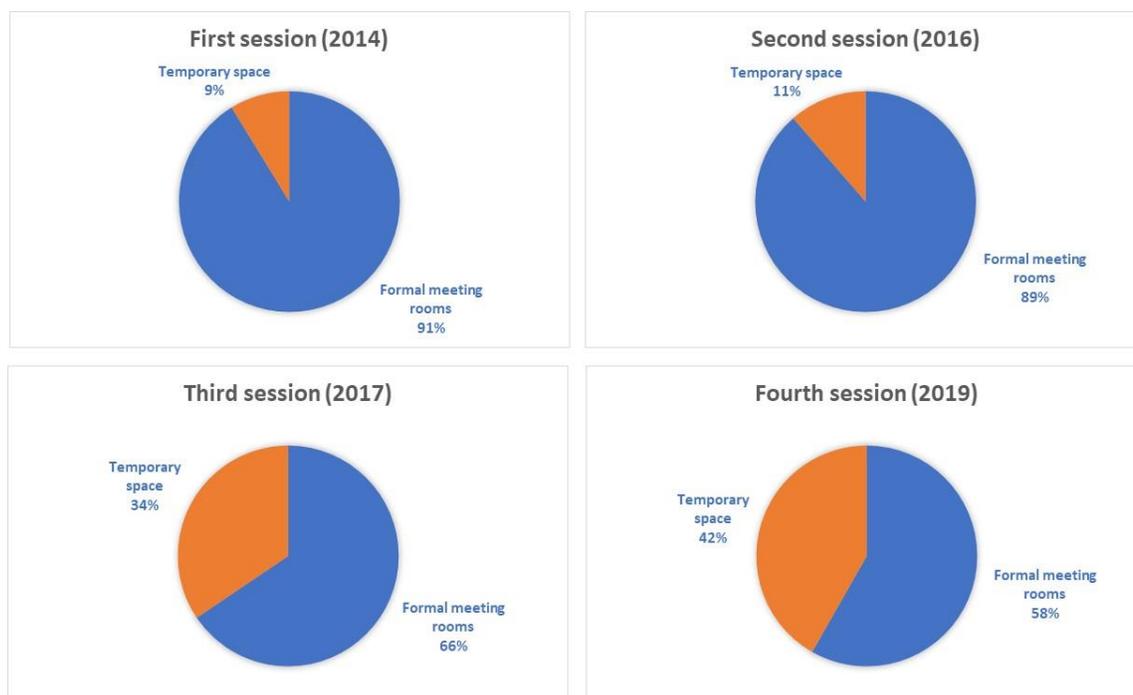
Figure I

Participation in recent and upcoming sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly



5. The charts in figure II below provide statistics on the proportion of fixed/permanent and temporary meeting spaces used during the sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The charts demonstrate that capacity issues not only relate to participant desks in the main conference rooms, but also to the availability of multifunctional spaces required of all modern conferences, including breakout areas, event spaces, exhibition spaces, press areas, informal meeting spaces and catering areas. The figure shows that the requirement for those types of multifunctional space rose from only 9 per cent of all space required during the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in 2014, to 42 per cent of all space required during its fourth session, in 2019. The United Nations Office at Nairobi has responded to this demand by using and converting corridors, walkways and car parks and installing temporary tented structures across the complex. This is not sustainable and introduces unacceptable risk and additional cost to conference organizers, not to mention the disruption to United Nations offices and programmes in the complex.

Figure II
Utilization of formal meeting rooms versus temporary meeting space during the sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly



6. The most recent major investment in the United Nations Office at Nairobi conference facilities was in the mid-1980s, almost 35 years ago. Given that the standard useful life of buildings¹ is limited, it is therefore expected that a capital construction project should be developed and implemented to meet the needs of the Office and address the foreseeable conferencing requirements over the next 25 to 30 years. In this regard, it is noted that a life-cycle maintenance programme for the east and west wings of the conference facilities at the Office was already forecast by the Secretary-General in his report on the strategic capital review (A/69/760).

7. Current conditions impede the efforts of the Secretary-General to improve conference servicing at the four main duty stations.² Complex events with more than 2,000 participants, including the meetings and conferences of the parties to multilateral environmental agreements, can only be held in Nairobi through the use of tents and other temporary structures. They are erected, furnished and supplied with temporary electricity and information technology services, as well as conferencing and interpretation equipment. The current facilities and those used in temporary solutions offer limited or no physical accessibility or sanitary facilities, and the available technology does not support accessible conference services. The temporary facilities are also vulnerable to changing weather conditions, in particular rain or heat, as they are not fully weatherproof and do not provide adequate ventilation or cooling.

8. The United Nations Office at Nairobi successfully hosted both the United Nations Environment Assembly and the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019 and, as a result of unprecedented participation levels, faced significant challenges regarding both the

¹ The standard useful life of a United Nations type A building is 50 years; it is expected that a renovation project will be required sometime within the first 25 to 30 years of the life of such a building in order to extend its useful life by an additional 50 years.

² See also General Assembly resolution 73/270, para. 31.

condition of the facilities and their limited capacity. It is also important to highlight the risk and potential reputational loss that the United Nations faces by continuing to try to support conferences of that size using the existing, ageing and inadequate conference facilities.

9. In addition, UNEP and UN-Habitat spent nearly \$500,000 in 2019 (\$317,000 and \$155,000, respectively) on one-time commercial event management services to supply the temporary tented structures, temporary information technology infrastructure, temporary audiovisual conferencing equipment, cabling, generators, washroom facilities and furniture to support those meetings. Those temporary arrangements are not sustainable, and as the demands of these multilateral programmes continue to increase and participation in future events expands, both the extrabudgetary cost and the potential risk of relying on such arrangements will grow significantly.

10. The action taken by the General Assembly and the Committee on Conferences in relation to the utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, in particular the calendar meetings of the Nairobi-based bodies, is summarized below:

(a) In 2001, the Committee on Conferences recommended to the General Assembly that it request UNEP and UN-Habitat to comply with the headquarters rule and to hold all their meetings at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, in order to further increase the utilization of the conference facilities in Nairobi ([A/56/32](#), para. 53);

(b) The General Assembly, in section II.A of its resolution [57/283 B](#), reaffirmed that all meetings of the Nairobi-based bodies shall take place in Nairobi, except as otherwise authorized by the Assembly or the Committee on Conferences acting on its behalf (para. 9). The Assembly strongly discouraged any invitation for hosting meetings that would violate the headquarters rule, in particular for United Nations centres with a low utilization level (para. 10), and reiterated its encouragement to the Secretary-General to continue to intensify efforts being made by the United Nations Office at Nairobi to attract more meetings to its facilities (para. 11);

(c) On the basis of the recommendations in the report of the Committee on Conferences for 2004 ([A/59/32](#)), the General Assembly, in its resolution [59/265](#), recalled several resolutions, including section II.A, paragraph 9, of General Assembly resolution [57/283 B](#), and reaffirmed that all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies shall take place in Nairobi, except as otherwise authorized by the General Assembly or the Committee on Conferences acting on its behalf, and requested the Secretary-General to report on the subject to the Assembly at its sixtieth session through the Committee on Conferences.

11. Most of the subsequent resolutions on the pattern of conferences have included similar text to reaffirm the prior resolutions and ensure conformity with the headquarters rule, under which all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies are to be held in Nairobi.

12. Besides addressing the immediate serious risks, the objective is to bring the Nairobi duty station up to par with New York, Geneva and Vienna as a centre for multilateralism, to professionally service the organizations headquartered in Nairobi, the wider United Nations family with offices or regional headquarters in Nairobi and the other major international meetings and conferences, in a fully accessible conference centre. In addition, a fully functional conference centre would support the programmatic objectives of the organizations in Nairobi, by improving outreach and communication with their constituents and strengthening their partnership and collaboration with Member States as part of their overall mandates and communications strategies. It would also enable Nairobi to explore distance

interpretation options and other innovative ideas, potential synergies and other cost-saving measures in the provision of conference services. The upgrade would cater for current needs and allow for growth over 20 years after completion.

B. Assessment of conditions

1. Current utilization

13. The existing facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi are ageing and are limited by their size, functionality and lack of multipurpose functions. They will not be up to the standard required to host larger international conferences and to be competitive in the future. The Office cannot fully support the conferencing requirements of the organizations headquartered in Nairobi, especially in the light of the strong growth trend in intergovernmental and multilateral forums on the environment, which is projected to continue. The Office has recognized this shortcoming in its inability to accommodate major international events of those organizations. The utilization of conference rooms in Nairobi in recent years remained relatively low, between 39 and 46 per cent, until 2018, when the demand for rooms surged to 54 per cent (see annex I, table 1). The surge in 2018 was due to non-recurrent intergovernmental processes in the lead-up to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in 2019, and processes mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/277](#), entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”. The number of mandates emerging from the fourth session of the Environment Assembly indicates continued intergovernmental processes leading up to the fifth session,³ suggesting that this increasing trend in utilization will continue.

14. In 2018, the Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi administered a survey among meeting requesters across its client base. The condition of the conference centre, in terms of both equipment and infrastructure, was a major issue that was raised repeatedly by the clients. Annex I, table 2, shows the number of calendar and non-calendar meetings held in Nairobi, as well as the number of meetings serviced by the Division of Conference Services outside Nairobi, from 2014 to 2018.

2. Building conditions

15. Constructed between 1983 and 1985, the conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi complex were designed prior to the digital age, when many of the communications and audiovisual technologies commonly used today were not in use.

16. The original conference facilities included eight meeting rooms of different capacities. In 2006, an additional six temporary conference rooms were built on the rooftop over the conference area to accommodate the requirements of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and those rooftop rooms are still in use, but they are considered inadequate as permanent rooms owing to a number of deficiencies, which are detailed further in section 6, Capacity, below.

17. Now more than 30 years old, the original eight meeting rooms are no longer fit for purpose. They are outdated, and shabby from a look-and-feel perspective, and while some investment was made in the technical, electrical and conferencing infrastructure in 2009 and in the interpretation facilities in 2012 in an effort to modernize, there is an urgent need for investment to upgrade the building envelope,

³ See United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/6 on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

reconfigure the spaces, incorporate new technologies and bring the facility up to acceptable international standards and best practice.

18. Constructed with reinforced concrete, the building's structural frame is, for the most part, still in good condition, though investment to upgrade the building envelope, specifically to replace roof waterproofing and coverings, doors, windows and other components, is long overdue from a life-cycle replacement perspective. On a regular basis during the heavy rains, there are instances of water ingress, especially in the interpretation booth areas. Over the years, some settlement has also become apparent in the rear of the main plenary hall, where settlement cracks in the infill block walls and the displacement of a portion of the concrete floor in the associated offices has become clearly visible. Investigative tests and specific interventions to remedy those problems and ensure the longevity of the building are now required.

19. Flexibility and ease of reconfiguration of conference and meeting spaces, often at short notice and to serve a range of client programme needs, are key features of most modern conference facilities. In some facilities, this includes a range of different-sized meeting rooms with either fixed or reconfigurable furniture arrangements. In others, it includes larger meeting spaces, which themselves are divisible and reconfigurable into a variety of different-sized meeting rooms using movable partitions and a range of formal and informal furniture, podium and head table configurations. The conference rooms at the United Nations Office at Nairobi do not allow for this.

20. Except for the main plenary hall, which can be divided with a large, manually operated room divider, for which replacement parts are no longer obtainable, the conference rooms are of a standard layout, with only the temporary rooftop rooms providing options for reconfiguration. Conference rooms have fixed furniture layouts with limited options for reconfiguration, and the two largest rooms (conference rooms 1 and 2) have the additional challenge of immovable raised podiums. Although it was the state of the art in the 1980s and of good quality, the furniture installed in the conference rooms is now unfortunately outdated. The pieces are bulky, sized to accommodate paper rather than laptop computers, and increasingly difficult to retrofit in order to accommodate ongoing developments in conferencing technologies. The low height of the desks is also unfavourable in terms of ergonomics. More importantly, the furniture solution does not facilitate use by persons who use mobility devices, such as wheelchairs.

21. Over the years, the reinforced concrete structure has given rise to significant difficulties when it comes to integrating the growing requirements of cabling for technologies, such as operable conferencing and audiovisual systems, and the provision of power and internet connectivity for all meeting participants. None of the meeting spaces have raised floors, which more easily support services such as cabling for power, data and a variety of conference-specific technology requirements. The cable ducts retrofitted into the concrete floors as part of the change from analogue to digital conferencing systems during prior renovations have become crowded. When reconfiguration is necessary for large-scale plenary meetings, rooms are unavailable for several days to enable technicians to manually disconnect each desk, rearrange the furniture, reconnect and reconfigure the systems, and test, troubleshoot and put the room into operation. The time and costs associated with those activities routinely lead to room configurations remaining fixed, which no longer supports client requirements for modern, more interactive meetings. The fixed podium routinely requires additional work to erect movable stages.

22. Modern conference facilities are increasingly providing more flexible lighting systems and incorporating more energy-saving lighting technologies, such as light emitting diode (LED) lamps. These new systems make available a variety of preset

options, in many cases directly controllable by the meeting chair, and support a wide range of activities, from onstage interactive presentations to broadcasting and the focused review and editing of documents. Integrated with the lighting systems are automated blinds. Again, the conference rooms at the United Nations Office at Nairobi feature none of those new technologies. Lighting can only be turned on and off, is outdated and comprises high-energy metal-halide and fluorescent lamps. Inadequate lighting levels present challenges, and clients, such as UNEP and UN-Habitat, now, at considerable cost, routinely have to erect trusses with stage lights to support broadcasting and have to set up LED video walls to improve the visibility of digital and in-person presentations, as well as to facilitate interactive dialogues and meetings.

23. The existing electrical systems serving the conference and associated facilities often operate at their limits, requiring special attention and care by maintenance technicians to ensure the continuity of the proceedings; additional temporary LED video walls and stage lighting also have to be supported by temporary standby generators. Specific consideration is also required for the routine life-cycle replacement of equipment associated with those rooms, such as uninterrupted power supplies, voltage regulators, electrical sub-boards and electrical wiring, and much of that equipment is now beyond the end of its design life. Difficulties also are being experienced with the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, from which increased cooling capacity is required. Rooms that do have forced-air ventilation systems in place, such as the main plenary hall, are unable to accommodate the increased occupancy of persons and heat-generating devices, such as temporary stage lighting and LED video walls, which exceed the specifications of the ageing system, resulting in an uncomfortable and unacceptable working environment.

24. Proper acoustics are integral to modern conference facilities. The minimalist interior finishes, large volumes and hard surfaces in the largest conference rooms are not only outdated and in urgent need of complete refurbishment, but also inadequate in terms of providing fit-for-purpose sound absorption and acoustics. Past tests have revealed the need for supportive interior treatments and other adaptations in order to reduce reverberation times to levels within acceptable limits.

3. Infrastructure and supporting facilities

25. Conference support spaces, including offices and spaces for exhibitions, pre- and post-function gatherings, hospitality and networking, are increasingly in demand at modern conference venues, and discerning clients, including UNEP, UN-Habitat and others, are increasingly requiring that those types of gathering spaces and services be made available for their meetings.

26. The conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi are entirely unequipped to accommodate these associated requirements, especially as the number of participants and the size and duration of meetings increase. Exhibitions are set up in the circulation space, and temporary tented facilities are constructed to house exhibitions, side events and the media, and to serve as required pre- and post-function gathering spaces.

27. In order to meet the requirements of delegates and other meeting participants, it has become routinely necessary for clients, such as UNEP and UN-Habitat, to spend several months prior to large-scale conferences procuring the services of an event management firm and several weeks erecting the required temporary tented facilities in various locations around the complex to accommodate meetings, exhibitions, technical and interactive forums, side events, members of the press and other functions that are considered basic/minimum requirements for such conferences. Participant badging and registration-related functions also have to be accommodated

in tents, which can be quite costly to the client given the early set-up and duration of those activities. Such facilities are not large enough to cater for the influx of delegates, which leads to long lines.

28. Other constraints include the lack of sufficient office space in close proximity to the conference venues and the lack of office and hospitality space suitable for very important persons, as well as space for visiting clients and conference administrators. It has become routine for facilities personnel to spend the weeks prior to such events dismantling, decanting, setting up and reconfiguring spaces to serve as conference support spaces, only to reinstate the original configuration after the event.

29. All of those temporarily installed venues also require temporary power, lighting, audiovisual, sound and internet services. Not only are those services time-consuming and costly to the client, but, depending on the season, the rains can also cause considerable interruptions to proceedings held in the temporary tented facilities. Moreover, those facilities are not accessible for persons with disabilities, in particular those who use wheelchairs. Support for persons with hearing, vision and other disabilities is also not available.

30. The recurring need to assemble tents and other temporary structures to provide crucial pre-function, exhibition, event registration and other spaces presents potentially unavoidable risks in terms of securing the United Nations premises and its staff and visitors, whether before, during or after the events. Among other things, additional security personnel have to be deployed to oversee service providers entering, leaving and staffing those temporary event spaces. The openness of the layout of the existing conference facilities also creates difficulties in terms of monitoring and security oversight, especially in the case of high-level visitors and very important persons. As the conference facilities are at the heart of the United Nations complex, with most of the surrounding public circulation paths being external and including multiple means of entry and exit, there is a need to set up and dismantle mobile security scanning and other crowd control devices on a routine basis. Security requirements, risks and recommendations would therefore be overarching criteria for any new construction and/or upgrading of conference facilities.

31. Not only does the lack of availability of suitable permanent, multifunctional conference support spaces that are able to accommodate client programme activities give rise to significant additional cost and inconvenience for the client and the providers of the facilities, but the continued lack of availability of those facilities is increasingly affecting the viability of Nairobi as a conference venue.

4. Technology

32. The conference management and simultaneous interpretation system currently installed at the conference centre has been in place since 2009, when it replaced an analogue system that had served since the 1980s. The system served well for a number of years, but failures began to arise as it started approaching the end of its useful life,⁴ affecting the servicing of large meetings.

33. Though some of the components of that system have been upgraded over the years and a supply of spare parts is kept in stock, failures are still experienced on a regular basis because of obsolescence.

⁴ The United Nations standard estimated useful life of audiovisual equipment is currently set at seven years, based on International Public Sector Accounting Standard 17, Property, plant and equipment. Although there is currently no United Nations policy in place to govern the replacement of equipment, the standard useful life is a useful metric for predicting when equipment will require repair or replacement.

34. The ad hoc merging and reconfiguring of the main plenary hall for large-scale meetings and the lack of adequate conditions for mission-critical equipment in the technical booths of the conference rooms, which lack proper space, power stability, humidity and temperature control and access control, has further contributed to the shortening of the lifespan of the equipment and increased the risk of equipment failure.

35. The technical team lacks a conference control centre to monitor critical equipment in order to pre-empt equipment failure and react in a timely manner when such failures occur.

36. Technical support is provided remotely, as the vendor does not have a local office or authorized representative in Nairobi. For large meetings, technicians have to be flown in to provide on-site support, at considerable expense to the clients.

37. The audiovisual distribution systems are in desperate need of upgrading. The large conference rooms are equipped with projectors that are deemed inadequate for large meetings because of the bright ambient lighting in the rooms. Video walls are rented for large events, which involves lengthy procurement processes and considerable expense to the clients. Other components, including web streaming systems, digital signage and audiovisual recording facilities, are at the end of their useful life and require major upgrades. A media asset management system is also lacking at the Nairobi location.

38. Cable ducts that run under the main meeting rooms have become congested with cabling for the various services underpin the conference centre, including electrical power, security, network and audiovisual services. There is no additional possibility of passing cables neatly across the rooms, and further upgrades would require a complete overhaul of existing cable ducts and/or cutting new ones through the concrete floors of the meeting rooms.

39. Although the rooftop rooms are the most heavily utilized in the compound, there has not been much investment in the provision of state-of-the-art audiovisual facilities in those rooms owing to their temporary nature. The rooms require better facilities to block the natural light in the room, which renders projection quality inadequate. Cable management is a major issue, as no proper cable ducts have been designed into the rooms. Web streaming and audiovisual recording facilities are also lacking.

40. In 2008, UNEP pioneered the concept of “paper-less” meetings. At the time, with the support of the Government of Qatar, the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the twentieth meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer were held jointly in Doha as completely paperless meetings. Over time, the term evolved into “paper-smart” and was increasingly adopted by other intergovernmental bodies in Nairobi and ultimately by all governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements under the auspices of UNEP. In parallel, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations was also conducting paperless meetings.

41. The Department of General Assembly and Conference Management took notice, and the meetings of the Committee on Conferences in 2011 were conducted as paper-smart meetings. In introducing the concept to the Secretary-General on 20 July 2011, the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management outlined a business model to conduct paper-smart meetings. Initial efforts were scaled up, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, was conducted as a paper-smart conference. A preliminary formal evaluation of the paper-smart concept was presented to Member

States as part of the substantive session of the Committee on Conferences in September 2012 (see [A/AC.172/2012/CRP.1](#)).

42. Increasingly large meetings are adopting the paper-smart concept as a means of promoting and contributing to environmental sustainability. Stable wireless and wired networks with adequate bandwidth capacity have thus become a key success factor for servicing large conferences. Although the infrastructure has improved over the years, with better technology and more bandwidth capacity being introduced, periods of downtime and slow access are still experienced.

43. The annual maintenance budget is not sufficient to completely overhaul the systems and bring them up to par with other duty stations.

5. Accessibility

44. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by General Assembly in its resolution [61/106](#) in 2006, prescribes, inter alia, the removal of barriers in the physical environment and the provision of information and the availability of assistive devices to enable the full participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

45. In 2018, the Joint Inspection Unit released a report entitled “Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system” ([JIU/REP/2018/6](#)), the key findings of which indicated a lack of availability of many of the services that are considered essential to make meetings more accessible at United Nations premises. Given the commitment of the United Nations to promoting accessibility and the equal participation of persons with disabilities, it is vital that all United Nations premises and facilities “walk the talk” and serve as examples of best practice in this regard.

46. The current conference facilities at Nairobi, however, exhibit several physical constraints. Given the current accessibility challenges, it is unacceptable to expect persons with disabilities to participate in intergovernmental meetings there, and urgent intervention is required. The extensive external areas and existing buildings create limitations in terms of mobility, as do the various temporary tented facilities, which, when erected in the open grass spaces, prevent persons with mobility-related disabilities from gaining access to and participating equally in events held in those locations. Appropriate wayfinding and other signage is inadequate, and the existing signage is in urgent need of improvement. Digital signage and digital wayfinding, including interactive touch-screen kiosks, would improve accessibility, in particular for delegates who are new to the Nairobi complex.

47. Accessible seating should preferably be available in all meeting spaces and ensure that persons with disabilities have various options in terms of seating location. However, delegates who use devices such as wheelchairs in the largest conference rooms cannot currently participate on an equal basis owing to the height, design and fixed nature of the desks and the distance between the seats. Wheelchair users often have to be accommodated in the circulation areas or aisles.

48. The rooftop conference rooms also present challenges. For example, a person with mobility-related challenges with a meeting scheduled in one of the rooftop rooms would have difficulty finding the limited ramps available and negotiating the route independently. Persons in wheelchairs would be unable to reach those rooms because of the uneven surfaces and other obstacles along the route, and even if the rooms were accessible, there are no accessibility-compliant washroom facilities on that level.

49. The provision of accessible conference services is mediocre at best. The conference facilities lack a broadcasting room from which international sign interpretation could be projected. The conference equipment currently installed does

not support accessibility technologies that are being developed, such as real-time speech-to-text captioning for persons with hearing impairments, and the delegate units lack tactile buttons to allow delegates with visual impairments to participate in meetings. Furthermore, the introduction of innovative technologies, such as augmented reality and virtual reality, could assist delegates by adding a further layer of information onto the real world or allowing them to attend and participate in meetings that would otherwise be inaccessible.

50. Without active commitment to the potentially significant investments necessary to retrofit the existing buildings and to equip new buildings with the new and increasingly innovative assistive technologies described above, it will not be possible to ensure the equal participation of persons with disabilities.

6. Capacity

51. The original conference centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi consists of eight meeting rooms of different capacities, seven of them with interpretation booths that can support two to six languages. Rooms 2, 3 and 4 can be combined into one large hall. Only two rooms offer interpretation facilities for six languages.

Table 1
Capacities of existing meeting rooms at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

<i>Room number</i>	<i>Desks</i>	<i>Seats per desk</i>	<i>Microphones (floor)</i>	<i>Interpretation languages</i>	<i>Delegations (1+1)</i>	<i>Delegations (2+2)</i>	<i>Total capacity</i>
1	109	4	109	6	218	109	436
2	138	4	138	6	276	138	552
3	49	4	49	4	98	49	196
4	49	4	49	4	98	49	196
2-3-4	260	4	260	6	520	260	1 040
5	Boardroom	–	0	0	–	–	20
6	Boardroom	–	14	2	–	–	28
7	Boardroom	–	14	2	–	–	28
8	Boardroom	–	14	2	–	–	28

52. The six rooftop rooms built in 2006 to accommodate the requirements of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are still in use, but they lack the necessary capacity, equipment and infrastructure. Interpretation can be provided only on demand, in up to two languages, using portable booths. Room 12 has been converted into a courtroom and is currently being used exclusively by the United Nations Dispute Tribunal. The rooftop rooms were built with light materials, do not have sound or temperature insulation, are not accessible and have no sanitary facilities; they are considered inadequate as permanent rooms.

Table 2
Capacities of rooftop meeting rooms at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

<i>Room number</i>	<i>Desks</i>	<i>Seats per desk</i>	<i>Microphones (floor)</i>	<i>Total capacity</i>
9	45	2	45	90
10	45	2	45	90
11	30	2	30	60

<i>Room number</i>	<i>Desks</i>	<i>Seats per desk</i>	<i>Microphones (floor)</i>	<i>Total capacity</i>
12	Courtroom	–	–	–
13	40	2	40	80
14	40	2	40	80

53. The governing body of UNEP was expanded from a Governing Council comprising 58 members to universal participation in the United Nations Environment Assembly. The governance structure of UN-Habitat, the other calendar body with headquarters in Nairobi, was also recently expanded to universal membership.

54. The number of participants attending the United Nations Environment Assembly has steadily increased throughout its brief history. Its fourth session, held in 2019, was attended by over 5,000 accredited participants. As a significant number of delegations are large, the only possible plenary hall that can be used is rooms 2, 3 and 4 combined. The plenary meetings of the Environment Assembly and other high-level events, such as dialogues or round tables, have had to be assigned to room 1 in a “one plus one” seating arrangement per delegation, with each microphone shared by two delegations, leaving only 25 seats for observers and stakeholders. At any given time, only two meetings with full interpretation can be scheduled. The remaining meeting rooms are insufficient to accommodate regional and other major groupings of Member States or informal meetings. Several temporary structures had to be built to accommodate the complexity of the meetings. Electricity and information technology services had to be temporarily brought to the temporary structures, all at significant cost to the convening organization. Those constraints pose immediate risks to the provision of adequate services to the bodies headquartered in Nairobi and have become a likely reason why the organizers of larger conferences do not consider the conference centre in Nairobi as a potential venue for their sessions.

7. Sustainability

55. In line with the Secretary-General’s bulletin on the environmental policy for the United Nations Secretariat ([ST/SGB/2019/7](#)), the Secretariat has committed to ensuring environmental sustainability management in the Organization, primarily with regard to the impact of Secretariat operations and facilities at all of its locations. The current conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which are over 30 years old, do not comply with a number of the principles and objectives of the policy, including principle 1, which includes a related objective for the United Nations to provide safe and healthy workplaces. Principle 2 requires efficiency in resource use and operations through the conservation of natural resources, including through the reduction of energy use and the optimization of sustainable energy consumption. Principle 3 requires the continuous improvement of environmental performance, including through integrated management systems.

56. The current conference facilities fall well short of serving as a model for how the Secretariat, in its leadership role, in particular at the United Nations Office at Nairobi as the headquarters of UNEP, can align its own practices with the aims and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Any new construction, as well as renovation of the existing conference buildings, will create significant opportunities to improve the environmental performance of the facility and increase efficiency in resource use and operations.

57. Current meeting spaces are equipped with suboptimal lighting systems, such as metal-halide and standard fluorescent lamps, and no automated control systems. More energy-efficient fittings, including LED lighting in combination with occupancy sensors, controllers and a building management system, which would enable usage to

be tracked and automatically turn off lights, cooling systems, displays and other conferencing systems when not in use, would significantly reduce day-to-day energy consumption. Necessary retrofits of conferencing and audiovisual systems over the years have resulted in unsuitable technical support and control rooms that are poorly ventilated, crowded and not fit for purpose. Similarly, existing cooling systems within the largest conference rooms are outdated and unable to support the increased heat generated by audiovisual display systems and other technologies used in modern meeting rooms. Purpose-specific rooms for network hardware, where required, as well as optimally sized meeting spaces that make optimal use of both natural ventilation and highly energy-efficient cooling systems, coupled with the introduction of renewable energy solutions, would significantly improve efforts towards cleaner energy and energy conservation.

58. As outlined in the sustainable events guide published by UNEP in 2012, sustainable conferencing increases savings in operating costs and promotes an all-inclusive approach. In this regard, specific consideration must be given to the reduction of wasteful consumption and waste generation, through the introduction of conference-specific waste management plans. Consideration must also be given to associated activities, such as the provision of conference venues that enable both virtual and paper-smart meetings and, in particular, make viable and encourage a reduction in the need for air travel. Given the existing conditions at the Nairobi facility, this would require significant investment in the provision of technology-enabled conference, meeting and exhibition facilities.

8. Business continuity

59. Building and servicing temporary structures to accommodate growing demand for conferences of organizations with their headquarters, regional offices or other offices in Nairobi comes at significant cost to those organizations and deters non-traditional clients from hosting events there. The provision of electricity, information technology and other basic services to such structures is unreliable and precarious, posing unacceptable risks to the professional conduct of intergovernmental bodies. The lack of reliability of facilities and services and the lack of competitiveness make it unlikely that other major events would be attracted to Nairobi. In the current conditions, it is also unlikely that other major conferences could be serviced in Nairobi. Strategically, it is very apparent that the conference facilities at one of the four headquarters duty stations have deteriorated over the years. The implementation of standard conferencing systems across duty stations would make meeting room configurations easily transferable across duty stations should the need arise to change the venue of a conference at short notice. Spare parts and technical know-how could also be shared if necessary. Meeting room capacity could be scaled up by linking meeting rooms at multiple conference venues, enabling delegates to travel to the closest venue and thus also reducing travel costs.

C. Needs assessment

1. Supporting the calendar meetings of United Nations headquarters entities

60. As already stated in the present report, the demand for meeting and multifunctional spaces in Nairobi has grown in size and complexity. The leadership of UNEP has expressed concerns on numerous occasions, as they find it undesirable that they have to temporarily expand the capacity of the conference centre using resources that could otherwise be used for their environmental mandates rather than compensating for inadequate infrastructure.⁵ Whereas Assembly resolution [73/260](#) is

⁵ See also General Assembly resolution [73/260](#), para. 9.

aimed at ensuring the sustainability, predictability, and stability of funding for sections 2 and 14 of the proposed programme budget, and the present report provides Member States with detailed information on the measures required to address the deteriorating conditions and limited capacity of the conference services facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, as requested in Assembly resolution [73/270](#), the leadership of UNEP considers that the two matters are related.

61. The governance structure of UN-Habitat was recently modified by General Assembly resolution [73/239](#). The first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly with universal membership was held from 27 to 31 May 2019. As in the case of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the limited capacity of the conference centre in Nairobi made it necessary for informal meetings of Member States to be held in the inadequate rooftop rooms, competing for time with meetings of stakeholders.

2. Events relating to multilateral environmental agreements and human settlements that could be held in Nairobi

62. UNEP has under its auspices several multilateral environmental agreements, among them the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The governing bodies of those conventions do not have a designated conference centre for their meetings, and they accept offers from parties to the conventions to host meetings or, alternatively, they hold them at an available United Nations conference centre. Although the facilities in Nairobi have been available, the main bodies of the conventions have not met in Nairobi since 2011. Among the reasons often cited by the secretariats are the limited capacity and conditions of the conference centre in Nairobi. Although Nairobi is the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has been held there only once, in 2006. On that occasion, the Government of Kenya hosted the conference at the United Nations Office at Nairobi complex, at significant expense, as large temporary structures, such as tents, had to be imported and set up. Annex II shows the locations where the main environment and human settlements bodies have met since 2014. The upper part of the table shows the bodies that are regular clients of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, while the lower part shows the bodies that are not currently regular clients.

63. As for the human settlements agenda, the Government of Kenya hosted the first session of the World Urban Forum at the United Nations Office at Nairobi in 2001. Since then, the Forum has grown exponentially in size and complexity, and it is now one of the human settlements conferences held outside Nairobi. Regardless of any interest Kenya may have in hosting the conference in Nairobi, it cannot be hosted at the Office owing to space limitations. In 2016, Kenya hosted the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The conference secretariat inspected the conference facilities at the Office and concluded that they were insufficient to accommodate the event. The conference was instead held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi. This trend goes to show the inadequacy of the conference centre at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

3. Potential for the future

64. The multilateral agenda relating to the environment, human settlements and sustainable development has grown at an accelerated rate in the past 20 years, and it is expected to continue to grow given the relevance of the subject matter. As Nairobi is the headquarters of both UNEP and UN-Habitat, it would be only natural that such multilateral activities would be hosted in Nairobi. However, the current facilities, as explained in the present report, are not fit for purpose, as they are insufficient and outdated. The 60 or so United Nations agencies, funds and programmes with offices or regional hubs in Nairobi are equally affected.

65. Notwithstanding the immediate risk of not being able to adequately service the calendar meetings in Nairobi, the business sustainability of the conference centre also needs to be further explored. Modern facilities would allow marketing efforts to expand the client base to other international organizations based in Nairobi.

D. Benefits

1. Mitigation of risk of failure given the current conditions

66. As already stated in the present report and in the report on the pattern of conferences ([A/73/93](#)), the conditions in which the Nairobi-based calendar bodies are serviced pose considerable risks to the successful outcomes of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the UN-Habitat Assembly and the other intergovernmental meetings of the organizations in Nairobi. Besides capacity concerns, considerable expenditure is incurred by those organizations, and Member States are forced to conduct informal negotiations in substandard and inaccessible rooftop rooms in which the interpretation and audiovisual equipment is outdated and prone to failure. Technical booths that were originally designed and built in the early 1980s were retrofitted with digital equipment in 2009. The equipment occupies most of the booth space, generating excessive heat, making operations difficult and shortening the operational life of the equipment.

67. To address the immediate risks of equipment failure, in 2018, the United Nations Office at Nairobi purchased from the manufacturer all available spare parts to keep the delegate microphone and control units functional for the next three to four years. That unit model has been discontinued and would require replacement, along with most of the current control equipment. However, this option is not currently recommended, as it would simply be a repeat of the 2009 upgrade. What is required is a general overhaul of the electrical and mechanical infrastructure and the redesign and/or relocation of technical booths. The interdependence between equipment, wiring and the physical limitations of the current infrastructure requires a broader scope, as well as a feasibility, design and construction project that would include physical and technological accessibility features.

2. Addressing the expanded requirements of United Nations headquarters entities

68. Servicing large conferences, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly, has become a major logistical operation and a significant financial burden to the United Nations Office at Nairobi, as well as to UNEP and UN-Habitat. Weeks of planning and procurement processes are required to provide the temporarily expanded facilities necessary for such conferences.

69. At a minimum, the facilities in Nairobi should be adequate for the intergovernmental meetings of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Habitat Assembly and their subsidiary bodies. The conference centre should also cater for such meetings and conferences requested by other United Nations

organizations in Nairobi. The facilities should meet current building codes, be accessible for people with disabilities, offer a minimum of comfort to delegations and provide modern conferencing, audiovisual and information and telecommunications technologies. The technologies deployed should allow the provision of accessible conference services. That is currently not the case.

3. Regional and global benefits

70. Nairobi is an important global and regional hub. Member States have decided that the two entities headquartered in Nairobi are to have universal membership, and they have adopted several resolutions requesting the United Nations to ensure conformity with the headquarters rule, under which all meetings of the Nairobi-based United Nations bodies are to be held in Nairobi. The growing participation in the events of those two entities is essentially a sign of confidence and is reflective of the growing importance of environmental and urban-related multilateralism, and the trend is likely to continue, if not accelerate, in the foreseeable future. Possible renovation work should, however, anticipate the future requirements of the current entities with headquarters, offices or regional hubs in Nairobi. The work should be aimed at enabling the United Nations Office at Nairobi to service major international conferences, in particular in the areas of the environment and urban development.

4. Future demands/requirements

71. Notwithstanding the arguments presented above for modern and adequate conference facilities in Nairobi, the support of both UNEP and UN-Habitat, as well as that of the host Government, will be crucial to drawing attention to Nairobi as a global and regional centre for multilateralism and other technical and political events. Building the infrastructure alone will not be sufficient to guarantee high occupancy. Efficient and client-oriented management will be paramount, as will be the marketing of the duty station with a view to expanding the client base to other Nairobi-based international organizations, along the same lines as the Economic Commission for Africa, with the understanding that priority must be given to meetings of Member States in the use of conference rooms. With due attention to the guidelines and procedures contained in the administrative instruction for the authorization of the use of United Nations premises for meetings, conferences, special events and exhibits (ST/AI/416), innovative management of conferences and events will be required at the Nairobi duty station.

E. Options

1. Facilities and infrastructure

72. As clearly demonstrated during the recent intergovernmental meetings of both UNEP and UN-Habitat, the existing conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which are able to accommodate only approximately 2,000 seated delegates, are not at all fit for purpose. Given the growing needs of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes headquartered in Nairobi and the opportunity to attract larger-scale meetings, the existing facilities are wholly inadequate.

73. The United Nations Office at Nairobi is exploring two potential options to address both the deteriorating conditions and the capacity limitations of the existing facilities. Both options would bring the existing conference facilities at the Office into full compliance with prevailing building and life safety codes and provide a modern, accessible, technologically integrated, flexible and multipurpose conferencing facility capable of accommodating up to 8,000 delegates (option 1) or up to 12,000 delegates (option 2).

74. Both options entail two main components: (a) the complete renovation of the existing facility; and (b) new construction, to varying degrees, depending on the option. At this early stage of development, the specific solutions for what constitutes “new construction” for each option have not yet been developed. A number of possibilities will be considered, including various construction types (i.e. permanent, semi-permanent and temporary) and locations. More technologically advanced facilities will also have to be considered in order to ensure the maximum usability of multifunctional spaces. In addition, options for implementation strategies have not yet been developed.

Option 1: up to 8,000 delegates

75. This option would comprise the full repurposing, upgrade and expansion of the existing conference and meeting rooms located in the central area of the Nairobi complex, as well as the construction of a new, state-of-the-art plenary hall facility adjacent, but conveniently positioned in relation to the existing conference rooms. There would be a wide range in the potential costs of this option, depending on what is finally agreed on with regard to phasing, functionality, scope, technology, fittings, flexibility, usage and many other considerations that will only become clear after completion of the next step, namely, the detailed needs assessment and expanded options analysis.

76. Repurposing and upgrade works for the existing conference rooms 1 to 8 will be focused to bring those rooms up to international standards in terms of safety, security, accessibility, sustainability and flexibility, as well as the installation of state-of-the-art technology and conferencing systems. Through the introduction of raised floors, the United Nations Office at Nairobi proposes to further explore opportunities for providing a range of more flexible and multipurpose spaces, with a variety of seating options and room divider solutions. The temporary rooftop rooms would be entirely reconstructed and expanded to be multifunctional, divisible and sufficiently flexible to meet the high demand for smaller rooms for both formal and informal meetings.

77. A new, state-of-the-art plenary hall building is proposed as a modern, multipurpose conference facility incorporating those conference support spaces that are currently lacking, such as exhibition areas, hospitality and catering areas, offices for very important persons and other offices, production, technical and press rooms, storage rooms and potentially also a remote interpretation hub. The main plenary hall would be expected to host up to 1,000 delegates, while the galleries would be reserved for the media, control rooms and simultaneous interpretation booths, with the provision of state-of-the-art conferencing, multimedia, audiovisual and engineering systems, as well as acoustically appropriate interiors, furniture and finishes. For ease of operation, while ensuring the necessary flexibility, the interiors and furniture would be as standardized as possible, with a mix of fixed and mobile and reconfigurable desk types, seating types, stages and podiums.

78. This proposal also includes the construction of an entirely new entrance and visitors pavilion, which would be tailored for participant registration, badging and screening large numbers of meeting participants, delegates and visitors, with parking and public transport in close proximity.

79. The refurbishment of those conference rooms, as well as the new building, would offer a unique opportunity to rework the exterior and interiors to give the conference facility a sense of place as the headquarters of the United Nations in Africa. In keeping with the modern aesthetic, this could be brought out in a number of ways, such as use of local materials and expertise, decoration and finishes and with the integration of artwork.

Option 2: up to 12,000 delegates

80. This option would build on the concept proposed for option 1. The proposal is to construct an additional, stand-alone, state-of-the-art convention centre on the periphery of the United Nations complex. The new convention centre would be a unifying space where people could come together to interact, learn and exchange new ideas and innovations.

81. The new convention centre would comprise several divisible and flexible spaces for exhibitions and events, meeting rooms of various sizes, types and seating configurations, pre- and post-function areas, as well as all the necessary conference support facilities and functions, among other features.

82. In order to make the most of the new facilities, it is envisaged that both facilities would be reserved and designated for larger conferences, such as the World Urban Forum. For other conferences, however, it would be conceivable to run two entirely independent conferences concurrently, one in the upgraded and expanded conference facilities in the central area of the complex and another in the new convention centre on the periphery. The latter would be specifically suited to meetings with membership other than just the United Nations.

83. Business continuity during construction will also be an important consideration, both for the Division of Conference Services and for the agencies, funds and programmes housed at the United Nations complex in Nairobi.

2. Technological solutions and standards

84. Both options would entail more technologically advanced facilities with a maximum of flexibility for the multifunctional use of space. Careful consideration will be given to technologies that allow interoperability and integration among the rooms in Nairobi, as well as with systems at other duty stations. This would support the possibility of distance interpretation. Other technologies, such as electronic attendance and voting, videoconferencing and other remote collaboration solutions, digital signage, self-service control interfaces and ancillary technologies to enable improved temperature and access control, would be installed in all main rooms.

3. Implementation strategies

85. Should there be a renovation and expansion of conference facilities in Nairobi, the project would have to be staggered in such a way as to avoid having a negative impact on the servicing of the official calendar of meetings and to avoid jeopardizing business continuity. The conference facilities comprise an east wing (rooms 2 to 8), a west wing (room 1) and the rooftop rooms (rooms 9 to 14). Conceivably, the first phase could be aimed at rebuilding the rooftop rooms in a manner compliant with building codes, accessibility requirements and conference technology requirements. The second phase could encompass only the west wing in order to ensure that a functional plenary room is available while the east wing is under renovation. Other new structures could be finalized in parallel with the second phase.

86. The technology layer could also be implemented in phases. Priority should be given to the technology rooms and conference control centre so that when meeting rooms are refurbished or built, the back-end infrastructure is already in place to support the new systems.

III. Next steps and resource requirement for 2020

87. Resources are required for multidisciplinary consultancy services to conduct a detailed needs assessment and expanded options analysis, which would build on the detailed assessment of conditions included in the present report and would significantly expand on the initial needs assessment and overview of options set out above. Hiring a multidisciplinary firm will ensure that industry expertise in conference services delivery is obtained to provide in-depth analysis and research on current trends and best practices in the management and operation of modern conference facilities.

88. The scope of activities for 2020 would include a detailed study of current and future needs and requirements over the next 25 to 30 years, in the light of the mandates of the entities headquartered in Nairobi and future programme-specific requirements. The aims of the study would be to determine strategic business and operational goals and targets, explore future conference servicing models and consider potential opportunities for alternative income-generating activities and means to ensure the maximum occupancy and utilization of conference facilities. This would also include a comprehensive risk assessment of the current operational situation in relation to ageing technology and infrastructure and the reputational impacts on the programmes and mandates of the headquartered entities.

89. The scope would also include an expanded options analysis regarding how to meet the requirements defined in the needs assessment, building upon the initial options set out in the present report. The options analysis would include multiple possibilities for delivering an initial capital project, including solutions for physical infrastructure and technology, as well as implementation strategies for delivering the projects. A whole life-cycle approach would be taken, including consideration of both initial and long-term objectives.

90. The work outlined above is expected to serve as a basis for the future development of technical proposals in the areas of building and technical design expertise, including architecture, engineering, electrical, mechanical and audiovisual systems, interpretation, technology, accessibility, sustainability, security and the professional operation of modern conference centres.

91. The estimated cost for multidisciplinary consultancy services for 2020 comes to \$470,000, comprising the amounts set out below.

Consultant

92. A resource requirement of \$84,000 will cover the services of a specialist conferencing consultant with expertise in conferencing and events, to provide direction for the work of the contracted professional services, to facilitate consultations among the various stakeholders and to ensure the timely preparation and submission of the anticipated report.

Contractual services

93. A resource requirement of \$270,200 will cover professional services specialized in the international conferencing and events industry to undertake a business conferencing needs analysis to review, inter alia, current market conditions, conferencing trends and best practice, comparable conferencing facilities, operations, and to conduct a detailed review of projected conferencing and event demands, potential client demands and projected programme requirements. Future delivery models for conference servicing will be considered, as will potential income-generating options with related operating expenses and funding alternatives. This

phase will also include a risk impact assessment to understand the reputational, programmatic and financial implications of any conference failure for the United Nations and Member States.

94. A resource requirement of \$115,800 will cover professional services to support and further expand on outcomes of the business conferencing needs analysis and to expand on the options analysis conducted in 2019. This will also include a risk and opportunity analysis related to the site, buildings and facilities, as well as assessments related to key areas affecting both infrastructure and operations, such as environmental sustainability considerations and universal accessibility for meetings. This phase will also entail the consideration of implementation strategies for delivering the projects and life-cycle approaches with attention to both initial and long-term objectives.

IV. Recommended actions to be taken by the General Assembly

95. **The General Assembly is requested:**

- (a) **To take note of the present report;**
- (b) **To approve the proposed next steps to be undertaken in relation to the development of a detailed needs assessment and expanded options analysis;**
- (c) **To appropriate an amount of \$470,000 under section 29G, Administration, Nairobi, of the proposed programme budget for 2020, which will represent a charge against the contingency fund;**
- (d) **To request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the results of a detailed needs assessment and expanded options analysis to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.**

Annex I

Room utilization in Nairobi and current and potential future meetings that could be held in Nairobi

Table 1

Room utilization in Nairobi

(number of standard meetings and percentage based on notional capacity of 502 meetings per year)

Room	Capacity	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
		Number	Percentage								
1	436	133	26.49	191	38.20	234	46.80	236	45.40	294	58.57
2	552	106	21.12	143	28.60	120	24.00	125	24.00	195	38.84
3	196	219	43.63	234	46.80	235	47.00	155	29.80	332	66.14
4	196	194	38.65	265	53.00	245	49.00	172	33.10	247	49.20
5	20	273	54.38	240	48.00	254	50.80	234	45.00	197	39.24
6	28	284	56.57	217	43.40	199	39.80	222	42.70	253	50.4
7	28	269	53.59	255	51.00	236	47.20	269	51.70	277	55.18
8	28	218	43.43	172	34.40	208	41.60	193	37.10	279	55.58
9	90	317	63.15	280	56.00	249	49.80	278	53.50	346	68.92
10	90	316	62.95	255	51.00	277	55.40	269	51.70	356	70.92
11	60	315	62.75	161	32.20	220	44.00	249	47.90	289	57.57
12 ^a	–	76	15.14	61	12.20	36	7.20	49	9.42	44	8.76
13	80	249	49.6	276	55.20	196	39.20	183	35.20	404	80.48
14	80	267	53.19	256	51.20	252	50.40	234	45.00	297	59.16
Total	1 884	3 236	46.04	3 006	42.94	2 961	42.30	2 868	39.40	3 810	54.21

^a Conference room 12 has been assigned to the United Nations Dispute Tribunal. Its layout is that of a courtroom with furniture designed specifically for court hearings.

Table 2

Calendar and non-calendar meetings held at Nairobi and meetings serviced by the Division of Conference Services outside Nairobi, 2014–2018

Type of meeting	Number of meetings
Calendar meetings held at Nairobi	254
Non-calendar meetings held at Nairobi	15 665
Meetings serviced outside Nairobi	2 799

Table 3

Known recurrent events that could be held in Nairobi given required quality of facilities

Meeting	Periodicity	No. of participants
<i>Events affiliated with UNEP and UN-Habitat</i>		
UNFCCC Conference of the Parties ^a	Annual	15,000 to 20,000
UNCCD Conference of the Parties ^a	Biennial (odd-numbered years)	5,000 to 7,000
CBD, Nagoya Protocol and Cartagena Protocol Conferences of the Parties ^a	Biennial (even-numbered years)	5,000 to 7,000

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Periodicity</i>	<i>No. of participants</i>
Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol	Annual	1,300
Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol	Annual	700
World Urban Forum ^a	Biennial (even-numbered years)	15,000 to 20,000
Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions	Biennial (odd-numbered years)	1,500 to 2,000
Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention	Biennial (even-numbered years)	700
CITES Conference of the Parties ^a	Triennial	4,000 to 6,000
<i>Other events affiliated with the United Nations</i>		
United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ^a	Quadrennial	3,000 to 4,000
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development ^a	Quadrennial	3,000 to 4,000
UNWTO General Assembly	Biennial (odd-numbered years)	1,000 to 1,500
Universal Postal Congress	Quadrennial	1,500 to 2,000
<i>Other events affiliated with the United Nations, organized by non-United Nations entities</i>		
International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent	Quadrennial	1,500 to 2,500
INTERPOL General Assembly	Annual	2,000
International Renewable Energy Agency Assembly	Annual	1,000 to 1,500

Abbreviations: CBD, Convention on Biological Diversity; CITES, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; INTERPOL, International Criminal Police Organization; UNCCD, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; UNFCCC, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; UNWTO, World Tourism Organization.

^a Current conference facilities cannot physically accommodate the event.

Annex II

Locations of meetings of major environmental and human settlements bodies since 2014

Instrument/organ	Headquarters	Location where main governing bodies met					
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Environmental bodies regularly serviced by the United Nations Office at Nairobi</i>							
Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal	Geneva	OEWG 9: CICG Geneva	COP 12: CICG Geneva	OEWG 10: Nairobi ^a	COP 13: CICG Geneva	OEWG 11: CICG Geneva	COP 14: CICG Geneva
Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade	Geneva	–	COP 7: CICG Geneva	–	COP 8: CICG Geneva	–	COP 9: CICG Geneva
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Geneva	–	COP 7: CICG Geneva	–	COP 8: CICG Geneva	–	COP 9: CICG Geneva
Minamata Convention on Mercury	Geneva	INC 6: Bangkok ^a	–	INC 7: Jordan	COP 1: CICG Geneva	COP 2: CICG Geneva	COP 3: CICG Geneva
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Nairobi	OEWG 34: Paris ^b MOP 26: Paris ^b	OEWG 35: Bangkok ^a OEWG 36: Paris ^b MOP 27: Dubai	OEWG 37, CICG: Geneva; OEWG 38: Vienna ^a MOP 28: Kigali	OEWG 39, Bangkok ^a MOP 29, Montreal ^a	OEWG 40, Vienna ^a MOP 30, Quito ^a	OEWG 41, Bangkok ^a MOP 31, Rome ^b
Convention on Biological Diversity	Montreal	Nagoya Protocol ICNP 3, Cartagena Protocol COP 7 and CBD COP 12: Pyeongchang	–	Nagoya Protocol COP 2, Cartagena Protocol COP 8 and CBD COP 13: Cancun	–	Nagoya Protocol COP 3, Cartagena Protocol COP 9 and CBD COP 14: Sharm El-Sheikh	OEWG (post-2020): Nairobi ^a
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity Ecosystem Services	Bonn	–	IPBES 3: Bonn ^b	IPBES 4: Kuala Lumpur	IPBES 5: Bonn ^b	IPBES 6: Medellin	IPBES 7: Paris ^b
<i>Environmental and human settlements bodies not regularly serviced by the United Nations Office at Nairobi</i>							
World Urban Forum	Nairobi	WUF 7: Medellin	–	WUF 8: session skipped	–	WUF 9: Kuala Lumpur	–

<i>Instrument/organ</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Location where main governing bodies met</i>					
		<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Bonn	COP 20: Lima	COP 21: Paris	COP 22: Marrakech	COP 23: Bonn ^b	COP 24: Katowice	COP 25: Santiago
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa	Bonn	–	COP 12: Ankara	–	COP 13: Ordos	–	COP 14: New Delhi

Abbreviations: CBD, Convention on Biological Diversity; CIGC, International Conference Centre Geneva; COP, Conference of the Parties; ICNP, Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol; INC, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee; IPBES, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity Ecosystem Services; OEWG, open-ended working group; OEWG (post-2020), open-ended working group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; WUF, World Urban Forum.

^a Held at Secretariat or regional commission conference centres.

^b Held at conference centres of specialized agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or at the World Conference Centre in Bonn, Germany.