

UNON's review of the technical failure experienced on 8 December 2022

Preamble:

Many thanks to Member States for their support of the Conference Facilities Capital Project. The General Assembly adopted the resolution authorizing the commencement of the design phase of the project, on the basis of Option B, without prejudice to any future decisions regarding the construction phase. The General Assembly has appropriated \$6.2 million in 2023 to fund the project team and to hire the design, programme management and risk management consultancy firms, and has also established a multi-year construction in-progress account, essentially green-lighting the project. Thank you to everyone for reaching this significant milestone.

Background:

1. UNON sincerely apologizes to the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) for the technical failure experienced during the hybrid session of the 160th CPR meeting that took place on 8 December 2022.
2. The setup was tested, as per the Standard Operating Procedures, prior to the start of the meeting and all systems were functioning normally. This type of failure has not been experienced before.
3. Just to recap that during the course of the meeting, when the Executive Director of UNEP was giving her speech remotely, the system feeding in the remote audio malfunctioned.
4. Technicians on-duty troubleshooted the issue but attempts at restoring normal operations with the current hardware proved unsuccessful.
5. A decision was then made to replace the hardware, which required some time.
6. Meanwhile, the in-person meeting proceeded normally with Member States that were physically present in the room able to make their interventions.
7. By the time the replacement equipment was installed, setup and tested, the Chairperson of the CPR had already decided to adjourn the meeting and to reconvene to a later date – today, 12 January 2023.

Mitigating measures:

1. New equipment has been installed to replace the malfunctioning hardware.
2. Once again tests in advance have been conducted, as per normal procedure.
3. Protocols are being revised for escalation steps to be followed should such situations occur again.
4. A review of all conferencing equipment is being undertaken with a view to establishing a priority list of equipment that requires replacing over the next five years.

Final note:

1. By adopting resolution 77/262, the General Assembly endorsed the ACABQ report's observations that "the provision of hybrid and virtual meetings requires a mandate from the General Assembly along with approved legal parameters and technical requirements" and that "the Committee on Conferences could review the necessary requirements for the provision of hybrid and virtual meetings, based on a rigorous assessment by the Secretariat, including best practices, challenges and lessons learned, and in consultation with Member States, for the consideration of the Assembly." In the

same report the ACABQ acknowledged the efforts of the Secretary-General to provide services to Member States and other clients during the pandemic and noted that **“the provision of hybrid meetings requires a decision from the General Assembly to define, inter alia, the legal and technical parameters of these meetings.”**