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Agenda Item 124
Proposed Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007
“Capital Master Plan”

Statement by Anja Zobrist Rentenaar
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Check against delivery

Thank you Mr. Chairman

We would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Reuter for his introduction of the business analysis for construction of a new permanent office building on the North Lawn as well as the Chairman of the ACABQ, Mr. Saha, for the report of the Advisory Committee.

Switzerland supports the conclusions and the recommended course of action outlined in the report of the Secretary-General. From the outset we considered the construction of a new permanent building on the North Lawn a valuable option which makes economic and long term corporate sense. Strategy III would have been our preferred option, provided the new building could be used for swing space. The timing, however, didn't permit it. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation of strictly separating the renovation of the UN Headquarter from any plan of constructing a new permanent building.

At this late stage, it is important to focus our attention on what is really at stake - the urgent need to renovate this building in order to ensure the safety and well-being of its occupants - and to move forward decisively with strategy IV. Any further delay has to be avoided. There are, after all, escalating costs of \$10 million a month to be factored in as well.

Although my delegation at this time does not have a firm position, we do not agree with the ACABQ that there is no merit in conducting a comprehensive feasibility study. This question has to be carefully considered and we are looking forward to taking it up at the 61st session. In the meantime we would want to ensure that no action is taken that would preclude the construction of a new permanent building on the North Lawn at some future date.

It is with great regret that we have learnt of the resignation of Mr. Reuter. He brought a breath of fresh air to this committee, for which we are grateful. We would like to thank him for his effort and his patience and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Thank you Mr. Chairman