

## **Progress report on the relocation of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean**

### **Introduction**

1. The New Administrative Capital (NAC) in Egypt has been under construction by the Government of Egypt since 2015. The NAC is located around 45 km east of Cairo and covers an area of 700 km<sup>2</sup>. The Government of Egypt started relocating the main government departments and ministries in 2024. It is planned that the transfer of parliament, presidential palaces, government ministries and foreign embassies will be completed by 2026.
2. The Government of Egypt has offered to construct a United Nations (UN) building in the Diplomatic District of the NAC, to co-locate the UN entities in Egypt. This will enable the UN to come together in an integrated way in support of the Government and people of Egypt, and in line with UN General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 2018 on the reform of the UN development system, including achieving efficiency gains through common back-offices and common premises.
3. Egypt hosts 38 UN entities including 20 country offices and 18 regional offices of different sizes and nature, and 30 of these entities have accepted the offer to move to the UN common premises in the NAC.
4. In October 2022, the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean supported the proposal from the Government of Egypt to relocate the WHO Regional Office to the UN common premises, taking into account the governance, financial, business continuity and staffing considerations set out in paragraphs 16–18 below.
5. The WHO section of the UN common premises is a 34 487 m<sup>2</sup> dedicated building with an independent entrance and identity, sharing a number of common and public areas with the other participating UN entities, including a cafeteria, gym, prayer room, storage and parking, and potentially other common services such as security services, fleet, information technology and facility management.
6. The Government of Egypt is responsible for the construction of the UN common premises in the NAC, including civil and finishing works and the provision of the minimum required electromechanical foundation. The participating UN entities would be responsible for the operational, running and maintenance costs, as well as for the cost of furniture, equipment, meeting and conference spaces and services, information technology services and audiovisual equipment, and common and public areas.
7. The project is being implemented under the guiding principle of shared ownership and leadership by all UN entities participating in the move to the UN common premises. This collaborative approach ensures that all entities contribute to and benefit from the project, promoting a unified and efficient operational environment.

### **Progress update on the UN common premises project in the NAC**

8. Considerable progress has been made by the Government of Egypt in relation to the construction of the UN common premises. The basis of design for the electromechanical works is complete and the works are in progress at the basement level. The concrete work of the building has been completed, and the external parking and landscape construction are in progress. The masonry work for the external building parameters is almost complete (see Annex 1).

9. A project management team has been recruited to coordinate between the Government of Egypt and the participating UN entities on the construction and fitting of the UN common premises. The team consists of one internationally recruited engineer at P4 and one locally recruited engineer at NO-B level. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is managing this team and handling the cost recovery from participating UN entities, according to the cost-sharing mechanism detailed in Annex 2.

10. A common premises task force was formed to ensure technical coordination and monitor the implementation of recommendations. The task force is intended to facilitate technical decision-making as the project progresses. With 100 000 m<sup>2</sup> of building space and 80 000 m<sup>2</sup> of external area, numerous technical decisions are required. To support this process, the project management team, in coordination with WHO (which occupies approximately half of the building), will conduct an initial review before presenting the findings to the task force for discussion and guidance. Proposed solutions will then be presented to the UN Operations Management Team and submitted to the UN Senior Management Team, as the ultimate decision-making body, for final endorsement.

11. In coordination with the project management team, and on behalf of the UN entities in Egypt, WHO is providing technical support to the UN common premises project related to the building infrastructure, including the electromechanical works, information technology, green building applications, security measure requirements and application of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

12. The WHO technical team is progressively reviewing and approving the WHO space allocation in the building, in addition to the common areas, in close collaboration with the contracted interior design agency and UNDP. This includes the interior design of the premises, including the main entrances, meeting rooms, offices, hallways, bathrooms and UN common areas such as the gym, cafeteria, clinic and meditation/prayer room.

13. Total expenditure for the UN common premises project in 2024 amounted to US\$ 656 000, out of which WHO's share was US\$ 224 000. The budget for 2025 is expected to be around US\$ 697 000, out of which WHO's share will amount to US\$ 237 000.

14. In February 2024, the WHO Egypt Country Office decided to co-locate with the WHO Regional Office in the WHO section of the UN premises for cost-efficiency and cost-saving purposes.

15. Based on progress of the work so far and the remaining work to be performed on site, the completion date of the UN common premises project is expected to be the end of 2027.

### **Governance, financial and other considerations relevant to the relocation of the Regional Office**

16. Currently, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has a workforce of about 640, of whom 120 are internationally recruited staff, 330 are locally recruited staff and 190 are consultants, UN volunteers or outsourced personnel. These numbers are subject to change in view of the current financial situation, and reprioritization and realignment exercise.

17. The cost estimate for relocation remains at about US\$ 10.822 million (please note Annexes 3, 4 and 5 in this regard). The estimate does not include potential cost implications relating to changes in the workforce and to the transition period while operations have to be maintained in both locations. The total cost of the project is likely to increase by 10–15%. The estimated breakdown is detailed in Annex 5. This estimated cost is not yet accounted for in the current and next biennial budgets and will be subject to further consultations in future reports to the Regional Committee.

18. The relocation cost estimate assumes that after completion of the construction and internal fittings of the UN common premises, the current WHO Regional Office premises in Nasr City, Cairo, and the new UN common premises in the NAC, will operate in parallel for at least 12–18 months during

2028–2029 and beyond, if required, to ensure business continuity. Finalizing the transition from Nasr City to the NAC will depend on completion of public functionalities in the NAC, such as international schools, medical services and an international airport with similar capacity to the current international airport in Cairo. A phased approach will be required, subject to the financial landscape, to prevent vulnerabilities that would impact the ongoing delivery of technical programmes and operations, and to ensure that the Regional Office appeals to, attracts and retains talent.

## **Conclusion**

19. The Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean is kindly requested to take note of the report and provide advice on the progress.



## Annex 1

### Photographs of the UN common premises project, as of February 2025



## Annex 2

### UN common premises cost-sharing mechanism

#### Cost-sharing mechanism for the UN common premises

20. The cost-sharing mechanism for the UN common premises is designed to ensure an equitable distribution of project costs among the participating UN entities, based on the proportional share of agency-specific areas.

21. **Agency-specific area:** This refers to any space exclusively used by a UN agency. For this calculation, the agency-specific area includes workstations, dedicated meeting rooms, storage, archives, lockers, filing areas and parking spaces allocated for official UN vehicles.

22. **Proportional cost share:** Each agency will contribute to the costs proportionally, based on the percentage that their agency-specific area represents in relation to the total agency-specific areas within the common premises.

#### Distribution of costs between WHO and the other UN entities

23. The building is jointly shared by WHO (Regional Office and Egypt Country Office) and 29 other UN entities. Both WHO and the other UN entities share certain common areas.

24. Costs are proportionally distributed between WHO and the other UN entities based on their respective agency-specific areas.

- **WHO:** Covers 47.45% of the costs, corresponding to their agency-specific area of 34 487 m<sup>2</sup>.
- **Other UN entities:** Cover 52.55% of the costs, corresponding to their cumulative agency-specific area of 38 200 m<sup>2</sup>.

25. For the cost of the project management team and related operational costs, it was agreed that WHO would pay 50% of their share. This is calculated as  $47.45 \times 50\% = 23.72\%$  of the total staff cost budget.

### Annex 3

#### WHO-submitted requirements for the UN common premises

##### Staffing levels

Grade level	Numbers
D2	3
D1	9
P5–P6	47
P1–P4	120
National Professional Officer, Junior Professional Officer, UN Volunteer	56
General Services Staff	300
Drivers	9
Consultants	60
Cleaners/messengers	53
<b>Current total</b>	<b>657</b>
Forecast growth	197
<b>Forecast total</b>	<b>854</b>

##### WHO guidelines for office space

Grade	Square metre standard
Regional Director	24
D2	24
D1	17.84
P1–P5	8.9
National Professional Officer, Junior Professional Officer, UN Volunteer	8.9
General Services Staff	5.94

P5 and above should be given individual rooms.

All staff must have access to natural light.

**Common areas**

Description	Details
Official vehicles parking space	11 vehicles
Staff vehicles parking space	350 vehicles
Reception area	350 m <sup>2</sup>
Storage	3350 m <sup>2</sup>
Archives	500 m <sup>2</sup>
Server room	50 m <sup>2</sup>
Communications room (per floor)	10 m <sup>2</sup>
Library area	150 m <sup>2</sup>
Cafeteria area	400 m <sup>2</sup>
Gym area	400 m <sup>2</sup>
Clinic	130 m <sup>2</sup>
Breastfeeding room	50 m <sup>2</sup>
Staff lounge	150 m <sup>2</sup>
Prayer/meditation room	100 m <sup>2</sup>
Dedicated meeting rooms	1 conference/plenary hall for 450 pax complete with control room, 5 interpretation booths, administrative and logistical support areas, media room and VIP lounge 1 SHOC (emergency operations) room for 30 pax with space for translation booths and control room 1 Cabinet meeting room for 10 pax 3 meeting rooms for 30 pax 2 meeting rooms for 30 pax, plus space for translation booths 2 meeting/videoconference rooms for 8 pax 1 workshop room for 50 pax (modular seating)
Generator	1000 kVA standby generator with automatic transfer panel
Uninterruptible power supply (UPS)	250 kVA modular UPS unit

## Annex 4

### Proposed UN common premises

	Other UN entities floor area in square metres	WHO floor area in square metres
Basement		20 000
Ground floor	10 875	4 016
First floor	8 652	3 011
Second floor	8 053	3 735
Third floor	9 412	3 735
Fourth floor	9 412	3 735
Fifth floor	9 412	3 735
Sixth floor	7 661	3 735
<b>Total</b>	<b>63 477</b>	<b>25 702</b>
<b>Total area</b>		<b>89 179</b>



## Annex 5

**Estimated cost of WHO Regional Office relocation to the UN common premises, including interior finishing, furnishings, and information and communications technology**

Item	Quantity	Unit price (US\$)	Total price (US\$)
<b>Furniture cost</b>			
1 Regional Director's office	1	35 000	35 000
2 Director offices (D2)	3	8 453	25 359
3 Director offices (D1)	8	8 453	67 624
4 P5 and P6 offices	50	5 075	253 750
5 P1–P4 staff	90	3 993	359 370
6 National Professional Officers	35	3 993	139 755
7 General Services staff	300	3 743	1 122 900
8 Non-staff	150	3 743	561 450
<b>Conference and meeting rooms</b>			
9 Main conference room (450 pax)	1	2 250 000	2 250 000
10 Cabinet meeting room (10 pax)	1	75 000	75 000
11 SHOC (emergency operations) room (30 pax)	1	250 000	250 000
12 Small meeting rooms (40 pax)	10	104 000	1 040 000
13 Huddle/meeting rooms (6 pax)	20	5 200	104 000
<b>Common service areas</b>			
14 Main entrance lobby	1	40 000	40 000
15 Clinic	1	25 000	25 000
16 Print shop	1	100 000	100 000
17 Archiving area	1	35 000	35 000
18 Rack for 3500m store	1	195 500	195 500
19 Share in new cafeteria	1	90 000	90 000
20 Share in new gym	1	75 000	75 000
21 Lounges in typical floors (6 pax)	10	2800	28 000
22 Transportation per employee	400	120	48 000
23 UPS unit (250 kVA)	1	160 000	160 000
24 Share in new generator	1	150 000	150 000
25 Access control system	1	120 000	120 000
26 CCTV system	1	150 000	150 000
<b>IT infrastructure</b>			
27 Main data centre room	1	110 000	110 000
28 IT equipment	1	2 696 015	2 696 015
<b>Contingencies</b>			
29 5% contingency estimate			515 336
<b>Total</b>			<b>10 822 059</b>