

**Relocation of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean to the UN Common Premises project, to be located in the New Administrative Capital of Egypt, as proposed by the Government of Egypt**

**Introduction**

1. Since 2015, a New Administrative Capital (NAC) in Egypt has been under construction by the Government of Egypt. The Government of Egypt plans to relocate the main government departments and ministries, as well as foreign embassies, to the NAC and house them there.
2. In late 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt briefed the United Nations (UN) Country Team on the NAC and plans for a UN House/Compound to be located in the NAC. In early 2019, estimated UN requirements for UN Common Premises were shared by the Resident Coordinator with the aforementioned Ministry. Renewed efforts to discuss the UN Common Premises started in February 2021.
3. In 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt communicated to the UN Secretary General a proposal for a memorandum of understanding between the Government of Egypt and the United Nations to build and lease UN Common Premises in the NAC free of charge for a period that is now extended to 99 years. In line with the UN reform targets, this offer was accepted by the Resident Coordinator on behalf of participating UN agencies. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will sign the memorandum of understanding on behalf of participating UN agencies, funds and programmes (collectively “UN entities”), in accordance with their respective rules and regulations.
4. Egypt hosts 38 UN entities, including 20 country offices and 18 regional offices of different sizes and nature, 34 of which have so far expressed willingness to accept the offer to join to the UN Common Premises project in the NAC. The WHO Country Office for Egypt, as a member of the UN Country Team, will also join the UN Common Premises. A project management team has been established under the Resident Coordinator’s oversight to coordinate the project as per agreed UN Development System Business Operation Strategy (BOS) Reform.
5. The Government of Egypt would be responsible for construction of the UN Common Premises in the NAC, including civil and finishing works, and the provision of 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, common areas, meetings and conference spaces and services, information technology services and audiovisual equipment, lobby, internal public areas, service rooms and cafeteria associated with the UN Common Premises.

**Proposal by the Government of Egypt for WHO/EMRO to relocate to the UN Common Premises in the NAC**

6. Following the establishment of the abovementioned agreement with the UN Resident Coordinator in Egypt on behalf of participating UN entities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt submitted a formal request to WHO’s Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO or the Regional Office), in March 2022 inviting the Regional Office to join the UN Common Premises project in the NAC. In line with the offer to the UN, WHO/EMRO would have an independent, but attached, building within the UN Common Premises and a separate memorandum of understanding would be entered into with the Government of Egypt in accordance with WHO’s rules and regulations.

7. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and the Armed Forces Engineering Authority, in charge of building the Diplomatic District in the NAC, have indicated that construction works for the UN Common Premises will start as soon as WHO/EMRO has confirmed its position on the relocation. The design of the UN Common Premises building will follow accordingly.

8. If WHO/EMRO joins the UN Common Premises project in the NAC, the design and construction will include a dedicated building with an independent entrance and identity. However, a number of common and public areas will be shared by all participating UN agencies, funds and programmes, including the cafeteria, gym, prayer rooms, storage and parking. There would be potential for further expansion of common services including administration and logistics, conference services, fleet management, and security services. Other areas considered in the UN reform agenda such as common finance, common human resources and common procurement services may not apply to WHO as a specialized agency that follows its own internal rules, regulations, policies, practices and oversight mechanisms governed by the World Health Assembly.

9. WHO/EMRO clarified that while WHO Country Office for Egypt will participate in the UN Common Premises project, the Regional Office's requirements for business continuity serving 22 Member States and territories requires long-term planning, including in light of financial implications arising from the relocation that impact future leadership and biennial budgets. The financial implications and business continuity risks (which could impact the Regional Office's optimal performance) arising from the proposed relocation of the Regional Office to the UN Common Premises in the NAC would require careful consideration and consultation by WHO/EMRO, including with senior management at WHO headquarters and with Member States at regional and/or global levels.

10. In May 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, considering WHO/EMRO's space and infrastructure requirements, reiterated its proposal.

11. At the time of writing of this document, the Government of Egypt has not suggested or proposed that WHO/EMRO may join the UN Common Premises in the NAC at a later stage.

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

12. The WHO Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean has been hosted by the Government of Egypt since 1949, initially in Alexandria until the year 2000, and since then in Cairo. This presence is subject to and governed by a Host Agreement signed by WHO and the Government of Egypt for this purpose. As plans to expand the Regional Office in Alexandria did not materialize in the mid-1990s, the Regional Office signed a lease agreement with the Governor of Cairo for 5000 m<sup>2</sup> of land in Nasr City at a yearly fee of 1 LE per square metre per year. The total rent was waived by the Municipality of Cairo. This lease is subject to renewal in 2026.

13. The seat of the Regional Office is determined by either the Executive Board or the Health Assembly, following discussion with the Regional Committee. The Health Assembly approved the principle of the relocation of the Regional Office from Alexandria to Cairo<sup>1</sup> and authorized the financing of the new Regional Office building.<sup>2</sup> A move of office within Cairo does not require further authorization from either the Executive Board or Health Assembly, unless there are financial or other implications requiring approval of the Health Assembly, for example for the purpose of construction of a new building that would require the financing from the Real Estate Capital Fund. However, even in the case of a move of location within Cairo with no financial or other implications requiring the Health Assembly's authorization, the matter may be reported for information to the Executive Board.

14. The New Administrative Capital is not considered a new city, but rather an expansion of Cairo's borders to include this new development. A major reason for the undertaking is to relieve congestion in Cairo.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> See summary records of the Forty-ninth World Health Assembly, document WHA49/1996/REC/3, Committee B, 4th meeting, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution WHA50.11.

<sup>3</sup> Cabinet approves presidential decree to redraw Cairo border to include new capital – Politics – Egypt – Ahram Online; reference to presidential decree of 8 June 2022.

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light of the foregoing, the relocation of the Regional Office to the NAC could be considered a move of office within Cairo.

15. The new area is located about 45 km east of Cairo covering an area of 700 km<sup>2</sup> with 21 residential and 25 dedicated districts, including the Diplomatic District (where the UN Common Premises are expected to be located). It is expected to have educational institutions, a central park, hospitals and clinics, mosques and churches, hotels and conference centres, a 90 000-seat stadium, 40 000 hotel rooms, solar energy farms, electric railway and a new international airport. It is planned that the transfer of parliament, presidential palaces, government ministries and foreign embassies will be completed by 2026.

16. As indicated earlier, approval from the Health Assembly is required when acquiring a change of duty station – that is, in a new city or country – as well as for allocation of funds from the Real Estate Fund governed by the Assembly for the construction of new buildings or extension of existing buildings. This does not include disposal of fixed assets (buildings) or signing lease agreements.

17. However the relocation of the Regional Office to the UN Common Premises in the NAC would also have business continuity and staffing implications, in addition to financial requirements that should be included in the proposed biennial budget. Relocation of the Regional Office from Alexandria to Cairo affected locally recruited staff more than international staff, and around a third of locally recruited staff opted to separate from WHO. Challenges faced due to the re-establishment of the workforce and maintaining business continuity during the first biennium after that relocation (2000–2001) were considerable.

18. Currently, WHO/EMRO 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. Given the workforce required to provide technical and operational support to countries and territories within the Region—half of which are experiencing ongoing emergencies and escalated demands—the total workforce is expected to increase by 30% in the next 5 years, to around 850.

19. Construction of the UN Common Premises is expected to start late this year with a tentative target completion date of end of 2024. Once construction is complete, the space will be handed over to a project team at the UN Resident Coordinator's Office for setting up required internal IT infrastructure, the interior for the conference and meeting rooms (including audiovisual equipment) and furnishing the office spaces and common areas on behalf of the participating UN entities. This process is estimated to take roughly 6–9 months, with an estimated completion date of mid-2025.

20. The cost estimate at this point is at about US\$ 10.822 million. Please note Annexes 1, 3 and 4 in this regard. The estimate is based on existing information for space and infrastructure requirements. The estimate does not include potential implications with regard to the workforce or the transition period while operations have to be maintained in both locations, if it is decided that WHO/EMRO relocate to the UN Common Premises. The likely total cost of the project is expected to increase by 10–15%. The estimated breakdown is detailed in Annex 4. This estimated cost is not foreseen in the current or future budget and would require consideration by senior management and allocation of required funds. If required, a further detailed plan including assumptions and expected costs, schedules and timelines should be prepared.

21. The relocation cost estimate assumes that for at least 12–18 months after completion of the construction and internal fittings of the new UN Common Premises, the current WHO Regional Office premises in Nasr City, Cairo, and the new office premises in the NAC would operate in parallel during the 2026–2027 biennium, and beyond if required. This parallel operation would be required to facilitate business continuity. Finalizing the transition from Nasr City to the NAC would depend on completion of functionality in the NAC such as international schools, medical services and an international airport with similar capacity to the current international airport in Cairo.

22. Any potential relocation will impact all the workforce. With more than two thirds of staff of the Regional Office recruited locally, and international professional staff serving 22 countries and territories including eight countries in graded and protracted emergencies, all requirements and implications with regards to current residences, accommodation availability, city amenities and transportation facilities would impact the plan and

might have additional business and financial implications for the delivery of results by WHO in the Region. A phased approach would be required in order to prevent vulnerabilities that would impact ongoing delivery of technical programmes and operations, and to ensure that the Regional Office appeals to, attracts and retains talent.

## **Conclusion**

23. Members of the Regional Committee are kindly requested to provide guidance to the Regional Director with regard to 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 12–22.

**Annex 1**  
**WHO/EMRO submitted requirements for the UN Common Premises**

**Staffing levels**

Grade level	Numbers
D2	3
D1	9
P5-P6	47
P1-P4	120
National Professional Staff, JPO, UNV	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	Sqm standard
Regional Director	24
D2	24
D1	17.84
P1-P5	8.9
National Professional Staff, JPO, UNV	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 room	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>
Praying/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
UPS	250 kVA modular UPS unit

**Annex 2**  
**Note Verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt to WHO**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Office of the Assistant Foreign Minister

**Registration no.:** 10419  
**Date:** Sunday, June 19, 2022

**Memorandum**

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Assistant Foreign Minister for Financial and Administrative Affairs and the New Administrative Capital, prSents its compliments to the Office of the Regional Director of the World Health Organization for the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

With reference to the ongoing coordination between the working teams of both sides as part of the Egyptian government's call for all UN entities, including the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, to move to the new premises in the Diplomatic District, after completing the necessary official procedures and the executive steps; and

Further to our memorandum No. 8281 dated May 24, 2022 regarding the review of the privileges included in the Egyptian government's call for moving all UN entities to the new premises in the Diplomatic District, and in this regard, to the meeting that was coordinated on June 14, 2022 regarding the review of the building's technical installations to be borne by the Egyptian government, i.e. implementation of fully finished construction including connections and outlets, heating and ventilation system, air conditioning system, firefighting system, back-up loads, UPS networks and emergency loads related to life safety;

While the UN entities shall provide the interior furniture of offices and meeting and conference rooms, security systems and requirements, the main control room, UPS units and generators for any additional loads, equipment for restaurants, cafeterias and kitchens, all equipment of the server room, as well as any equipment for lighting, furniture and interior decorations, it should be noted again that the building's architectural design includes (connected/ separate) identity for the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region independent from the rest of the UN offices, including electricity, water, sewage, and air conditioning networks that are completely separate from the rest of the building's network services.

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs looks forward to more cooperation from the Regional Office and to providing the engineering office with the required technical specifications so that they can be included in the final design, in parallel with the necessary procedures to obtain initial approval from your side so that the Egyptian government can move quickly towards starting and completing the necessary construction works in accordance with the established timeline.

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Assistant Foreign Minister for Financial and Administrative Affairs and the New Administrative Capital, would like to take this opportunity to express its utmost respect and appreciation to the Office of the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

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To the Office of the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region



وزاره الخارجية

مكتب مساعد وزير الخارجية

١٨٨٦ رقم القيد:

التاريخ: الثلاثاء ٢٤ مايو ٢٠٢٢

**مذكرة**

تهدى وزارة خارجية جمهورية مصر العربية - مكتب السفير مساعد وزير الخارجية للشئون المالية والإدارية والعاصمة الإدارية الجديدة - أطيب تحياتها إلى مكتب المدير الإقليمي لمنظمة الصحة العالمية لشرق المتوسط، وبالإشارة إلى المذكرات المتبادلة بشأن متابعة التسبيقات الجارية بين فرق العمل لدى الجانبين في إطار دعوة الحكومة المصرية لإنقال كافة البيانات الأممية للمقر الجديد بالحى الدبلوماسي، ومن ضمنها المكتب الإقليمي لمنظمة الصحة العالمية لشرق المتوسط بعد الانتهاء من الاجراءات الرسمية والخطوات التنفيذية لذلك؛

تتشرف بالإفادة أن الوزارة تقدر مستوى الاستجابة لمكتب الإقليمي لتبادل المعلومات عن الاحتياجات اللوجستية المتعلقة ببعض العاملين وحجم ومستوى الأعمال والأنشطة والمجتمعات بمكتب الإقليمي وارتباطها بها خطة المكتب للتطلعات المستقبلية والتي تم بالفعل أخذها في الاعتبار في التعديلات الجديدة للتصميم الهندسي للمبنى ليصبح لمكتب الإقليمي هوية مستقلة بشكل (متصل/منفصل) عن باقي المكاتب الأممية ووفقاً للعرض المرئي الذي تم تنسيقه لممثلي البيانات الأممية يوم الخميس الموافق ١٩ مايو ٢٠٢٢.

وأتصالاً بذلك، تتشرف بالإفادة أن الحكومة المصرية تؤكد في دعوتها لمكتب الإقليمي على توفير (الأرض/ أعمال البناء/ تسليم المبنى كامل التشطيب والمرافق/ موقف السيارات/ Rent free لمدة ٩٩ عام)، مع تحمل منظومة الأمم المتحدة التأمين وأعمال التشغيل والصيانة والتامين والاستهلاكات الدورية، علماً بأنه جاري التفاوض حالياً صياغة مشروع اتفاقية للمقر الأممي الموحد مع برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي (UNDP) ينص على كافة الإلتزامات بين الطرفين.

وإذ تتطلع وزارة الخارجية المصرية إلى المزيد من التعاون من جانب المكتب الإقليمي ومحاولة تقديم الدعم اللازم لتسريع الاجراءات الداخلية بالمنظمة للحصول على موافقة مبنية من جانبكم ليتسنى للحكومة المصرية المضي بخطى سريعة نحو البدء في أعمال التشييدات الازمة للمقر وانهاؤه وفقاً للمخطط الزمني المقرر.

وإذ تنتهز وزارة خارجية جمهورية مصر العربية - مكتب السفير مساعد وزير الخارجية للشئون المالية والإدارية والعاصمة الإدارية الجديدة - هذه المناسبة لنعرب لمكتب المدير الإقليمي لمنظمة الصحة العالمية لشرق المتوسط عن فائق الاحترام والتقدير.

إلى مكتب المدير الإقليمي لمنظمة الصحة العالمية لشرق المتوسط



**Annex 3**  
**Proposed UN Common Premises with or without WHO**

**Option 1. UN common premises with WHO**

	UN Floor area in square meters	WHO Floor area in square meters
<b>Basement floor</b>		20 000
<b>Ground floor</b>	10 875	4016
<b>First floor</b>	8652	3011
<b>Second floor</b>	8053	3735
<b>Third floor</b>	9412	3735
<b>Fourth floor</b>	9412	3735
<b>Fifth floor</b>	9412	3735
<b>Sixth floor</b>	7661	3735
<b>Total</b>	<b>63 477</b>	<b>25 702</b>
<b>Total area</b>		<b>89 179</b>

**Option 2. UN common premises without WHO**

	UN Floor area in square meters
<b>Basement floor</b>	15 000
<b>Ground floor</b>	12 923
<b>First floor</b>	11 446
<b>Second floor</b>	10 087
<b>Third floor</b>	11 446
<b>Fourth floor</b>	11 446
<b>Fifth floor</b>	11 446
<b>Total area</b>	<b>68 794</b>

**Annex 4**  
**WHO/EMRO estimated relocation cost to the UN Common Premises –**  
**the cost includes interior finishing, furnishing and ICT.**

	Item	Quantity	Unit price (USD)	Total price (USD)
<b>Furniture Cost</b>				
1	RD office	1	35 000	35 000
2	Director offices (D2)	3	8453	25 359
3	Director offices (D1)	8	8453	67 624
4	P5 and P6 offices	50	5075	253 750
5	P1–P4 staff	90	3993	359 370
6	NO staff	35	3,993	139 755
7	G staff	300	3743	1 122 900
8	Non-staff	150	3743	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 room	1	250 000	250 000
12	Small meeting rooms (40 pax)	10	104 000	1 040 000
13	Huddle/meeting rooms (6 pax)	20	5200	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>