


Seismic Mitigation Project Newsletter

ISSUE N° 5 / JANUARY 2023

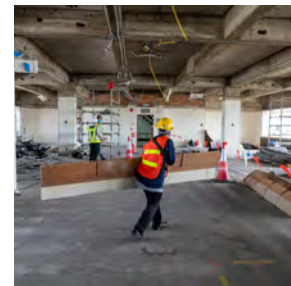
1 LIFE-CYCLE
REPLACEMENT



2 SEISMIC CODE
COMPLIANCE



3 18% ENERGY
EFFICIENCY



4 UNIVERSAL
ACCESSIBILITY



5 HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS
REMOVAL



6 HEALTH &
SAFETY



7 SUSTAINABILITY



8 20% SPACE
OPTIMIZATION



9 BUSINESS
CONTINUITY



2022 Wrapped, 2023 Begins!

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first issue of the SMP newsletter for 2023. This is a milestone year for the project because we expect to see the full completion of works and moves to the renovated space by year-end. We begin the year with good news that the General Assembly in its resolution [A/RES/77/263](#) has positively endorsed our request for an appropriation of the full budget required to complete the project.

Further to the completion of the Tendering Phase with the award of all key contracts, we commenced Phase 1 construction in November 2021, which is currently in progress and due to be completed in the second quarter of 2023.

Since December 2021, our clients have been in swing space, the UN Agencies Funds and Programmes (UNAFPs) consolidated in Block A of the Secretariat and 8 ESCAP Divisions have been piloting flexible workplace initiatives in the newly constructed SMP Swing Space Building. They have been adapting to new ways of working and sharing feedback and lessons learned to inform the design of the final

workspace. In 2022, we conducted extensive consultations with 25 client groups from the UNAFPs to finalize the designs of their final workspaces and select ergonomic furniture and worktools to support their programmatic requirements. In this context, we will hear some candid feedback from SMP Change Champions and Logistic Leaders who have been the glue that holds the project and our clients together, facilitating the timely implementation of works.

In this issue, we are also pleased to provide you with updates on our ongoing attention to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) aimed at ensuring a safe ESCAP premises.

As we head into the final year to complete the project by December 2023, on behalf of the SMP team, I want to thank you for all the kind support provided and patience shown over the past years. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to our continued collaboration in what promises to be an exciting New Year. Wishing you a joyful, healthy and productive 2023!

Sunari Silva, Project Manager, SMP

Construction Updates

With the award of all key contracts including the contract for the general construction works, the construction phase commenced in November 2021. Phase 1 construction works covering Block B of the Secretariat building are underway and are scheduled to be completed in the second quarter of 2023.

Mobilization Works

In November 2021, the construction mobilization commenced with the general contractor cordoning off the area behind the Secretariat building and erecting on-site construction offices and staging areas. Soon afterward, we saw the scaffolding rising up and completely draping the Block B tower. The construction area in Block B of the Secretariat was strictly isolated from the occupied Block A to ensure no construction-related disruptions or health risks were experienced by the occupants in Block A.

Demolition of Existing Space

Over the last 14 months, the general contractors have stripped the interior space of Block B, removing all old building elements to install seismic reinforcement, installing new building systems including electrical, mechanical and fire safety systems, replacing the existing windows on both the North and South facades of the building with an energy efficient solution, safely removing all hazardous materials and implementing a brand new office space through the complete renovation of the interior space.



Interior Demolition Works

Seismic Reinforcement Works Completed

Over the last 12 months, the contractors have mostly completed the seismic reinforcement works in Block B primarily by wrapping Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymer (CFRP) on selected columns and beams. This is a new technology and approach to seismic reinforcement of buildings and the works were conducted under the oversight of seismic engineers from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok who are the designers of the seismic reinforcement solution for the Project.

New Façade Solution

The old glazed window solution on the North and South sides of the building has been fully replaced with an energy efficient solution. It is more modern in appearance and has a superior light transmission with reduced heat gain and UV transmission into the building, thereby contributing to achieving the energy efficiency mandate of the SMP.

The 15-storey high sheer wall on the West side of Block B was stripped of the existing damaged Italian Carrera marble and the concrete surface was repaired and reinforced with CFRP after which the installation of the locally sourced Thai Saraburi Marble cladding commenced. The replacement of the Italian Carrera with the Thai Saraburi is not only a cost-

saving initiative but also an opportunity seized to use comparable locally sourced materials.

Replacement of the Existing Electrical and Mechanical Systems

The old electrical and mechanical systems have been stripped and replaced with newly designed and more efficient air conditioning, electrical and fire safety systems such as the installation of new sprinklers and fire alarms. All new systems will be integrated into the existing Building Management Monitoring System (BMS).

Implementation of the Interior Works

In the final phase, interior space will be renovated to implement a new and modernized office space solution. Once the general contractor has completed their works and tested and commissioned all major building systems, the furniture providers will install the new furniture system followed by the finalization of the IT works to complete the office space. *(more information on the modernized new workspace is covered separately in this newsletter)*

Phases 1 and 2 Construction Completion

Although phase 1 construction was originally expected to be completed in the

fourth quarter of 2022, it has now been delayed to the second quarter of 2023. The works are progressing under the close management and supervision of the project team to complete the project by year-end.

UNAFP occupants can expect to start moving into Block B of the Secretariat Building starting in the second quarter of 2023. ESCAP occupants can expect to move into the renovated space in Block A closer to the end of 2023.

Once the project is completed, the Secretariat building will achieve 16-18% gains in energy efficiency, 20% gains in space efficiency, seismic, fire and life safety code compliance as well as complying with mandates related to sustainability and accessibility.



Scaffolding Installation for Phase 1 Construction



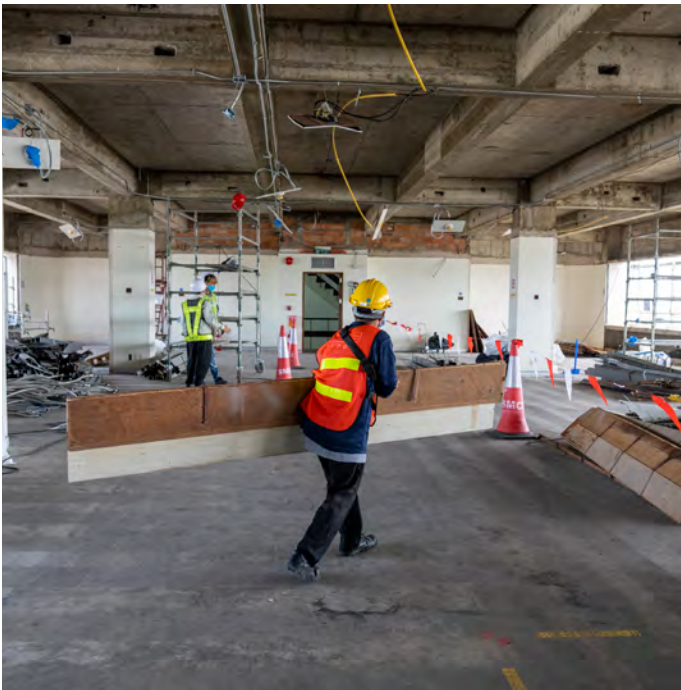
Groundbreaking ceremony to formally inaugurate the construction works in November 2021



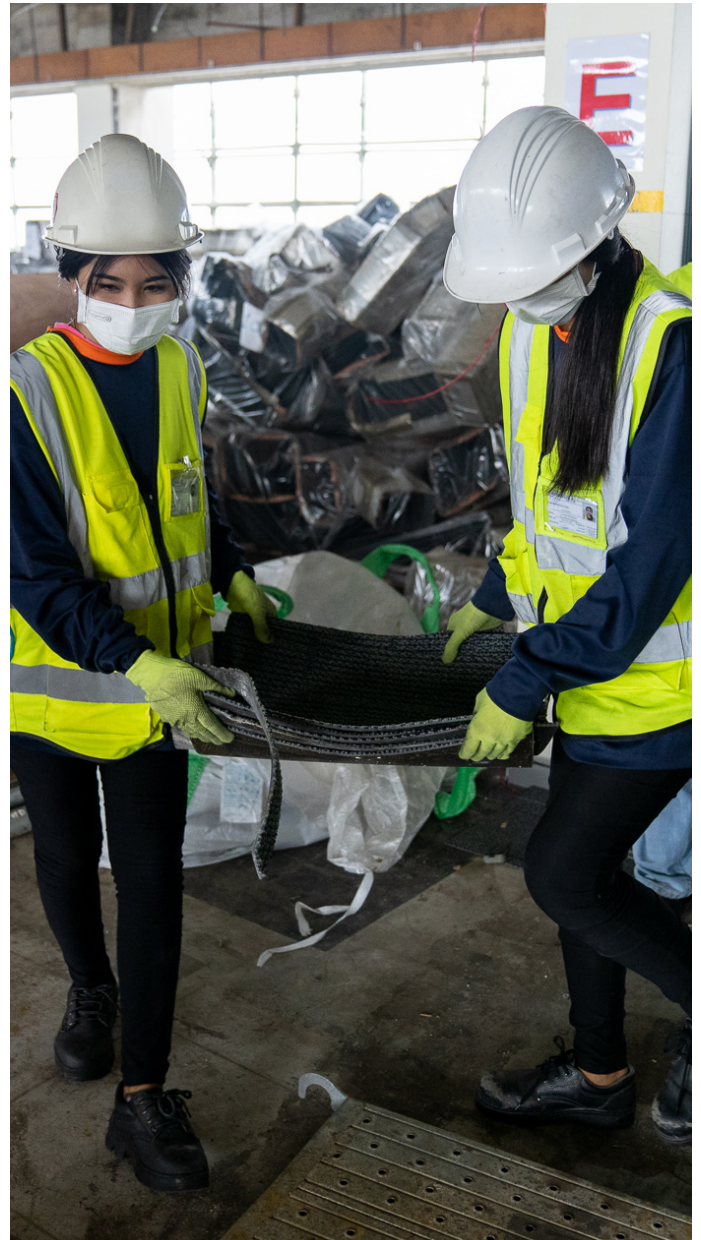
Interior Demolition Works - Existing Smoke Detector Removal



Briefing and construction site walkthrough with the Vice Minister of Japan



Interior Demolition Works - Construction Waste Removal



Interior Demolition Works - Existing Carpet Removal

Future Workspace - What's Next?

Through the complete interior renovation of the Secretariat Building, the project will deliver a safe, modernized, sustainable and accessible workspace solution for all occupants from both ESCAP and UNAFPs. Click on the image below to watch the SMP 3D Animated Walkthrough 2022 video.



Safety, Health and Wellbeing

The new workspace solution primarily takes into consideration the seismic fire and life safety as well as the health and wellbeing of occupants in the building. This is achieved through the implementation of complete seismic, fire and life safety upgrades that comply with the relevant building codes, which is a core project mandate. The installation of a new and more efficient ventilation system ensures increased

air quality and effective temperature control.

Access to Natural Light for All

The replacement of the existing windows on the North and South sides of the building with energy efficient double glazed windows, reduces heat gain in the building, letting in more natural light while minimizing harmful UV rays.

The open layout of the floor plates also provides increased access to natural light for all occupants, whereas in the past the windows were accessible only to those who had private enclosed offices along the window walls.

Ergonomics, Sustainability and Accessibility

The new workspace solution will also offer ergonomic furniture such as height adjustable desks, dual adjustable monitors, ergonomic chairs and flexible adjustable partitions and privacy screens for all occupants to support health and wellbeing and minimize occupational safety and health related incidents.

All the furniture and accessories including upholstery also comply with sustainability and fire safety standards with reduced or zero percentage of harmful emissions that may compromise the indoor air quality of the workspaces.

The furniture solutions are also lightweight, have a smaller footprint and can be adjusted or reconfigured easily to meet changing requirements of the occupants.

The implementation of ergonomic furniture also supports the delivery of a workspace that is accessible and inclusive for all including colleagues with disabilities.

Integration of Technology

The new workspace solution is not limited to the built environment, furniture and accessories but also integrates technology to create a truly modernized and flexible workspace. All spaces will be designed with access to broadband WiFi throughout the building and cloud storage, thereby enabling occupants to use their portable technology to work in a more mobile manner from any location or space they choose without being tied to a dedicated workspace.

Occupational Safety & Health

In its initial phases and before the start of the main construction works, the SMP established a multi-layered approach to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) including construction site safety and COVID-19 safety, while ensuring business continuity throughout the duration of the project.



OSH briefing for workers before hazardous materials removal

The SMP's OSH plan is enforced in compliance with the ESCAP OSH framework and guidance from the Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health (DHMOSH) at the UN Headquarters in New York. The project team, OSH Officers under the general contractor and consultants work closely with the ESCAP OSH Officer to ensure that the construction works and the site comply

with safety requirements, with incidents of non-compliance immediately flagged for remedial action.

OSH is a key priority for the SMP to ensure seismic, fire and life safety in the Secretariat Building, the removal of any hazardous materials present and delivering a future workspace that supports occupant safety, health and wellbeing.

Meet Susan Wambui - ESCAP OSH Officer



Safety and Health Matters: Susan conducting random safety inspections at the construction site

Susan Wambui is the dedicated ESCAP OSH Officer. She can be seen walking around with her safety vest on, making sure that the entire ESCAP premises and not just the construction site is free of any safety hazards. Susan conducts random safety inspections and weekly construction site safety walks to ensure that the general contractor and site workers are compliant with the SMP's OSH plan at all times.

Susan hails from Kenya and has 10 years of experience in the area of OSH having worked with the UN in Liberia and Afghanistan. She is a mom and recent grandma who takes both safety and cool gospel dance very seriously.

The project team credits Susan's leadership, expertise and dedication in helping to achieve over 430 days of construction with zero accidents.

“Workplace safety and health is all about sensibly managing risks to protect workers and the business. Good safety and health management is characterized by a strong leadership involving managers, workers, and contractors. Our focus is to ensure all construction activities are carried out in a safe manner and safety work procedures are followed to prevent accidents and ill health at the workplace.”

~

Susan Wambui



OSH Training



Group 1 team writing Risk assessment report after assessing the SMP construction site during the DHMOSH Safety and Health trainings

To further develop OSH capacity at ESCAP, in August 2022, DHMOSH organized an Occupational Safety Assistant Mission (OSHAM) that focused on various OSH trainings for SMP team members and other ESCAP staff working in areas such as facilities management and maintenance works.

A total of 217 UN personnel received OSH awareness briefing and training course. This includes 34 UN personnel participating in the 4-day OSH training and certification course, 157 personnel from ESCAP Divisions and UNAFPs who joined the 2-hr general OSH awareness briefing, and 26 OSH committee members joining the OSH committee briefing session.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Report of the Secretary General

The sixth annual progress report of the Secretary General on the Seismic Mitigation Retrofit and Lifecycle Replacements Project at the UNESCAP premises in Bangkok ([A/77/330](#)) outlined the activities undertaken and progress made during the reporting period. The report was published on 8 September 2022.

The report highlighted the successful conclusion of the Tendering phase with the award of all key contracts including the contract for the general construction works valued at \$24.7M, which is within the construction budget approved by the General Assembly.

The extensive value engineering conducted by the project team to reduce construction costs by nearly \$5M and stay within the approved budget, without compromising scope and quality was also detailed along with efforts made to commence the main construction works in November 2021, despite initial delays resulting from the impacts of Covid-19 in Thailand.

The report further highlighted key areas of progress including continued cooperation with the Host Government, efforts to seek voluntary contributions from the Member States, progress made on the Flexible Workspace Pilot

programme, the safe removal of hazardous materials from the Secretariat building and ongoing efforts to ensure the highest standards of OSH are being observed at the construction site and at the ESCAP premises. It also took note of the steps taken to ensure ESCAP is compliant with the relevant building standards and best practices for Persons with Disabilities.

Budget Requested for 2023

The General Assembly in its resolution [A/RES/77/263](#) approved the appropriation of \$10,902,400 requested by ESCAP to complete the project in 2023. This consists of \$10,345,900 under Section 33 and \$556,500 under Section 19 and includes the balance of the overall project budget of \$40,019M, initially approved by the General Assembly.

ACABQ and 5th Committee Hearings

Further to the publication of the report, ESCAP and SMP representatives attended the hearing of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on 30 September 2022, and the informal session of the 5th Committee of the General Assembly conducted on 18 November 2022. During these sessions the team responded to questions from both Committees who took note of the progress made during the reporting period.

Both the ACABQ and the 5th Committee also took note of best practices in several areas and recommended sharing them with other Secretariat locations for their guidance and use. These include:



continuous efforts made to reduce project costs through significant value engineering efforts during the award of the contract for the main construction works as well as continuous value engineering during construction;



joint procurement exercise, led by SMP and ESCAP Procurement Unit, undertaken as a single solicitation exercise to procure standardized furniture for both ESCAP and ECA, thereby achieving economies of scale;



use of local materials and local knowledge and including the inclusion of qualified female professionals and experts in technical and leadership positions within the project.

Energy efficiency gains

SMP is mandated to achieve 16-18% energy efficiency gains through the implementation of the overall project works. Let's look at how these efficiencies will be gained.

Replacing single glazed windows on the North and South façades of the Secretariat building with energy efficient, double-glazed, laminated-aluminium-framed windows, with high light transmittance and low heat gain from outside to inside.

Replacing marble cladding on the exterior walls with new marble after weatherproofing the exterior walls, upgrading the building roof with a new rainwater drainage system and increased thermal insulation to reduce heat gain.

Upgrading to new electrical systems, including distribution and control panels, LED lighting and the incorporation of a smart lighting control systems with motion and daylight sensors.

Upgrading the existing mechanical ventilation system with a new higher-performing variable air volume system solution which will increase efficiency leading to less energy consumption.

Implementing an open plan interior office space solution providing greater access to natural light for all occupants, thereby reducing the dependency on artificial lighting.

Change Champions & Logistics Leaders

Change Champions and Logistics Leaders serve as interlocutors between the project and their respective UNAFP or ESCAP Division. They are the superheroes who coordinate swing space logistics and ensure that the future workspace meets client requirements. They have taken on these tasks in addition to their primary job responsibilities and make it possible for the project team to keep moving forward.

Reflecting on her experience, Change Champion Yukhontorn Suewaja from ESCAP/IDD shares that it has been an honor to support the project. "I've attended many meetings and met new people," she says. While the project has caused changes at the workplace, Yukhontorn has helped her colleagues adapt to adjustments and stay relaxed.

"Moving to new swing space did not cause any problems. Whenever some colleagues didn't feel comfortable, I coordinated with the SMP staff and other relevant units to find ways to solve problems."

In the face of uncertainties and challenges, Mohamed Elharati from UNEP/ROAP has been a very effective change champion and leader, especially in communicating the positive outcomes of the project.

"Given the delay and setbacks it isn't always easy to help colleagues stay positive, but I support them in visualising the end results and how the end would definitely justify the means in this case," he explains.

Change Champion Iwona Spytkowski from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Thailand compliments the project team for being conscientious and responsive to clients. Iwona finds the project exciting for further greening of the UN premises and believes that it is contributing to a positive footprint of the UN in Thailand as well as to a positive working environment for everyone.

"The construction itself is so non-invasive, it's easy to forget that 50% of the Secretariat building has been a construction zone for the past year," Iwona says

Contact Us

More information about the SMP can be found on our website <https://www.unescap.org/smp> or scan the QR code below



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