



29 February 2024

Dear Director-General,

More and more staff are approaching us having heard rumours that the Palais will be closed to staff for a period of several months.

We have been discussing potential closures since the start of the year. However, we had been under the impression that any such measure would last for a matter of weeks, similar to the end-of-year closure.

Before you make any such decision, we hope you will take into account the highly detrimental impact this would have on the welfare of staff and the cohesion of teams. Making use of flexible working arrangements for part of the week has nothing in common with being cut off entirely from the workplace for several months. A few workspaces in the H building does not compensate for this. In general, we are receiving increasing numbers of complaints from staff who feel they are paying the costs of the liquidity crisis.

Perhaps even more importantly, we are deeply concerned about the message the announcement of an extended closure would send to Member States, namely that staff do not need to be present on site in Geneva, continuously, for extended periods. This perception will be particularly likely if no other part of the United Nations takes such measures.

For all these reasons, we request that the UNOG response to the liquidity crisis does not include an extended closure of the Palais.

I would further like to remind you that feedback from the end-of-year closure indicated strong dissatisfaction with the insufficient notice and that a commitment was made to announce future closures well in advance.

Lastly, I would request that any extended closure be the subject of formal consultations with staff representatives before the final decision is made.

Best regards,

Laura Johnson

Executive Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a dot over the "i" in "Johnson".

Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

Cc: Ms. Kira Kruglikova, Director of Administration, UNOG