



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MOHAMED FOUAD, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 136: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019: CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (New York, 1 November 2018)

Madame Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 136: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019: Construction and Property Management at the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
2. The Group wishes to thank Mr. Christian Saunders, Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Central Support Services; and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports.
3. The Group notes with appreciation the continued support of the people and Government of Chile for the work of the Commission in Santiago, including facilitating the construction. The Group trusts that the Secretary General will continue to take steps to engage with the host country to ensure the success of the project.

Madam Chair,

4. The Group emphasizes the relevance of the five regional commissions to this Organization and to Member States. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) established in Santiago in 1965 is one of them and was founded with the purpose of contributing to the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. ECLAC is a regional reference not only for being the voice and mirror of United Nations guidelines, but also, for being a repository of information and knowledge, a renowned think-tank and a centre of multilateral cooperation focusing on enhancing regional development. ECLAC is not only a physical presence translated into a building, but it also has a historical presence, because it has been an immeasurable source of debate, thought and criticism, it has been present in different political moments of the region and has remained a bastion for the developing countries and an advocate for their socio- economic development.

Madame Chair,

6. The Group notes that, after the earthquake that hit Chile in 2010, ECLAC concluded that the North Building, which was originally constructed as a temporary structure in 1989, was in need of mitigation measures. Keeping this in mind, and despite some setbacks, the Group welcomes the efforts of the Secretary General to abide by the timeline for the completion of the project by the end of 2023.
7. The Group takes note of the qualitative risk assessment workshop that was held in July 2018, resulting in a project risk management strategy and a project risk registry. We further note the intention of the Secretary General to hold another similar workshop in the first quarter of 2019 to provide more detailed information on the scope and design elements in order to enable the conduct

of a Monte Carlo analysis and produce a cost-sensitivity chart. The Group trusts that appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure risks mitigation particularly in the design phase.

8. The Group takes note of the post requirements of two temporary positions and one P-3 project coordinator at headquarters as well as of the revised cost plan of the project. We will be interested to seek clarification in the ensuing informal consultation in this regard with a view to ensure that the project is provided with adequate resources so that it can be concluded in time.

Madame Chair,

9. The Group emphasizes the importance of making effective use of lessons learned from other capital projects, such as the seismic mitigation project of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Africa Hall renovation at the Economic Commission for Africa, in particular with respect to the use of locally sourced and manufactured materials. Furthermore, the Group stresses that there is a need to adhere to project timelines and cost estimates.

10. The Group is encouraged by the fact that the main bulk of the required construction materials will originate from the region. We strongly support the recommendation of the ACABQ on the importance of ensuring the use of locally sourced and manufactured materials, as well as labour, in the implementation of this construction project.

11. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to assure you, Madame Chair, of its readiness to engage constructively in the upcoming informal consultations with the aim of concluding this agenda item in a timely manner.

I thank you.