



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. DAYANA RIOS REQUENA, MINISTER COUNSELLOR IN THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 132: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR 2014-2015, CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE FACILITIES, PROPOSALS FOR THE RENOVATION OF CONFERENCE FACILITIES, INCLUDING AFRICA HALL, AT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 14 October 2014)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 132: Programme Budget for 2014-2015 in particular the progress in the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, proposal for the renovation of Conference facilities, including Africa hall, and revised estimates relating to the programme budget for biennium 2014-2015.

The Group of 77 and China would like to thank Mr. Collen V. Kelapile, Chief of Staff at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for their respective introduction of the reports of the the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on this item.

At the outset, the Group would like to send its appreciation to the host country, Government and people of Ethiopia, for the continued facilitation the smooth implementation of the projects and we are grateful for their continued support to the work of United Nations and other multilateral entities in the Region.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the progress made on the implementation of the construction of additional office facilities which was completed in August this year. The Group would like to re-emphasize the need to ensure that, the remaining ancillary work is fully completed in a timely manner as planned to avoid further delay and possible cost overrun.

With regard to the occupancy and rental income, the group has taken note that, as of August 2014, the new facilities host a total of 685 staff as compared to the 647 planned. We have also taken note that UNOPS, UNHCR, UNOAU including UNAMID, UNICEF, WHO are currently hosted in the new premises. We would like to encourage the Secretary General to ensure every effort is made to ensure that, the entities continue to collaborate on issues of mutual interests and we look forward on the detailed clarification on elements of cost recovery arrangements on services provided to the entities.

The Group concurs with the Advisory Committee's views on the need for establishment as soon as possible on the estimates of the maintenance of the facilities and details information on the surplus from rental and other incomes.

With regard to the cost of the project, we are pleased to note that, the total cost of the project

remained at US\$ 15.3million as of July, 2014 while the overall expenditure stood at US\$13.26 million. The Group encourages the Secretary-General to continue to ensure the project is completed on time and within the approved budget.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to security arrangement, the Group welcomes the Secretary General's proposal to enhance security of the premises and we look forward for detail clarification on specific elements during the informal consultations.

Tuning to the renovation of the Africa Hall, the Group recalls paragraph 3 section III of General Assembly resolution 65/259 that requested the Secretary-General to assess the status of conference facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in particular Africa Hall and Conference Room 1 to ensure that they were in strictly compliance with highest International standards for conference facilities.

The Group is deeply concerned on the continued delay of this important project which form a major part of our interests. While other capital projects initiated at almost the same time including UNON and ECA have been advanced or completed, the case of Africa Hall is still at the conceptual and design stage. This is difficult to understand for our Group taking into account the previous concern expressed by the Assembly.

The Group will be interested to hear the detail reasons for the delays as well as accountability and oversight measures taken to avoid further delays. We will also be interested to learn on the measures taken to accelerate the implementation of the project during informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the cost estimates, the Group has taken note of the requested resources and we look forward for detailed discussion during informal consultations. The Group would like to once again encourage the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to ensure the project is completed within the budget and within the projected time frame while ensuring the mechanism for oversight of the project by both headquarters and project management in Addis Ababa are in place.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China would like to assure you of our readiness to engage in constructive deliberation on this item with the aim of reaching positive outcome as quickly as possible,

I thank you Mr. Chairman.