

REMARKS

BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

**THE INTRODUCTION OF
AGENDA ITEM 136: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019 ON PROGRESS IN THE
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES AT THE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA), AND
UPDATE IN THE RENOVATION OF CONFERENCE
FACILITIES INCLUDING THE AFRICA HALL AT THE
MAIN SESSION OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE FIFTH
COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Chairman,

This statement aligns itself with the remarks made by the Group of Seventy-Seven and China.

At the outset, as we are taking the floor in the Current Session of the Fifth Committee Formal Meetings for the first time, we wish to congratulate you and Members of the Bureau for successfully guiding the work of the committee.

We also wish to thank **Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas**, Assistant Secretary-General and Controller, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 136: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019, the Progress in the Construction of the New Office Facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, and update on the Renovation of Conference Facilities, including Africa Hall (*document A/72/374*), and **Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu**, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing the related report of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

Ethiopia attaches greatest importance to the construction and renovation works undergoing in the ECA compound, particularly the renovation project of the historic Africa Hall. This heritage reminds all Africans where our Union started before six decades, and the vision of the Founding Fathers of the Organization of African Unity. It is not only a conference facility availed to the international community, but it is also a historical icon symbolizing the long journey of the African people from the struggle of political independence to socio-economic development.

We take note of the Report of the Secretary General, regarding the progress of the projects and the strong coordination that existed between the Projects Team, the ECA and the Government of Ethiopia, which is imperative for the successful completion of the works. In this connection, we would like to assure the ~~Assembly~~ ^{Committee} that the stated cooperation will continue to keep the schedule for completion of the Africa Hall renovation project by the end of 2021 and finishing works of the New Office Facilities ancillary project by 2018.

As noted in the report of the ACABQ, we trust that the Projects Team will closely monitor cost plans and the project timeline, in order to make-sure that the work will be completed within the approved project scope, schedule and budgeted total-cost. In this respect, it is important to underline the significance of the work planned for Stage 3 of the Project, namely **completion of the detailed design and tender documentation for early decanting work of the Congo and Nile Buildings of the Africa Hall**. The design work is, a critically defining factor for smooth conduct of the stages 4 and 5 of the project, which are the main **construction and close-out implementation phases**.

Accordingly, we would like to encourage the Project Team to expedite the process of, what is called, the **Monte Carlo Simulation** for risk analysis, to avoid implication on the project time-line including finalization of the entire design works. We would also like to emphasize that findings of the independent risk assessment firm would be incorporated into the construction contract of the renovation at the appropriate time to overcome any slippage on the schedule. Measures to eliminate physical, communication and technical barriers for persons with

disabilities as well as safety standards must be incorporated in the work ahead.

Regarding the detailed cost plan, while we highly appreciate assertions by the Secretary General, that the total cost of the project through 2021 remains unchanged at \$56,896,300.00, variation of some estimates such as that of the main building, infrastructure and external works related to the renovation must be tracked from time to time.

Mr. Chairman,

Ethiopia remains committed to provide its in-kind support, and we trust that the Secretary General, in coordination with the African Union, will continue his efforts to mobilize additional resources. In this regard, we want to encourage strengthening of outreaches in the continent as well as globally.

Finally, we wish to conclude by assuring the ^{*Committee*}~~Assembly~~ that the government of Ethiopia will continue its cooperation with ECA and the Projects Team, through the already constituted Stakeholders Committee and the Advisory Board until the work is done to the satisfaction of Member States.

I thank you,