

Check Against Delivery

Statement

By

H.E. Ambassador Negash Kibret

Director General for International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

On Agenda Item 130: Overseas property management and construction:

Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa; and United Nations Office

at Nairobi

At the Fifth Committee of the 67th Session of the United Nations General

Assembly

October 2011

New York

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me thank Mr. Warren Sach, Assistant-Secretary-General for the Office of Central Support Services, for presenting to us documents A/67/216 and A/67/217, containing the reports on property management and construction projects in Nairobi and Addis Ababa respectively. Our appreciation also goes to Mr. Collen Kelapile, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee as contained in document A/67/484.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements by the distinguished representatives of ----- and Cote d'Ivoire on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Africa respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly outline a number of issues that are of particular interest to my delegation. In this connection, I am delighted to point out that significant progress has been made in the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa since the last report on the matter. As reflected in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/66/351, several steps have indeed been taken to accelerate the implementation of the project.

In this regard, we are pleased to draw your attention to paragraph 6 of the report of the Secretary-General, which indicates that as a direct result of the close collaboration between the Economic Commission for Africa and the host Government, an important project milestone was

reached with the substantial completion of the building superstructure, which was celebrated in a topping-out ceremony on 9 February 2012.

Mr. Chairman,

No doubt, members of the Committee are cognizant of the commitment of Ethiopia to the UNECA which at the onset was demonstrated through the provision of the Africa Hall in 1958.

As elaborated in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report, the voucher system for value added tax-free status in respect of local purchase of goods and services for the project continues to be implemented. In the same vein, as reflected in the reports of the Secretary General and that of the ACABQ, the Government of Ethiopia has continued to work closely with the ECA to ensure that all issues related to the timely and predictable delivery of needed construction materials, including cement, are adequately addressed. In this connection, I wish to reassure distinguished members of this Committee that this cooperation will continue in a same fashion.

I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the Secretariat, the Commission and the project management team for undertaking a value engineering exercise that has resulted in reductions in costs totaling \$522,100, primarily realized through making the electromechanical systems more efficient as indicated in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report.

On the other hand, as indicated in paragraph 41 of the report, I wish to commend the ECA, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the African Union, for launching the renovation of Africa Hall to make it a "monument to modern African history" in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/259. We would like to see this historic hall be renovated, as

illustrated in paragraph 43 and 44 of the Secretary General's report, in order to make it a modern conference facility, incorporating exhibition and museum spaces, upgrading all furniture and conference support installations, preserving and restoring historical and cultural values imbedded in the architecture, enhancing safety of the facility and incorporating accessibility for persons with disabilities. We, indeed, appreciate the efforts exerted towards this goal and assure you of Ethiopia's full support.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the United Nations Office in Nairobi, as reflected in both reports of the Secretary General and ACABQ, my delegation welcomes with appreciation the report that the new building was fully occupied, well within schedule and budget. In this regard, we would like to congratulate the Government of the Republic of Kenya, the United Nations Office in Nairobi, and the contractors for a work well done.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, My delegation would like to express the appreciation of the Government of Ethiopia to the ECA and relevant divisions at the UN Headquarters for their unreserved efforts and understanding and reiterates its full support to expedite the construction of the project in line with the schedule.

I thank you!