



United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov

**Statement by Cherith Norman, Minister Counselor for UN Management and Reform,
On Agenda Item 134: Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa and update on the
renovation of conference facilities, including Africa Hall
70th UN General Assembly
December 1, 2015**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My delegation would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services Mr. Stephen Cutts for the presentation of the Secretary-General's report. We would like to further thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the ACABQ, for the presentation of the Committee's report on the various issues under this agenda item.

The United States appreciates the updates on the progress made since the last report on the construction projects at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. We note that the continued support of the host country has been instrumental in the execution of the new office facilities. Furthermore, we are encouraged to hear that the new office facilities have been substantially completed. However, we urge ECA to complete the remaining work as soon as possible. My delegation also looks forward to fruitful discussions on the status of the Africa Hall renovation project including project scope, costs and governance structure. We encourage the Secretariat and ECA to take the necessary steps to ensure that progress of the remaining stages will be closely monitored so that the project will be completed on time and within budget by 2021.

Further to the ACABQ findings, my delegation believes that the contingency fund and the business case for the Visitors' Center need to be more fully articulated and justified. With regard to the contingency fund, the cost estimates related to the contingency amount are based on a fixed percentage rather than a risk-based estimation of the project. We further support the establishment of an Organization-wide policy in this area. Lastly, the business case for the Visitors' Center does not reflect specific details, such as estimated revenue generation and annual operating costs, which the United States believes is vital to a strong business case and looks forward to discussing these points during our consideration of this agenda item.

In conclusion, we look forward to working constructively with our colleagues in the Fifth Committee to address these issues and other matters related to ECA in the coming weeks.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.