

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1 November 2016

Proposal for the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific premises in Bangkok

(ACABQ report: A/71/570; related Secretary-General's report: A/71/333)

Progress in the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, and update on the renovation of conference facilities, including Africa Hall

(ACABQ report A/71/571; related report: A/71/370)

Madam Chairperson,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's reports on ESCAP and ECA.

With respect to ESCAP, the Secretary-General proposes four options for the project at ESCAP. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of option C, being the more cost-effective option for addressing seismic mitigation and life-cycle replacements simultaneously, subject to its recommendations on the related cost estimates. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide an update of cost estimates for option C, taking into account the Committee's observations, including on escalation and contingency provisions, swing space requirements, and space and energy efficiencies.

With the exception of the resources related to the proposed consultants for flexible workplace arrangements, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposed resource requirements for 2017, amounting to \$705,800 under sections 19 and 33 of the programme budget for 2016-2017, which would represent a charge against the contingency fund. The Committee also recommends approval of the establishment of the project management team and project support staff, and the establishment of a multi-year construction-in-progress account for the expenditures of the project from 2017 until project completion.

Finally, the Advisory Committee welcomes the positive steps taken towards engaging with the host country.

Madam Chairperson,

Turning now to ECA and specifically with regard to the Africa Hall renovation project. Stage 1 (Preparation) and stage 2 (Design) have been completed; stage 3 (Pre-

construction) started in May 2016. However, as the contract negotiation with the lead consultant (for design and supervision) took longer than anticipated, some of the works for stage 3, which were initially scheduled to take place in 2017, are now postponed to the 2018-2021 period. Despite this delay, a construction contractor for stage 4 (construction) is scheduled to be hired by the end of 2016 and an independent risk-management firm is scheduled to be hired in early 2017. The Advisory Committee reiterates that keeping the project on schedule is critical for avoiding any potential cost overruns and recommends approval of the proposed temporary positions.

Finally, the Advisory Committee welcomes the effort of ECA to coordinate with the host government, and in general welcomes the contributions of the host country. Likewise, we welcome the voluntary contribution made by the government of Mali in regards to Africa Hall.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.