

Seventy-third session main part: Agenda item 136

Fifth Committee of the General Assembly

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Progress in the renovation of the Africa Hall and construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa

Remarks by

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Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates, good morning.

I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's report A/73/355 on the progress of the renovation of the Africa Hall and the construction of new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. I am pleased to report that in the third quarter of 2018, we reached our final completion milestone with regards to the construction of the new office facilities, known as the Zambezi building and its ancillary works.

Africa Hall Renovation

With respect to the renovation of the Africa Hall, it remains the core objective of the project to address inadequacies related to building functionality and useful life, with a view to achieving the highest standards for conference facilities, while preserving and restoring the historical and cultural values embedded in the building's architecture.

Project Governance

The governance structure was established with the Project Executive being an imperative link between the project and the Organization.

The Office of Central Support Services (OCSS) provides substantive guidance and expertise and is actively involved in the project as a member of the Stakeholders' Committee. Through these

coordination meetings, the OCSS/Global Property Management Service is regularly updated and informed of progress made and issues faced by the project.

The Global Property Management Service, supported by a professional firm, developed a risk management strategy, performed through a Monte Carlo simulation, to ensure that the Project Owner obtains an unbiased, outside view concerning the overall status of the project and the measures proposed to mitigate risks, this being the first quantitative project risk assessment of its kind.

Progress update

The Early Works package commenced in January 2018 and is scheduled for completion in March 2019, a delay which was unforeseen and resulted from issues incurred by the contractor during the mobilization period.

Tendering for the Main Renovation Works is currently ongoing, and a contract award is expected in early 2019.

Efforts on the design and technical documentation for the conference engineering systems and curatorial aspects of the permanent exhibition are underway and have advanced to the final phases.

Considerable progress has also been made in the negotiations with the Host Country related to the project. An agreement that frames the project implementation was signed and negotiations are ongoing regarding additional land required for visitors' parking, which is foreseen to be located outside of the ECA compound.

Taking the above into consideration, the schedule estimate for the Main Renovation Works to be completed is in early 2021, slightly later than the date initially planned. Despite this schedule delay in completing the project, the Monte Carlo risk simulation performed this year anticipates the confidence level for delivering the project within the maximum approved budget of 56.9 million US dollars at seventy-five per cent, which is currently the highest budget confidence level for all ongoing global capital construction projects.

Next Steps

The next steps foreseen for the upcoming reporting period are: (i) completing pre-construction activities; (ii) completing the implementation of the Early Decanting Works; (iii) commencing the implementation of the Main Renovation Works; (iv) signing the lease agreement with the host country to define the use and development of the additional land for the visitors parking lot; and (v) defining the permanent exhibition themes and completing the related design.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

To conclude, the General Assembly is requested to take note of the progress made on the Project and its revised cost plan; and to appropriate an amount of \$8,931,100 for planned project activities in 2019.

Thank you.