

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

5 November 2019

**Seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project
at ESCAP premises in Bangkok**

(ACABQ report: A/74/7/Add.8; related report of the Secretary-General: A/74/317)

Mr Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the Seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at ESCAP.

The Advisory Committee notes that the bid documents for the general construction works were issued later than planned, owing to a number of factors, including the incorporation into the final design of previously unforeseen fire and life safety scope items. The construction works are now planned to start in the second quarter instead of the first quarter of 2020 as had previously been reported. The Committee is concerned that successive delays have been reported in the start of the construction works in the current and previous progress reports. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to complete the project on time and within the approved budget.

With regard to the removal of hazardous materials and the second, detailed survey of the entire ESCAP premises that is to be conducted to inform the full extent of abatement works required prior to the start of main construction work, the Advisory Committee stresses the need to incorporate the outcome of the survey into the project scope as soon as possible, including a health and safety plan. The Committee also emphasises the need to develop

strategies for managing and mitigating any eventual risks that could arise from the outcome of the second survey.

The Advisory Committee also recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in his next progress report, details on the utilization and expected future rental income of swing space, as well as information on developments regarding space efficiency and utilization, including lessons learned from piloting flexible workplace strategies. The Committee further trusts that the Secretary-General will provide in his next progress report an update on the accessibility features being introduced at ESCAP.

Finally, Mr Chairman, the Advisory Committee is recommending approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for post and non-post resources for the project in 2020, including the proposed establishment of three local level positions.

Thank you, Mr Chairman