



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY AMBASSADOR BOUBACAR DIALLO, G-77 COORDINATOR, PERMANENT MISSION
OF REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON ITEM 138: PROGRAMME
BUDGET FOR 2022: CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: PROGRESS IN
THE RENOVATION OF THE AFRICA HALL AT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA IN ADDIS ABABA: THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(New York, 24 November, 2021)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 138: Proposed Programme Budget for 2022, Progress in the Renovation of the Africa Hall at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. The Group wishes to thank the Secretary General for his report contained in document A/76/308. We also thank the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for its report contained in A/76/7/Add.13.

2. The Group of 77 and China also express its gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for the continued support to the Economic Commission of Africa and other UN Offices residing in Addis Ababa. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the fulfilment of all outstanding issues from the side of the Government, in relation to requirements for the renovation project. We trust that the Secretary General will take necessary steps to seize this progress for the successful completion of the project and will further his engagement with the Government of Ethiopia for successful completion of the project.

Mr. Chair,

3. The Group reiterates the historical significance of the Africa Hall and the importance to conserve the heritage of the landmark site. We reiterate our call for respecting the original design and appearance of the building while ensuring compliance with best practices on current international building standards. The Secretary General shall make all the effort to work with the AU and member states of the AU that have put their cultural print in the Africa Hall. In this respect, the contribution of the Republic of Mali to the renovation project is noteworthy in this regard as well.

4. With respect to the services to be availed by Africa Hall, including through the visitor center, the Group reiterates its stance on ensuring accessibility for students, academics, residents and tourists regardless of their capacity to pay. On the matter of resource mobilization to support completion of the project, the Group welcomes the recommendations of the Advisory Board and encourages the Secretary General to make use of these recommendations. While thanking Ethiopia and Mali for their contribution and Switzerland for its pledge, the Group calls on other member states to make voluntary contributions in support of this project.

5. The Group of 77 and China attach great importance to project accountability and take note of the sixth annual audit conducted by Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the Africa

Hall renovation. The Group stresses the importance of effective governance, oversight, internal control and accountability to ensure that the project is implemented within the approved budget and within the revised project schedule. The Group further encourages the project team to scale up the efforts towards utilization of local knowledge, material, technology and capacity.

6. The Group commends the regular consultation between the project team and Global Asset Management Policy Service. In this regard, we call on the Secretary general to promptly finalize the hiring process of the main contractor and resume the renovation project. During the informal consultations, the Group will be interested to learn more about the Covid-19 related risks and the measures put in place to contain the risks.

7. The Group commends the Secretary-General for the commitment as well as the efforts to stay within budget despite the delays in implementation. While noting the completion of the decanting work, we call on ECA to finalize all outstanding procurement and others matters and resume the project for finalization within the revised timeline.

Mr. Chair

8. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China supports the budget proposed by the Secretary General for project activities in 2022.

9. The Group would like to assure you of our readiness to engage constructively in the consideration of this agenda item with a view to reaching a conclusion in a timely manner.

I thank you