



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY COUNSELOR M. LUZ MELON, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 134: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR
THE BIENNIUM 2012-2013 – OVERSEAS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN
PART OF SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, 21 October 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 134 entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013". We would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, Mr. Warren Sach, for introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on overseas property management and construction projects contained in documents A/66/336, A/66/351, A/66/279 and A/66/349. We also wish to thank the Chairperson of the ACABQ, Mr. Collen Kelapile, for introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/66/7/add. 3).

2. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to proper management of the Organization's property portfolio and the effective management of any construction undertaken by the Organization. This Group has previously stated its strong position and support for proper mechanisms and strong management structures to implement construction projects.

3. The Group, therefore, notes with appreciation the progress report on the construction of additional office facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The completion of this project in advance of its schedule and within the budget is commendable and clearly demonstrates the benefits of proper project management. Members will recall that prior to the adoption of resolution 63/263, the same project had faced seemingly insurmountable difficulties since it was approved in 2001. It was only after the General Assembly's intervention in 2008 that UN Headquarters took on an enhanced role in coordinating and supporting overseas property management and construction projects. Furthermore, dedicated project management capacity was established to manage the construction. The result of all these efforts is that, the Secretary-General in his current report indicates some of the contingency funds will remain unutilized once the final payments are made. We commend the host authorities, the contractors and the UN staff who have worked collaboratively to deliver this project well within schedule and budget.

4. The Group welcomes the progress made in implementing the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). We commend the existing cooperation and collaboration between the ECA and the host country authorities in support of this project and which has resulted in proactive action to ensure that identified bottlenecks to implementation of the project as scheduled are dealt with expeditiously. We believe that working collaboratively, no further delays will arise.

5. The Group notes that pursuant to resolution 65/259, the ECA, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Africa Union, is undertaking renovation of Africa Hall to make it a “Monument to modern African history.” It is the expectation of this Group that the procurement of the consultancy will proceed expeditiously.

6. The Group further notes the report on Strategic Heritage plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva, which contains the results of the conceptual engineering and architectural study. We will actively study the findings and the proposals therein.

7. The Group of China and 77 reaffirms its long-standing position that the architectural integrity of the United Nations complex must be preserved. Any proposal to accommodate UN Headquarter needs must be in line with the original design and respect the architectural integrity of the UN complex.

8. With the aforementioned in mind, the Group will examine the report of the Secretary-General on the feasibility study on the United Nations Headquarters accommodation needs 2014-2034 and consider the various proposals contained therein taking into account the observations and recommendations of the ACABQ.

I thank you.