

## Construction projects and feasibility study

### Statement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

*(Report ACABQ: A/66/7/Add.3, Reports of the Secretary-General: A/66/336, A/66/351,*

*A/66/279 and A/66/349)*

Mr. Chairman,

1. I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report relating to four reports submitted by the Secretary-General on construction related projects at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (A/66/336) and the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa (A/66/351), a proposal for the Strategic heritage plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva (A/66/279), and the Feasibility Study for the United Nations Headquarters (A/66/349).
2. The Committee has welcomed the successful completion of the new office facility at the **United Nations Office at Nairobi**, which is expected to be delivered on time and within budget. For purposes of drawing lessons, it is requesting the Secretary-General to conduct a post-completion review to assess the implementation of the project, including an analysis of planned versus actual space utilization of the additional office facilities.
3. The Committee notes that the project at the **Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa** has been delayed by six months, largely due to the lack of cement. The causes of the delays were addressed in cooperation of host country authorities. The Committee has welcomed the support provided by the host Government of Ethiopia and encouraged continued close collaboration to address any other issues in a timely manner. It also encourages the Office of Central Support Services to continue to provide ECA with the necessary support and guidance on project management and technical matters.

4. As regards the proposals for the **strategic heritage plan for the United Nations Office in Geneva**, the Advisory Committee took note of the extent of the deterioration of the Palais des Nations and the main findings of the conceptual engineering and architectural study. The Committee has recommended that the Secretary-General be authorized to proceed with the preparation of a detailed implementation plan and cost analysis based on the medium-term (8 years) option, which offers the lowest cost option and would also meet all requirements of the strategic heritage plan. It has emphasized that the preparation of the detailed plan would be without prejudice to any decisions that the General Assembly may take on this matter. The Committee has also requested the Secretary-General to thoroughly examine all alternatives for achieving greater efficiencies and savings in the restoration and renovation works.

5. The fourth report presents the **feasibility study for the Organization's long-term accommodation needs at Headquarters**. The primary option considered was the construction of a new building on the North Lawn, which would allow a unified compound and also present the lowest risk and lowest cost. The other options assessed include buying an existing building off-campus, leasing office space off-campus and constructing a building off-campus.

6. The Committee was informed that, since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report, there have been new developments relating to another possible option for a new building, referred to as UNDC-5, on First Avenue south of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. In light of the latest developments, the Committee has recommended that the Secretary-General reassess the preferred option for the construction of a new building on the North Lawn against the option for a "lease to own" arrangement with the United Nations Development Corporation. It has also requested that detailed analysis of the costs, benefits, risks of each option and underlying assumptions for office space requirements be presented to the General Assembly at the earliest, but no later than at its second resumed sixty-sixth session.