



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. BROUZ  
RALPH ENNERIC COFFI MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY THE PERMANENT  
MISSION OF COTE D'IVOIRE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA  
ITEM 133: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR BIENNIUM 2012-2013:  
PROGRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE FACILITIES  
AT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA, AT THE MAIN PART OF  
THE SIXTY-EIGHT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY-FIFTH  
COMMITTEE  
(New York 13, December, 2013)**

**Mr. Chairman,**

At the outset, the African Group align itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Fiji on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

The African Group would like to thank Mr. Stephen Cutts, Assistant Secretary General for Central Support Services for introducing the Secretary General's report as well as Mr. Richard Moon, Vice Chair of the ACABQ for introducing the Advisory Committee's related report.

On the special account, the African Group would like to thank the Government of the Ethiopia for continued support and commitment on the facilitation of the implementation of this important project.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The successful implementation of the construction of additional Office facilities project at the ECA including renovation of conference building and especially the Africa Hall form a major part of our Group's interest. In this regard, we welcome the progress made so far on the construction of the additional office facilities which is expected to be completed in few days from now with occupation starting few weeks to come. We have also taken note that this project has been very much affected by many setbacks which has delayed its completion.

**Mr. Chairman**

The African Group is deeply concerned at the delays in the execution of the projects at the Economic Commission for Africa. Specifically, we are concerned on the delay of construction project resulted from delays in importation of materials and logistical challenges, errors and omission on part of architecture and construction management consultant, delays on payments by contractors and poor coordination by contractors. The Group is equally concerned on the delay in implementation of ancillary projects resulting from technical shortcomings.

**Mr. Chairman**

The Group notes and welcomes the information on value engineering and like the ACABQ, stresses that its application should be treated as the best practice rather than an ex post facto reaction to project implementation.

The Group has further taken note of the information on the flexible use of the Office space. We would like to stress that, this matter remain to be concluded by the Assembly. We also encourage the Secretary General to take into account requirement of the tenants and demand specific and real situation in the ground on this matter.

The Group will be keen to learn in details number of these elements during the informal consultations.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Turning to the renovation of the Africa Hall, the African Group recalls that by paragraph 3 section III of its resolution 65/259 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to expeditiously assess the status of conference facilities at the Commission, in particular Africa Hall and Conference Room 1, to ensure that they were in strict compliance with the highest international standards for conference facilities.

The Group is deeply concerned by the unnecessary delays on the implementation of this project due to elements which could be addressed. The Group is also concerned that the Secretary General didn't provide any allocation for these project in his current proposal in line with given mandate. We would like to remind to the Secretary general on the repeated calls by the General Assembly on the importance of guidance, interaction and coordination between the Secretariat in New York and the Economic Commission for Africa as well as the need for full accountability and oversight on this and other construction project.

**Mr. Chairman**

The African Group is also concerned that, the Office for Internal Oversight Services, which has been entrusted for oversight coverage of this and other capital projects and also for report on annual basis, did not fulfill its oversight responsibilities under the reporting period. We would once again urges the Secretary general to ensure that all the shortcomings are addressed as a matter of priority taking into account lessons learned and best practices on the implementation of the similar capital projects.

The Group will be seeking a number of clarifications on the implementation of these projects, including the measures taken to address the shortcoming, accountability elements and resource requirement for the current biennia.

**Mr. Chairman**

In conclusion, the African Group would like to assure you of our readiness to engage constructively on deliberation with the aim to conclude this agenda item in a timely manner.

**I Thank You**