

**Statement of the Vice-Chairman
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)**

13 December 2013

**Progress in the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic
Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa (A/68/517)**

ACABQ report: A/68/643;

Report of the Secretary-General: A/68/517

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the progress in the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. The Advisory Committee notes the reported progress in the implementation of this project; however, it regrets the one-year delay in the delivery of the project, attributed to performance issues on the part of the contractor, and the related financial implications both to the United Nations and to the prospective UN system tenants who continue to reside outside the ECA complex. In this connection, the Advisory Committee is of the view that ECA should take appropriate action against the contractor to seek legal redress at the appropriate time when the full extent of the prospective claim and the related damages has been determined.

With respect to the ancillary projects, the Advisory Committee notes that the progress in their implementation has been affected by the continued delays mainly resulting from design deficiencies. The Committee calls for closer monitoring of the project in order to avoid further delays and is of the view that issues of accountability and responsibility for the recruitment and supervision of the design consultant should be examined.

Mr. Chairman, the Advisory Committee commends the efforts made by the project management team to contain costs by applying the principles of value engineering and reiterates that such value engineering should be continually pursued as a best practice. The Committee is also of the view that flexible workplace principles should be factored into this and all other major capital projects.

Coming to the renovation of conference facilities, particularly Africa Hall, the Advisory Committee is concerned at the slow progress of the assessment and design phase of the project due to the failure on the part of the initial design consultant. The Committee expects that every effort will be made to expedite the recruitment of a design consultant with the experience and expertise to complete the task. Furthermore, the

Committee expects that the report on the requirements and cost estimates for the project will be submitted to the General Assembly no later than at its 69th session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.