Fifth Committee of the General Assembly  
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Report on the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch

Statement of John Hocking, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals

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Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I am making the following statement on behalf of the Registrar of the Mechanism, Mr. John Hocking.

The present report (A/68/724) provides an update on the progress made on the construction of the new premises of the Arusha branch of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/244B.

The Registrar of the Mechanism is pleased to report that key milestones in the project have continued to be met since his last report approximately one year ago – and indeed, even since his presentation to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions last month. Such milestones include the General Assembly’s approval to proceed with the design and construction of the new facilities and its approval of the budget; the recruitment of the project manager; the conclusion of the agreement with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the grant of the land on 5 February; and the signing of the contract with the architectural and engineering design consultancy firm on 26 February.

The Project Manager took up her duties in April 2013. She brings a wealth of experience to the team from both the private and public sectors, including the United Nations. Reporting to the Head of the Office of the Registry of the Arusha branch, the Project Manager is instrumental to the success of this construction project. She provides full-time daily oversight and integrated project management to assist the Registrar of the Mechanism to seamlessly advance the project and ensure ethical compliance and accountability.

Pursuant to paragraphs 8 and 15 of resolution 67/244 B, the project team has built on its cooperation and coordination with stakeholders both on the ground and at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Office of Central Support Services continues to support and provide guidance to the Mechanism in all aspects of the project’s implementation. Working closely with the ICTR and ICTY, and based on their experiences, the
Mechanism has identified the design requirements of the new facility primarily in-house. Relevant offices within the Secretariat, including the Department of Safety and Security, and the Office of Information Communication Technology, are providing high-level advice to ensure that the overall strategic objectives of the Organisation are incorporated into the design. The Office of Legal Affairs has provided legal support and drafted key legal documents for the project. The Registrar of the Mechanism wishes to extend his appreciation to all of these stakeholders as they continue to contribute to the success of this project.

The Mechanism and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania have continued their excellent collaboration over the last year and the Registrar expresses his sincere gratitude to the Government for its tireless efforts to make this project a success. On 5 February 2014 the United Nations and the Government of Tanzania signed the agreement for the land that has so kindly been offered at no cost to the United Nations. Steps towards the agreement’s practical implementation have already begun.

The General Assembly has appropriated the entire budget for the project - $8.787 million. In its resolution 66/240B, it initially appropriated $3 million. A special multi-year account was authorised in resolution 67/244B. On 27 December 2013, the General Assembly approved by resolution 68/257 the budget of the Mechanism for the biennium 2014-2015, including the remaining $5.79 million for the construction project. The Registrar of the Mechanism thanks the Member States for this support.

Contract negotiations with the architectural firm concluded last month, and the contract between the United Nations and Ridge and Partners LLP for the provision of professional architectural and engineering services for the design and construction of the new Arusha facilities became effective on 26 February 2014. An introductory meeting between the Mechanism and the successful firm was held yesterday, 5 March, in Arusha. Ridge and Partners, an established firm based in the United Kingdom, will join efforts with its sub-consultant, F.B.W. Group, an architectural and engineering firm operating out of Kampala, Uganda, with a focus on East Africa. The requirement of a business presence in Africa was a key requirement in the selection process, in line with the General Assembly’s encouragement to include local knowledge and capacity in the implementation of the project. Both Ridge and Partners and F.B.W. Group are United Nations-registered vendors. A past joint project of these two firms is the British High Commission in Kampala. The Registrar is confident that Ridge and Partners will be able to effectively transform the conceptual design presented last year into a reality.

Construction projects present challenges and risks to the Organisation. As the representative of the Secretary-General at the Mechanism, the Registrar is fully committed to managing these risks. Heeding the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of resolution 67/244B, the Registrar formally requested the Office of Internal Oversight Services to arrange for a continuous audit of the project, and instructed the Project Team to meet regularly with the ICTR Resident Auditor in Arusha. The first audit of the project is scheduled for the second quarter of this year.
As you can see, the Mechanism has made excellent progress over the last year, and additional key milestones will be met in 2014 - the architectural and engineering design firm will develop a detailed design for the facility and produce tender documents for construction. The sourcing of the construction firm is anticipated to begin in the first half of this year.

This construction project is of crucial importance to the Mechanism. The premises will be the new home of the Arusha branch. It will equip the Mechanism with the infrastructure it needs to carry out its heavy responsibilities, which include ensuring that the ICTR’s legacy and achievements in the field of international criminal justice are carried forward to future generations. The Registrar of the Mechanism remains firmly committed to completing the construction of the new premises of the Arusha branch within the overall timeline and budget approved by the General Assembly, secured by a strong governance regime with full accountability.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this critical project.