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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR AMAN HASSEN,

**DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,**

**AT THE 5TH COMMITTEE OF THE 69TH MAIN SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 132: PROGRESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL
OFFICE FACILITIES, PROPOSALS FOR THE RENOVATION OF CONFERENCE
FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE AFRICA HALL, AND REVISED ESTIMATES RELATING TO
THE PROGRAM BUDGET 2014/15.**

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 14/2014

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the Chief of Staff at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, **Mr. Collen V. Kelapile**, for introducing the Secretary-General's report on **Agenda Item 132: Progress in the Construction of additional office facilities, Proposal for the renovation of conference facilities, including Africa Hall, and revised estimate relating to the program budget 2014/15, at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**, contained in **A/69/359**. Our appreciation also goes to the Chairman of the ACABQ, **Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu**, for introducing the related report of the Committee contained in **A/69/415**.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by **Bolivia** on behalf of **G77 and China** and **Togo**, on behalf of the **African Group**.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation commends the Secretary-General as well as the Executive Secretary of ECA on the successful completion of the construction of the additional office facilities on **12 June 2014**, and the full occupancy of the premises in **August 2014**. It is also hoped that the remaining small part of ancillary project work will be completed on schedule.

As a host country, my Government has given utmost priority to the project and has done its best in facilitating the smooth delivery of the infrastructure components, in the timely completion of access roads leading to the new entrances of the ECA compound and other administrative support facilities.

Mr. Chairman,

The additional office facilities comprise a seven-story building which accommodates **685** Occupants. Owing to the addition of this facility to the complex, and as a result of this surge in the number of staff, visitors, delegates and vehicles entering the compound; it will be necessary to have additional Security Officers hired. In this regard, we welcome the proposal of the Secretary General for **18** Security officers to conduct fire, compound and floor patrols and to provide screening services at the vehicular and pedestrian entrance gates on a shift basis.

Turning to the renovation of Conference facilities, including the **Africa Hall**, let me make the following points:

It is to be recalled that in **2008**, at the **50th** anniversary of the commission, the **Economic Commission for Africa**, in collaboration with the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, the **African Union** and the **Government of Ethiopia**, launched the first initiative of a historic project for the renovation of Africa Hall to make it a monument to modern African History.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to look back at the history of the Africa Hall. The original seven-storey building, consisting of a conference hall, was built in 1961, in the span of only 18 months. It was here, in this very conference hall, that the predecessor of the **African Union**, the **Organization of African Union(OAU)** was founded on **May 25, 1963**. Also in this building is found the art works of world famous **Ethiopian Artist, Maître Afeework Tekle**. This famous work entitled "**Total Liberation of Africa**" is a **150m²** stained glass window in the foyer of the Hall. The work depicts images symbolizing African Nations Uniting to tackle poverty and disease. There is also the geometric design surrounding the central window.

The historic Africa Hall is one of Addis Ababa's landmarks. The Hall has been a host to numerous high-level meetings, and African Heads of States decisions, among which the adoption of the **Charter** of the **OAU**, is no doubt historic.

Mr. Chairman,

The assessment undertaken by the consultant has shown extensive structural fatigue in the foundation, slabs, beams, columns, and extension walls of the Africa Hall due to the age of the building, as more than half a century has elapsed since its inauguration.

In addition to this, the assessment revealed a great deal of deterioration and a multitude of deficiencies that need to be addressed urgently. The findings and conclusions of the consultant highlight essential overall building renovation work that is critically needed, in order for the building to remain safe & functional. Such work would need to be completed as a prerequisite for meeting the project objectives in the Plenary Hall to attain the highest standards for conference facilities, as required by the **General Assembly**.

My delegation concurs with the recommendation of the ACABQ that, given the delays that have already accumulated in the execution of the project, the General Assembly may wish to authorize the secretary General to proceed to **stage 3**, that is **preconstruction**, so that the development of the detailed design, construction drawings and tender documentation can commence according to plan.

We also note that the project is scheduled to execute the structural upgrade, essential life safety and building works, the plenary Hall associated work, external work, heritage conservation and visitors center, which is estimated to take approximately **seven years (from 2015 to 2021)**.

The estimated project cost for the renovation of the Hall, its adjunct visitor areas and associated security enhancements is **\$ 56,896,300 USD**. In this

connection, let me reiterate my Government's assurance for a guaranteed access for all imported materials, and other facilitation necessary for the smooth implementation of the project.

Mr. Chairman,

In Conclusion, my delegation would like to assure you of its readiness to discuss the agenda item further in the informal consultations.

I thank you!