

STATEMENT ON THE BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. HICHAM OUSSIHAMOU, MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 136: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019 ENTITLED STRATEGIC CAPITAL REVIEW AT THE MAIN SESSION OF THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY-FIFTH COMMITTEE

(New York, 9 Nov 2017)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 136. Programme Budget for the biennium 2018-2019 particularly on Strategic Capital Review.
2. We would like to thank Mr. Dimitri Dovgopoly, Officer in Charge of OCSS as well as Mr. Babou Sene, Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee for introducing the reports of the Secretary General and the ACABQ respectively.
3. The Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Group welcomes the substantial progress made by the Secretary-General to date by proactively taking steps to develop a long-term framework for addressing the maintenance and construction requirements of the United Nations owned and leased buildings and facilities. The value of this initiative in terms of potential cost avoidance by member states as well as availing good working conditions of staff cannot be overemphasized.
5. The Group believes that the Secretary-General will continue to ensure that buildings are not left to substantially depreciate and that efforts will be made to take measures to extend their useful life. In this regard, the African Group is pleased to note that the Secretary General has placed the issue of maintenance of buildings of the United Nations as a priority especially those in the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Office in Nairobi.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group trusts that the Secretary-General will remain committed to guaranteeing safety of personnel in various United Nations duty stations through modernization and maintenance of property owned or managed by the organisation including through replacement of offices and site infrastructure as well as renovation of buildings. The African Group urges the Secretary-General to adhere to industry norms and building codes relating to health, safety issues as well as compliance with requirements for people with special needs.
7. The Group notes that the Strategic Capital Review has articulated some near-term projects and capital expenditure among other stations focuses on Economic Commission for Africa and United Nations Office in Nairobi. In this regard, the group notes with satisfaction that a construction project proposal has been developed to replace office blocks A-J at United Nations office in Nairobi. Implementation of the project will be useful in ensuring necessary safety standards and improved space utilization. We urge the Secretary General to continue to ensure that effective measures will be put in place to implement proposals in the Strategic Capital Review report and that lessons learned and best practices in implementing similar capital projects within the organizations are applied as appropriate.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The Group will examine thoroughly a wide number of issues contained in the reports presented to the fifth committee which include the question of use of contingency funds, costing, timelines and oversight arrangement in preparation for engaging effectively during the forthcoming informal consultation.
9. In conclusion, I would like to assure you of the African Group's commitment to engage constructively in the negotiations on this important agenda item to ensure its timely conclusion.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.