

STATEMENT

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. MÁRCIO BURITY, THIRD SECRETARY AT PERMANENT MISSION OF ANGOLA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 137: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR BIENNIUM 2018-2019: CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN NAIROBI DURING THE MAIN SESSION OF SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - FIFTH COMMITTEE
(NEW YORK, 11 DECEMBER, 2017)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 137: Proposed programme budget 2018-2019 specifically on the proposal for the replacement of the office blocks A-J at the United Nations at Nairobi.
2. At the outset, the African Group would like to thank Mrs. Shale-Work Zewde, Director General of UNON, and Mr. Patrick Carey, Officer in Charge in the Office of Central Support Services, for introducing the Secretary-General's report A/72/385 and We would also like to extend our appreciation to Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for introducing its related report.
3. The African group appreciates the fact that the United Nations Secretary-General has demonstrated his determination to provide sustainable and sufficient accommodation and related facilities for all UN staff in the various UN duty locations through the development of the Strategic Capital Review reports.

Mr. Chairman,

4. In this regard, the Group expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General's initiative to develop the Strategic Capital Review which identifies in advance deficiencies in buildings and associated facilities so as to take corrective actions to avoid spending huge sums of money in future arising from their deplorable nature. It is through such review that the Secretary-General identified buildings which required immediate replacement in many locations including in Nairobi.

Office blocks A-J which were constructed in 1970's as temporary office swing space has been identified for replacement since it is old with a remaining useful lifetime of about one year. These blocks no longer comply with the current building codes as well as UN security and safety requirement and that they are not universally accessible. The review further determined that investment in major maintenance of these buildings would with time cost more than their replacement cost.

5. The Group recalls that during the 70th main session, the General Assembly approved a total of \$5,000,000 being consultancy funds to undertake a feasibility study on replacement of blocks A-J during the 2016-2017 biennium. The said feasibility study was done in early 2017 and is now complete. The Group wishes to thank the Secretary-General for developing a construction project proposal to replace office blocks A-J based on the study findings. This proposal is before the General Assembly for deliberations and consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group notes that the Secretary-General's report contains information on accommodating non-secretariat entities as tenants. This is important in ensuring that there exists no idle capacity is experienced. With the implementations of flexible workplace strategies, the Group believes that clarity on the space requirement and its availability will be ascertained. In this regard, therefore, UNON would require to continuously ascertain those non-secretariat entities who are interested in being accommodated in the office space to be available from 2022. Further, undertake space utilization assessment continuously. The group will also be interested to understand through the informal consultations the effects of the on-going business transformation reform initiatives.
7. To guarantee efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the project, the Group believes that appropriate governance and oversight measures are imperative. The report stipulates the arrangements which are proposed to provide necessary governance including dedicated project team, steering committee and advisory board for oversight.
8. The Group is of the view that the Office of the Central Support Services should provide very useful, concrete and reliable coordination of the project in an effective manner. The Office of the Internal Oversight Services is expected as appropriate to undertake project ex-ante and post-ante evaluation and inspection to advice through its findings without further delay on any observed risks.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The Group welcomes the adaptation of the United Nations enterprise risk management. In this regard, we hope that there will be very effective identification of potential risks for the project and establishment of risk mitigation measures to ensure that most of the unforeseen risks are effectively addressed.
10. The Group notes that the projected total project cost amounts to \$69.88 million inclusive of the contingency amounts. Out of this amount a total of \$604,000 is required to commence the preparatory work during the 2018 period including consultancy services for design work, dedicated project team and unforeseen expenditure. The Group trusts that a separate account would be established and that a multi-year construction in progress account will be adopted by the General Assembly.
11. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the African Group will follow materialization of this important UNON project, and the progress in the construction of New Office Facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, and the renovation of Conference Facilities, including renovation of the historic Africa Hall with keen interest. In this connection, the Group would like to call upon all involved in the management of these properties to always closely follow and appropriately document their situation with a view of ensuring the necessary safety and security measures are in place and to make sure the working conditions of the UN staff, delegates and guests are guaranteed.
12. The Group will continue to support efforts by the Secretariat and all involved in these projects, and places strong faith in them for the successful, transparent and credible conduct of the work. It is also the understanding of the Group that all Member States will remain committed for the success of these essential UN projects.
13. Last but not least, The Group wishes to assure you of its readiness to engage in constructive deliberations on this important agenda item.

I thank you Mr. Chairman