



Agenda item 138
Proposed programme budget for 2022

Seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific premises in Bangkok (A/76/313)

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan
Assistant Secretary-General, Controller
11 November 2021

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

1. The fifth progress report on the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific premises in Bangkok is submitted pursuant to section XII of General Assembly resolution 75/253 A.
2. The report provides an update on progress made on the project since the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/75/235) and outlines the activities undertaken, including key procurement activities, change management and business readiness, the construction of on-site swing space facilities and the moving of occupants prior to the start of construction.
3. I would like to begin by once again stressing the importance of this project. ESCAP is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations, with 53 members and 9 associate members. Bangkok is the regional hub of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific, with our premise housing 26 entities. Compliance with current seismic as well as fire and life safety codes are fundamental to ensure the health and safety of all occupants and visitors to our premises.

4. Despite some initial challenges and delays, partly resulting from the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the project has made significant progress, especially in the areas of procurement and business readiness. While still subject to risks, the project remains on track, with construction estimated to be completed in 2023 within the overall approved maximum cost of \$40,019,000.

5. Achievements during the reporting period include:

- The rebidding exercise for general construction services, which incorporated lessons from the previous tender, attracted significantly more interest and resulted in the selection of an established general contractor and the signature, on 14 October, of the contract for the general construction works, within the approved budget.

Mobilization works began on 8 November and the main construction works will begin on 22 November.

- In preparation for construction, all ESCAP staff have relocated to the on-site swing space while staff from other UN entities have moved to their respective swing spaces, without any reduction in rental footprint.

- In addition to its Occupational Safety and Health framework, ESCAP is introducing a comprehensive Covid-19 response plan and will require all contractors to fully comply with the Covid-19 safety measures in place, as a part of its multi-layered risk mitigation measures.

6. I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation to the host country, who has provided invaluable advice on local construction methods, building codes and regulations, as well as occupational safety and health.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.