



STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MAGID YOUSIF, MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY, REPUBLIC OF SUDAN, ON AGENDA ITEM 132: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2010-2011, CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE FACILITIES AT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IN ADDIS ABABA AND THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT NAIROBI, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 7 December 2009)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this agenda item.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Director of Budget Sharon van Buerle for the introduction of the relevant reports under this agenda item. The Group also thanks Ms. Susan McLurg, Chairperson of the Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee.
3. The Group of 77 and China notes the Secretary-General's progress report on the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The Group also notes on-going efforts being undertaken to overcome the delays experienced by the Secretary-General in implementing the construction project. These efforts should ensure that proper mechanisms and management structures are put in place to guard against the recurrence of the unfortunate circumstances that led to the cancellation of the original construction, and which were brought to light by the Procurement Task Force. The risks that the organization was being exposed are unacceptable and the Group hopes that the lessons learnt will lead to the establishment of better structures for the management and administration of construction projects undertaken by the organization.
4. The Group welcomes the progress made in resolving some of the challenges that the construction project at ECA had faced in recent times, including, the status of the contract with the architect, duty free and tax-free status and site works in relation to the host Government, and the building of an alternate access road. The Group believes that the momentum built in this respect will ensure that any outstanding or emerging issues will be resolved expeditiously.
5. The Group has previously expressed its concern at the delays, lack of coordination and insufficient guidance from Headquarters and the poor management of the construction projects at the ECA and at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The Group's considered position was that the lack of internal controls and proper accountability structures exposed the Organization to significant potential risks. The Group therefore considers the management reviews undertaken both at the ECA and at UNON, and the proposals made by the Secretary-General as an recognition of the existence of these risks and also as an effort to manage them. In light of the information provided by the secretariat, the Group will be seeking clarifications, during the informal consultations, on the adequacy of the measures proposed and those already implemented.
6. The Group notes the progress made in the construction of additional office facilities at UNON. This is particularly welcome considering the major delays that this project has experienced since it was first approved. The Group is convinced that with proper management, this project can be

completed within the projected time-frame and therefore calls on the Secretary-General to ensure that the implementation of this project monitor is closely monitored.

7. The Group of 77 and China notes with appreciation the completion of the construction of additional conference facilities at the Vienna International Centre and the completion of the project on the improvement and modernization of the Conference facilities at UNON.

8. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the Group acknowledges the invaluable contributions made by the Governments of Austria, Ethiopia and Kenya, respectively, as the host countries, towards ensuring the successful implementation of the above-mentioned construction projects.

I thank you.

