



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS. NORMA TAYLOR ROBERTS, PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2004-2005, DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 8 March 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Dileep Nair and Mr. Vladimir Kuznetsov, Chairman of the ACABQ, for introducing their respective reports under this item and will make brief remarks on some of the issues raised in these reports.

With respect to the report A/59/373 on the operations and management of UN libraries and the review which was conducted from March to May 2004, the Group of 77 and China stresses that any amendment to the United Nations policy on Libraries should be developed in conjunction with Member States. Additionally, the libraries of the United Nations specialized agencies should be invited to participate in the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries.

While automation can assist in improving the delivery of services provided by the UN Libraries, the G-77 and China believes that attention should be paid to making more documents available in electronic formats in all UN official languages. The Group supports the need for harmonization and collaboration on the use of technology and the Internet in all UN libraries.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group has taken note of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the construction of the additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa. In this regard, we note that the original implementation schedule has been revised to ensure that the final project is H-MOSS compliant and the construction phase is now scheduled to start in June 2005. We trust that the Commission will make every effort to meet the targets set in the revised project schedule.

We further note the undertaking to attempt to keep the project costs within the budget approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/270 and expect that the Secretariat will be able to provide the Committee with an update of the financial impact of security related enhancements to the building design. The Group also wishes to express its appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia for generously allocating additional land to the Commission and re-routing public roads to ensure that the additional land falls within the security boundaries of the compound.

We appreciate the report of the OIOS on the audit of air safety standards in procuring air services for UN peacekeeping missions as contained in document A/59/347. The use of air services by the United Nations for peacekeeping operations is on the increase. While every effort must be made to ensure that aircraft services are procured at best available terms, there can be no compromise on safety. The Report contains a number of pertinent recommendations which deserve speedy implementation. We look forward to ascertaining the status of their implementation during informal consultations.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.