

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP BY
MRS. CAROLINE NALWANGA MAGAMBO, COUNSELOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE AGENDA ITEM 136: PROGRAMME
BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018–2019 PROGRESS IN THE RENOVATION OF AFRICA HALL
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OFFICE FACILITIES AT THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
AFRICA IN ADDIS ABABA AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE
SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(NEW YORK, 7 DECEMBER 2018)

Madame Chairperson,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 137: program budget for biennium 2018-2019, Progress in the Renovation of Africa Hall and the Construction of New Office Facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa. The group associates itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of G77 and China.
2. At the outset, the Group wishes to express its appreciation to Mr. Christian Saunders, Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Central Support Services and Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the related reports.

Madame Chair,

3. The Group attaches great importance to the Renovation Project of the historic Africa Hall as it holds symbolic and historic significance of the African story. The Africa Group wishes in this regard to express its gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for its continued support to the ECA including the donation of the historic Hall. It is also our sincere belief that the Secretary-General will continue to work with the host country to ensure the success of the renovation project.
4. The Group also wishes to welcome the successful completion of the construction of the new office facilities, Zambezi Building, in the ECA compound during the third quarter of 2017. As the construction of this project has set exemplary standards in terms of access, safety and other user-friendly aspects, the Group hopes that the lessons learned in this regard would be replicated for other UN facilities on the continent. As part of the project closure, the Group looks forward to receiving an update on the status of the issuance of the certificate of final completion as well as details on the experience of setting benchmarks for projects of this nature.

Madam Chair,

5. The Africa Group is appreciative of efforts made during the renovation process to preserve the original design of the building and its appearance. We also note with appreciation the compliance with, and the application of best practices and current international maintenance codes. We expect that obsolete features in the old building such as the sound system, audio-visual facilities and life and fire safety provisions will be also updated. The Group further welcomes efforts for energy efficiency, which is to be generated from renewable sources.
6. The Group emphasizes the importance of maintaining the overall objective of the project including cost, schedule and quality. We also wish to encourage the recruitment of an artwork restoration expert and an audio-visual and conference engineering services professional.

Madam Chair,

7. The project-specific Agreement signed in April 2018 between the ECA and the host country to provide operational arrangements for customs or import processing and other privileges related to project implementation is appreciated. In a similar manner, the Group welcomes cooperation between the United Na

10. The importance of global awareness creation on the historic Africa Hall and the African heritage, especially to the African Academia and Diaspora, and the expansion of partnerships

11. In conclusion, Madam Chair, the Group wishes to reiterate that the renovation of Africa Hall