

Seventy-third session main part: Agenda item 136

Fifth Committee of the General Assembly

18 November 2018

**Proposal for the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project
at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific premises in Bangkok**

**Remarks by Mr. Patrick Carey, Officer in Charge
Office of Central Support Services**

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to introduce the Secretary-General's progress report on the Seismic and Life Cycle Replacement Project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (A/73/327).

The report before you is submitted pursuant to the section XIII of General Assembly's resolution 72/262, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report for the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacement project.

At the outset, I am pleased to report that this has been an eventful and successful year for the project. The project team completed the planning phase towards the end of 2017 and is now working on the final design with the lead design consultancy firm. The project governance structure has been strengthened by establishing a "Change Champion" network to address business continuity challenges and to proactively engage end users in designing an office space that will be modernized and fit for purpose.

During the design phase, the seismic mitigation retrofit design will continue to be refined, as will the planned life cycle replacement scope of the project, with the aim of addressing health and safety issues, including fire and life safety planning. The construction and swing space strategies have been optimized and all oversight body recommendations are in the process of being implemented.

During the reporting period, the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and her senior management te30030052005100030057004B0048000971 0 595.32 841.92

The Host Country continues to play an active role in the project and the ESCAP team continues to engage with the Technical Advisory Group on lessons learned and to ensure the local knowledge and best practices are incorporated into the project. Furthermore, it is also noteworthy that in May 2018 ESCAP hosted the Inter-Agency Network of Facilities Managers. The meeting provided a unique opportunity for the project team to discuss with their professional counterparts common issues and lessons learned from capital projects at various duty stations around the world.

As regards developments during the design phase, I would like to highlight in particular the revised construction methodology and swing space strategy on-site. Simply by changing the construction methodology, the need for off-site space has been avoided in favour of onsite only swing space, to provide a more cost-effective solution and to minimize the disruption and address the impact on business continuity.

ESCAP has also completed an accessibility survey with 400 ESCAP staff participating in an online survey or focus groups. Findings from the survey and focus groups were considered and outlined in the ESCAP Accessibility Roadmap. This roadmap not only informs the design of an accessible office environment, but also gives us the opportunity to improve current operations.

Here in Headquarters we have hired against the Project Coordinator post, which is jointly funded by ESCAP and ECA and have also hired independent risk management services. In that regard, OCSS conducted a risk management workshop in Bangkok in early 2018 and performed a Monte Carlo risk model to measure the Organisation's level of confidence that the project will be completed within budget. OCSS also held a Value Engineering Workshop with the Project Executive and her team to look at how to avoid potential cost overruns, finding alternative design solutions when needed to remain within budget, without