

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on agenda item 138: Proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2022, Progress in the Renovation of the Africa Hall at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Abeba.
2. My delegation thanks the Secretary General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for their respective reports.
3. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the G77 and China and the African Group and will make few additional remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

4. Ethiopia has the great honor of hosting Economic Commission of Africa and other UN Offices in Addis Abeba.

6. With respect to the services to be availed by Africa Hall and revenue generation, we would like to emphasize, full accessibility for all income groups is second to none. This being said, the Government of Ethiopia will coordinate with the ECA in support of the income mobilization efforts. In this regard, Addis Abeba provides a number of opportunities that should be exploited by a deliberate and concerted effort in increasing the visibility of Africa Hall. We look forward to learn more details on the recommendations of the Advisory Board on income mobilization.

Mr. Chair,

7. We reiterate the calls for the timely completion of the project within the revised project schedule. Ethiopia welcomes the completion of the decanting work. We believe continuation of the actual renovation work is overdue and we call on ECA to promptly finalize all outstanding procurement and other matters and resume the project for finalization within the revised timeline. Considering the trend of the COVID-19 global pandemic in Ethiopia and the prevailing best practices in ensuring continuity of work in several other sectors, we expect the project to resume in normal terms with the necessary mitigation measure against the pandemic.
8. We also encourage the project team to scale up the efforts towards utilization of local knowledge, material, technology and capacity. Most of the art works in the Hall are of African origin and preservation of historical, cultural, and architectural integrity of the Hall is of paramount importance. As a result, the Secretary General must make sure, knowledge and expertise from the continent is utilized. Coordination with heritage and arts institutions at national and regional levels and with UNESCO is also necessary.

Mr. Chair

9. Ethiopia requests member states to approve the budget proposed by the Secretary General for project activities in 2022. We also encourage member states to make voluntary contributions to the project following the examples set by Mali that has paid its full contribution and Switzerland that pledged to make financial contribution.
10. We look forward to constructive engagement and timely conclusion of the deliberations.