

**Fifth Committee Briefing
10 October 2013**

**Statement by
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Introduction

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to provide a briefing on the construction project of the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals. In its resolution 67/244B of 21 May 2013, the General Assembly authorised all activities related to the construction of a new facility for the Arusha Branch of the Mechanism. In this resolution, the General Assembly also requested that regular updates on the progress of the construction project be given to Member States. Although I understand how busy Fifth Committee members are during this time of the year, I appreciate the importance of keeping Members States regularly appraised of our progress in moving the construction project forward.

I am pleased to report today that the project is on time and on budget.

Implementation of timeline

In accordance with the project's timeline, we have finalised the selection of the site. Known as Lakilaki, the site was given to the Mechanism by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. It sits on a plateau atop a gently sloping hill facing Mount Meru, approximately 12 kilometres from Arusha city centre. We are grateful to the Tanzanian Government for their generous offer and their continuous and unwavering support.

In his report A/67/696 of 16 January 2013, the Secretary-General presented detailed cost estimates for the project. A project budget of \$8.78 million has been approved to construct the facility, which is to be ready for occupancy at the end of 2015. In paragraph 6 of resolution 67/244B, the General Assembly authorised the creation of a multi-year special account to record income and expenditures for the construction.

Also in report A/67/696, the Secretary-General presented the conceptual design for the project, which was the result of the successful collaboration between OCSS and the Mechanism. It was exceptionally done in-house by OCSS, and resulted in a significant reduction of the overall project length and cost, a fact for which the General Assembly commended the Secretary-General in resolution 67/244 B. In accordance with paragraph 13 of resolution 67/244B, I will continue to remain conscious of the timeline and budget and will strive for savings and efficiencies whenever possible.

As set out previously, the design revolves around a single, prominent tree – symbolising justice in many parts of the African continent – where “courts” have traditionally been conducted in open air, under a tree. The facility will have three buildings – an office building, an archives building and a courtroom.

The intention is for the courtroom to be multi-functional, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 12 of resolution 67/244B: it can be transformed into a conference room or meeting space, depending on the needs of the Mechanism. Further, in accordance with paragraph 19 of resolution 67/244B, I have engaged in consultations with other judicial institutions, such as the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, to explore the possibility of sharing facilities. Moreover, in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 67/244B, the Project Team is committed to applying a flexible workspace approach, as is currently being considered by Member States in the context of the United Nations Headquarters.

The lean, minimalistic and energy efficient design of the three buildings and the facility as a whole reflect the essence of the Mechanism – an organisation mandated to be small and lean – while at the same time conveying a sense of gravitas that fits its solemn mission.

I am pleased to inform you that the recruitment process for the Project Manager has been completed. She took up duties in April 2013 and brings a wealth of experience to the team from both the private and public sectors including the United Nations. Reporting to the Head of Office of the Registry of the Arusha Branch, the Project Manager is instrumental to the success of this project. She provides full-time daily oversight in order to seamlessly advance the project and ensure ethics compliance and accountability.

Recruiting a dedicated Project Manager was one of the lessons learned from other United Nations construction projects, such as the United Nations Office in Nairobi and the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, and the Mechanism remains committed to implementing these valuable lessons.

Current phase

We have now entered a key phase of the project. As we speak, the procurement process for the architectural and engineering consultancy firm is well advanced. It will be the responsibility of the successful firm to transform the architectural concept into reality.

The procurement for the architectural and engineering firm began in May 2013, and is being conducted in accordance with all applicable United Nations rules and regulations. An Expression of Interest was published on a number of websites, including the United Nations Global Marketplace; the United Nations Procurement Division; the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR); the United Nations Office in Nairobi and the Mechanism. It was also published in newspapers across Tanzania and Kenya, and with professional registration boards within the East African Community. Bids closed on 6 August 2013.

The selected firm, which the Mechanism expects to have on board by December of this year, will be responsible for preparing detailed working documents and the architectural blueprint. A key requirement in the selection process of the architectural firm was for the firm to have local experience and presence, in line with paragraph 7 of resolution 67/244B.

All this, the selection of the site, the presentation of the cost estimates, the development of the conceptual design, the recruitment of the Project Manager and the evaluation of the architectural firm have been completed to ensure that the project remains within the timeline approved by the General Assembly.

Moving forward: once the architectural design firm is on board, the Project Team can then proceed with further developing the design, elaborating on the requirements and preparing for the selection of a construction firm. The Secretary-General will submit a progress report on this phase to the General Assembly during the first part of its resumed 68th session, as requested in paragraph 13 of resolution 67/244B.

Cooperation with other Offices

Throughout this entire process, the Mechanism has benefited from the technical and operational expertise of the ICTR and the ICTY, as well as a number of departments within the Secretariat.

In accordance with paragraph 15 of resolution 67/244B, the Mechanism and OCSS have collaborated extensively from the inception of this project. This cooperation has only grown. OCSS has provided the Mechanism with invaluable technical advice, and has assisted the Mechanism in liaising with other offices and departments here in New York who are working with us on this project. These include OLA, PPBD, OICT and DSS. I can only praise the collaboration between and amongst these institutions and offices.

Role of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania

The Mechanism and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania have continued to engage with one another on all aspects of the project, from the local-level Regional Commissioner's Office to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This commitment of the Government is laudable, and I have no doubt that it will continue throughout the duration of the project.

Accountability and Project Team

Construction projects present challenges and risks to the Organisation. As the representative of the Secretary-General at the Mechanism, I am fully committed to managing these risks. As recommended in paragraph 10 of resolution 67/244B, the Project Team and I have actively collaborated with the internal auditors – OIOS – to set up a robust system of checks and balances, with clear instructions, chains of command and accountability.

This construction project is of crucial importance to the Mechanism. Not only will the new premises equip the Arusha Branch with the infrastructure it needs to carry out its responsibilities, but it will also contribute to carrying forward the ICTR's legacy and achievements in the field of international criminal justice. Again, I am firmly committed to achieving this on time and on budget.

Thank you.