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## UNITED NATIONS LIBRARY

### Report by the Secretary-General

1. At its fourteenth session, the General Assembly accepted with gratitude and appreciation a gift of \$6,200,000 from the Ford Foundation to construct, furnish and equip a new building to house the United Nations Library on the Headquarters site. Resolution 1354 (XIV), by which the General Assembly accepted this generous offer, requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session regarding the level of library resources and services that should be made available to ensure that the new Library might be used to the best possible advantage, and to report on the progress of development and construction of the new building.

### Library resources and services

2. The Secretary-General has reviewed all of the studies and reports on the requirements of the Headquarters for library resources and services which were prepared in the course of the negotiations with the Ford Foundation that resulted in the gift of \$6,200,000 for an appropriate Library building. Moreover, he has given attention to additional studies of the Library's functions and the level of support required to perform those functions which have been prepared by the Director and staff of the Library. Finally, he has had the advice of four distinguished librarians from outside the Organization who have served as consultants.

3. On the evidence of these studies and this expert advice, the Secretary-General is convinced that the Library's future development should be along the

lines and of the magnitude suggested in his report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session on the gift of the Ford Foundation, in which it is stated:

"In order to provide adequate library resources and services to meet growing needs, the Secretary-General has estimated that a considerable increase up to an approximate doubling of the present rate of acquisition of library materials would be necessary to achieve a desired eventual total collection of about 400,000 volumes. He also propose that, in due course, an increase of 25 to 30 per cent in staff will be necessary to allow, particularly, for an approximate doubling of the present indexing and related bibliographical work." 1/

4. That these estimates are modest and that they reflect a predicable trend of increasing use of the Library by delegations and the Secretariat as well as by scholars and writers is borne out by the experience of the Library during the past year, most of which has been spent in improvised temporary quarters in the Secretariat building. Thus, despite the handicap of inadequate reading rooms and the fact that nearly half of the collections are presently stored in a basement area where they are for practical purposes inaccessible, use made of the Library during 1959-1960 was, once again, greater than in any previous year, as the following table illustrates:

	<u>Jan.-Dec.</u> <u>1951-1956</u> (average)	<u>Jan.-Dec.</u> <u>1957</u>	<u>Jan.-Dec.</u> <u>1958</u>	<u>Jan.-Dec.</u> <u>1959</u>	<u>Sept.-Aug.</u> <u>1959-1960</u>
Reference queries	64,000	87,303	103,870	107,861	109,063
Loans	67,000	79,514	91,637	100,955	115,149

5. The above figures are the measure of only two specific activities of the Library; however they reflect the Library's entire workload, which may be seen to have increased by about 60 per cent since 1956 and which certainly will increase still further by reason of the enlarged membership of the Organization and the stimulus of the new Library building. What the figures do not show is the need for much more indexing and related bibliographical work than it is presently possible to perform. Thus, for want of staff the Library cannot undertake much needed indexes in French to the current documents of the United Nations; it cannot prepare indexes to many special reports and studies whose usefulness would be

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Annexes,  
agenda item 72, document A/4231, para. 30.

enhanced thereby; it cannot respond to many calls for bibliographies and reading lists which would serve the research staff and the delegations.

6. In this regard, the Library serves the Organization less effectively than it did in 1951-1956, because as the daily work of answering reference questions and lending books has grown, it has been necessary to divert more and more staff to these tasks at the expense of the kind of bibliographical work which formerly distinguished the Library's role. For example, between 1949 and 1957 the Library published seven major works in its Bibliographical Series, including A Bibliography of the Charter of the United Nations (128 pages) and a Bibliography on Industrialization in Under-Developed Countries (216 pages). Since 1957 it has not been possible to add to this series, despite an obvious need for a number of similar compilations (plainly it would have been most useful to have had, for example, extensive bibliographies on the emergent States of Africa, on disarmament, on space law and on many other subjects).

7. To meet only the most pressing of these needs for more indexes and more bibliographical services the Library has requested three additional junior professional posts and three junior clerical posts in 1961. Thereafter, as the rate of growth of the collections is accelerated and the Library is installed in its new building, it will surely be necessary to increase the staff by a few posts in each of the next few years from the present 89 to an eventual total of about 125 posts. Some upward reclassification of posts also will be necessary to compensate equitably for the increased responsibilities that will fall to the senior staff of the Library as their spans of authority are extended and the Library's services are expanded.

8. The present distribution of posts by grade is as follows:

Director (D-2) . . . . .	1	
Total		1
<u>Professional posts</u>		
Senior Officer (P-5) . . . . .	1	
First Officer (P-4) . . . . .	5	
Second Officer (P-3) . . . . .	5	
Associate/Assistant Officer (P-2/P-1)	23	
Total Professional		34

General Service posts

Principal (G-5) . . . . .	2	
Senior/Intermediate/Junior (G-4/G-3/G-2) . . . . .	47	
Total General Service		49

<u>Manual posts</u> (M-2)	5	
Total Manual		5

Grand total 89

The manning table to be established, step by step, by about 1965 would distribute posts by grade as follows:

Director (D-2) . . . . .	1	
Principal Officer (D-1) . . . . .	1	
Total		2

Professional posts

Senior Officer (P-5) . . . . .	5	
First Officer (P-4) . . . . .	6	
Second Officer (P-3) . . . . .	12	
Associate/Assistant Officer (P-2/P-1) .	26	
Total Professional		49

General Service posts

Principal (G-5) . . . . .	8	
Senior/Intermediate/Junior (G-4/G-3/G-2) . . . . .	58	
Total General Service		66

<u>Manual posts</u> (M-2)	8	
Total Manual		8

Grand total 125

9. The proposed distribution of posts by grade would, incidentally, redress somewhat the existing imbalance in the Library where only 32.4 per cent of the Professional posts are at the P-3 to P-5 level, as against an over-all Secretariat percentage of 73.6. This adjustment, which yet would class only 46.9 per cent of the Library's Professional posts at the P-3 to P-5 level, is deemed essential if the Library is to attract and to keep the qualified career staff which its expansion will require.

10. The primary furniture of a library is, of course, books. And in this age of communication there is almost no limit to the number of books which are useful in the work of a world organization. Fortunately, however, it is not necessary for the United Nations itself to possess all of the books which are published in many branches of law, economics, political and social affairs with which the delegations and the Secretariat are concerned. To a degree the Headquarters may rely on the great general and special libraries in the New York area which are unfailingly co-operative in allowing access to their collections. Notwithstanding, the daily work of the Organization requires that its own library provide on the spot a great variety of books, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, governmental and inter governmental documents, maps and other forms of publication. These library materials must be selected with skill, acquired from all over the world with the greatest possible speed and organized for maximum usefulness.

11. At present the Library numbers roughly 200,000 volumes. It is an excellent collection in many languages, and it serves, with modest annual increases, to provide for the most pressing needs of the Organization. However, it should be much larger and much better than it is. In the opinion of the Secretary-General, supported by the advice of the Director of the Library and the judgement of his consultants, the collection should be about twice its present size, i.e., about 400,000 volumes, which is approximately the size of the Library of the European Office, formerly the League of Nations Library. Accordingly, plans for the new Library building are predicated upon the development of a collection of this magnitude. It is not expected, however, that the collection need grow beyond 400,000 volumes, for as that level is reached the systematic withdrawal of superseded and otherwise obsolete material should approximately balance current additions.

12. To achieve this goal, the present rate of acquisition of new materials should be approximately doubled. At today's level of book prices this will entail an increase of about \$50,000 annually in the funds appropriated for the purchase of books, periodicals, maps, etc.

13. Both as regards staff and book purchases, the development plans outlined above as representing the anticipated requirements for the years ahead are essentially the plans which were developed in the course of negotiation with the Ford Foundation in 1959. In a sense they represent an obligation of the Organization to provide the services and the library materials appropriate to the new building as well as necessary for the most effective functioning of the Headquarters establishment. The Secretary-General recommends that these plans be approved.

#### Building development

14. Following the decision to erect the new Library building arrangements were made to provide temporary housing for the Library staff and services during the construction period. To this end space in the Secretariat and the Conference buildings was converted to permit the housing of the most essential library facilities. Books and document collections not required for frequent reference during the period of construction of the new building were crated and transferred to inactive storage. This phase of the project was completed on 13 February 1960. The financial implications of the creation of temporary library facilities and the movement of the staff and collections had been estimated at \$114,000; however, owing to changes in original plans and construction methods on which the estimate was based and through the use of regular Secretariat mechanics rather than outside contractors for both the construction and the physical move, the actual expenditure was held to approximately \$50,000.

15. The Secretary-General has retained the firm of Harrison and Abramowitz, architects for the original Headquarters buildings, to develop plans, drawings, specifications and design details for the new building. The design as now conceived carries out, with minor modifications, the initial concept of the library structure which was visualized in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session.<sup>2/</sup> With agreement on the design the development of working drawings and construction plans is now under way.

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<sup>2/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 72, document A/4231.

16. A prime contractor has been selected for the construction project on the basis of competitive bids and the guaranteed maximum price certified by the contractor gives assurance that the funds available will be sufficient to complete the building, including furnishings and landscaping, as anticipated. The demolition of the old Library building was finished in August and excavation work preparatory to the erection of the foundations is now under way with the anticipation that this phase of the project will be completed before the end of November. The construction schedule indicates that the new building will be completed for occupancy in November 1961.

17. The gift by the Ford Foundation of \$6,200,000, which was transferred to the United Nations on 9 November 1959, was immediately invested. The interest accruing on the investment has been taken into account in budgeting the costs of the project.

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