



Eighteenth session
Agenda item 58

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1964

Major maintenance and capital improvement at
United Nations Headquarters

Development of the basement area of the General
Assembly Building

Twenty-third report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions to the General Assembly at its
eighteenth session

1. In its seventeenth report to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session (A/5604 and Corr.1), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions considered part I of the Secretary-General's report on major maintenance and capital improvement at United Nations Headquarters (A/C.5/991), relating to the expansion of the meeting-room facilities. In the present report, it deals with part II concerning the development of the basement area of the General Assembly building.

2. In his 1962 report on major maintenance and capital improvement at Headquarters,^{1/} the Secretary-General proposed a construction programme for the development in two stages of the basement area of the General Assembly building for television and other visual services:

(a) Stage I, comprising (i) installation of basic structural steelwork, plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, dust control, fire protection equipment, and electrical work for the entire basement area; (ii) construction of a technical area consisting of rooms for recording, printing and processing; and (iii) construction of a studio area;

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Annexes,
agenda item 62, document A/C.5/928.

(b) Stage II: construction of an additional studio with public gallery suitable for use as a briefing and screening room. At that time, the Secretary-General proposed that stage II be deferred for reasons of economy.

3. In respect of this proposal, the Advisory Committee made the following recommendations,^{2/} which were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly:^{3/}

(a) The additional visual facilities to be provided should be limited to stage I;

(b) The Secretary-General should be invited to undertake, as a matter of urgency, as part of the internal survey by the Administrative Management Service a study to determine the optimum use to be made of the remainder of the basement area. This study would need to be completed before any work began on stage I, since the details of that work might well partly depend on the specific use to be made of the rest of the area. The Advisory Committee would be ready to consider a report by the Secretary-General, including definite space utilization proposals as soon as such a report could be made available. It should then be possible for the Secretary-General to present an over-all plan and revised estimates for work on the basement area as a whole, which could be considered by the General Assembly, together with the timing of any approved capital expenditure.

4. During the first half of 1963, the Administrative Management Service of the Office of the Controller studied the problem as a part of its survey of the utilization of office and related space in the Secretariat building, and the Advisory Committee wishes to place on record its appreciation of the detailed and comprehensive report which was submitted to it at its summer session. Apart from adjustments already carried out after a floor-by-floor survey, the report concludes that the only prospect of providing any appreciable amount of additional office space, short of major new construction, lies in the development of the General Assembly basement area along the lines now proposed by the Secretary-General (see para. 5 below). This space, comprising some 11,000 square feet (1,022 square metres), is said to be at the present time the only area available for office

^{2/} Ibid., document A/5267, para. 21.

^{3/} Ibid., document A/5334, para. 8, and ibid., Plenary Meetings, 1191st meeting.

expansion at Headquarters with the possible exception of some 3,110 square feet (289 square metres) of sub-standard space on the 39th floor.

5. As a result of this study, the Secretary-General has completely revised his plans of last year for the development of this area and has determined that as much of the space as possible should be utilized to alleviate the present critical shortage of office accommodation. The revised plan as now proposed provides that approximately one-half of the area would be utilized for office space and the balance for television and other visual services. The main new features are the following:

(a) Maximum utilization of the available space would be achieved by the sub-division of the entire area into two floors;

(b) To this end, the television studio would be re-designed to be one rather than two storeys high, and the briefing and screening room for visitors would be eliminated;

(c) Office space, amounting to 5,342 square feet (496 square metres) would be created at the first basement level and 5,895 square feet (547 square metres) at the second basement level.

These areas would be finished as typical office space and would be comparable to other office space currently provided in adjacent areas of the General Assembly building.

6. The Advisory Committee expects that the plan as now proposed would meet the long-term requirements of the television and other visual services.

7. In paragraph 17 of his report (A/C.5/991), the Secretary-General indicates that the new concept requires substantial changes in the basic construction in the area as compared with the previous plan and that, by installing an intermediate floor throughout the General Assembly building basement, the requirements for structural steel work, air conditioning, lighting, plumbing, and other facilities are considerably greater. Although final architectural plans and specifications have not been prepared, pending a decision by the General Assembly on the details of the project, the costs of the plan as now proposed are estimated to be as follows:

	\$
(a) Construction, including 15 per cent contingency	998,000
(b) Contractor's and architect's fees	155,000
(c) Equipment and installations	40,000
	<u>1,193,000</u>

8. Particular attention is called to the fact that this cost estimate is based on the assumption that: (a) construction and working drawings would be prepared early in 1964; (b) work would be carried out in conjunction with the expansion of meeting-room facilities; and (c) the major portion of the work would be completed in 1964. This schedule would require expenditures of \$900,000 in 1964 and \$293,000 in 1965. The estimate includes provision for essential processing and technical equipment which is required to make the area operational.

9. The Advisory Committee has observed that, bearing in mind the severe financial difficulties of the Organization, the Secretary-General envisaged the possibility of developing this area in stages. He ascertained, however, that this would cost not less than \$350,000 and, depending upon circumstances, as much as \$600,000 more than if the work were carried out as a single operation and in conjunction with the expansion of meeting-room facilities. It would therefore appear that the development of the area in stages cannot be recommended.

10. Accordingly, the Secretary-General proposes that the basement area of the General Assembly building be developed in 1964 and 1965 along the lines described in paragraph 5 above at an estimated cost of \$1,193,000. The Advisory Committee notes that, in making this recommendation, the Secretary-General is particularly conscious of the need to find office space within the Headquarters buildings. The Committee agrees with the Secretary-General's view and considers that, in the circumstances, the present project, although it involves substantial expenditure, is a practicable one and the most economical method of providing additional office space at an early date.

Recommendation of the Advisory Committee

11. In the light of the foregoing considerations, the Advisory Committee would concur in the plan proposed by the Secretary-General for the development of the

basement area of the General Assembly building. However, it must call attention to the fact that the estimate of \$1,193,000 submitted by the Secretary-General contains a substantial contingency provision, and it would hope that the Secretary-General will make every effort to negotiate a guaranteed maximum price contract on the most favourable terms and to keep actual costs at a minimum.

12. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

(a) Authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to \$1,193,000 for the complete work in the basement area;

(b) Appropriate \$900,000 for the portion of the work to be completed in 1964;

(c) Request the Secretary-General to negotiate as soon as possible a "guaranteed maximum price" contract subject to the ceiling of \$1,193,000 for the total work and report to the Advisory Committee;

(d) Authorize the Secretary-General, subject to the ceiling of \$1,193,000, to sign the contract with the concurrence of the Committee.
