



Twentieth session
Agenda item 86

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Fourteenth report of the Advisory Committee on
Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the
General Assembly at its twentieth session

1. In its twenty-sixth report to the General Assembly at its nineteenth session^{1/} the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions considered a report of the Secretary-General^{2/} concerning the question of a site for and the provision of a permanent building to house the United Nations International School. The Secretary-General's report referred to General Assembly resolution 1982 (XVIII) of 16 December 1963, which appealed to Governments of Member States to take such measures as they might consider necessary to ensure that voluntary contributions for building and endowing the International School would be forthcoming at the earliest possible date from appropriate sources, governmental or non-governmental.
2. In his report, the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly that the Ford Foundation would be prepared to make a grant of up to \$7.5 million to cover the cost of building and equipping the new School if it could receive assurances that the United Nations attached real importance to this project and expressed in a tangible way the support of the Member States. The Foundation indicated its concern that the question of the site should be satisfactorily resolved and that an endowment fund should be established adequate to ensure the School's independence.
3. In the light of the Ford Foundation's offer, the Secretary-General suggested to the General Assembly at its nineteenth session that reconsideration be given

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, Annex No. 19, document A/5888.

^{2/} Ibid., documents A/5834 and Add.1.

to an earlier idea, namely that the School be constructed at the north end of the United Nations Headquarters site.

4. In suggesting this course of action, the Secretary-General recognized that it was also of vital importance that the School should be allowed to develop the highest quality of education under the general policies established by the Board of Trustees and administered by the Director and faculty, and expressed his full agreement with the opinion expressed in the past by the General Assembly, and underlined by the Board of Trustees and the Ford Foundation, that the School must have an endowment or development fund adequate to ensure its financial independence. The Board of Trustees believed that such a Fund should reach a level of not less than \$3 million to ensure an annual income of \$150,000, to provide for an adequate scholarship fund of \$75,000, plus \$75,000 to be applied to measures for improving the quality of education, including essential curriculum research, the preparation of international teaching materials, staff training opportunities, and a broadening of the base of recruitment of teachers which the Board believes desirable, which could not be supported from the present level of tuition fees.

5. It was reported by the Board of Trustees at that time that against the \$3 million required, cash gifts and pledges amounted to \$963,000, of which \$75,878 had been pledged or paid by ten Governments and the balance from individual and foundation gifts. The Board and the Secretary-General considered that the value of the site, plus at least \$1 million in contributions from United Nations Members, would represent a substantial United Nations counterpart to the Ford Foundation gift and that the best method of achieving that goal must be weighed by the General Assembly.

6. The General Assembly, in resolution 2003 (XIX), approved in principle the use of the north end of the United Nations Headquarters site for the construction of the School, subject to review of legal arrangements by the Advisory Committee, and made an appeal to Governments for contributions to the Development Fund.

7. In its report,^{3/} issued after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2003 (XIX), the Advisory Committee stated that authorization to use the Headquarters site would, in practice, be equivalent to a substantial donation

^{3/} Ibid., Annex No. 19, document A/5888.

towards the construction of the School, noting at the same time that it was evident that such construction would give rise to a number of legal problems. The Committee referred to its previous observations to the effect that no commitment for the construction of a new building should be entered into, except on the basis of funds actually donated or firmly pledged, sufficient to cover all or a substantial portion of the cost of the project. The Committee stressed, therefore, that it could not over-emphasize the importance of the establishment of an adequate Development Fund to ensure the School's financial independence, and strongly recommended that construction should not start unless and until the greater part of the Development Fund had been received or firmly pledged.

8. In his report to the twentieth session, the Secretary-General stated that on the basis of the General Assembly's action the Board of Trustees proceeded with the development of detailed plans for the new building.^{4/} However, as some misgivings were noted among civic leaders and organizations, as well as among some Members of the United Nations, in March 1965 the question was raised whether the United Nations would consider an alternative location for the School, on Welfare Island situated in the East River, opposite the north end of the United Nations complex. After extensive study, the Board of Trustees informed the Secretary-General that this alternative site would not adequately meet the needs of the School. At the same time the Board indicated its willingness to reopen the question of finding, within the financial possibilities of the School, a suitable site located near the United Nations and available in time to avoid serious delay in construction.

9. In June 1965, the New York City authorities indicated a new possibility at 25th Street and the East River Drive, on land to be created by filling in, or constructing a platform over the East River. A special gift of \$1 million from members of the Rockefeller family would meet the greater part of the cost of developing this new site.

10. The Board of Trustees decided that this solution would be in the best interests of the School and so informed the Secretary-General and the Mayor of New York City. The Ford Foundation confirmed that its grant of \$7.5 million would

^{4/} A/6079, para. 3.

be available for constructing the School on the new site as soon as the designs were approved by the Board and the conditions concerning the Development Fund met.

11. The Secretary-General stated that the proposed new site offered a happy solution for the physical location of the School, that he proposed to sign a long-term lease with New York City at \$1 per annum for the property and that he would inform the Advisory Committee of the detailed provisions of the lease being worked out between the City and United Nations legal advisers.

12. It was pointed out by the Secretary-General, however, that one serious obstacle remained to the realization of the plans for the School, namely, the conditions set by the Ford Foundation concerning the level of the Development Fund, established at \$3 million, to ensure the viability of the School.^{5/} In this connexion, the Secretary-General had made a new appeal to all Members in February 1965. In his report he stated that as of 15 October 1965, a total of thirty-three Governments had responded, bringing their pledges to \$255,292, which, together with private contributions and pledges, brought the level of the Fund to \$1,232,738.

13. In its report to the nineteenth session, the Advisory Committee joined the Secretary-General in expressing appreciation of the Ford Foundation's generous offer. The Committee also associates itself with the Secretary-General in expressing its appreciation to the City of New York for its offer of the 25th Street site on a one-hundred-year lease at an annual rental fee of \$1. Similarly, it wishes to acknowledge the continuing support extended to the United Nations by members of the Rockefeller family in offering a \$1 million grant towards the development of the site for the School.

14. With regard to the proposed new site for the School, the Advisory Committee would agree with the Secretary-General that the 25th Street location appears to offer a satisfactory solution to the physical problem which has confronted the International School for the past five years. This proposal resolves the concern expressed by the Committee last year that if the School were located on the United Nations Headquarters site, little land suitable for building would remain should the General Assembly wish at some future date to extend the Headquarters premises.

^{5/} A/6079, para. 7.

The Committee, therefore, concurs in the Secretary-General's proposal to sign a one-hundred-year lease with the City at \$1 per annum for the property, subject to agreement being reached between the City of New York and the United Nations on a satisfactory lease, and suggests that the General Assembly may also wish to record its approval.

15. With regard to the Development and Endowment Fund to be financed from voluntary contributions, the Committee notes that a total of thirty-three Governments have responded to the appeal, bringing their pledges, as of 15 October 1965, to \$255,292. Including private pledges and contributions, the Fund now totals \$1,232,738. Given the present circumstances - whereby some 41 per cent of the target has been received or pledged and an acceptable site, having only a token financial implication, has finally been agreed upon - and provided that the Board of Trustees and the Secretary-General obtain the agreement of the Ford Foundation, the Advisory Committee suggests that the General Assembly may wish to endorse the Board's request to proceed with the preparation of the detailed plans and specifications for the buildings in order to ensure that the School may move into the new premises in time for the 1968-1969 academic year.

16. At the same time, the Committee would draw the attention of the General Assembly to the report of the Board of Trustees.^{6/} In paragraph 12 of that report, the Board expressed the opinion that no further substantial contributions can be expected from private voluntary sources until the Governments of Member States contribute a significant proportion of the Development Fund in order that work on the School can progress without interruption. The Committee also notes that the Secretary-General has expressed the hope that Governments will give concrete evidence of their support for the School and respond generously at this critical point. The Advisory Committee associates itself with the Secretary-General's remarks and hopes that as the uncertainty of a site and construction costs have now been removed, Governments of Member States will see their way clear to contribute generously to the Fund, thereby securing financial viability for the School prior to its dedication.

17. In paragraph 9 of his report (A/6079) the Secretary-General referred to the operating deficit for the current school year (1965-1966) estimated at \$45,400.

^{6/} A/6079, annex, para. 12.

However, it is reported by the Board that the General Assembly grants for 1963-1964 and 1964-1965 were insufficient to liquidate the operational deficits for those years and that balances of \$579 and \$10,985, respectively, remain uncovered. Taking into account these deficits for prior years totalling \$11,564, the anticipated deficit for 1965-1966 will be \$56,964. The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the General Assembly would find it possible to make an appropriate grant to the International School Fund for 1966 to cover this operating deficit. In this connexion, the Advisory Committee would recall that the General Assembly, in resolution 1439 (XIV) of 5 December 1959, provided for financial assistance to the United Nations International School for a period of five years, which period expired with the 1964-1965 academic year. However, in the prevailing circumstances and in the light of recent developments, the General Assembly may wish to continue its policy of subsidizing the operational budget of the School for an additional year, and approve a grant of \$57,000 for the current year 1965-1966.

The Advisory Committee believes that once the target of the Development Fund has been attained, the School can be expected to achieve a balanced budget and that no further assistance from the General Assembly should be required.
