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Report of the Secretary-General

1. At the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General reported on the progress in filling the riverside site at 25th Street and Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, leased from the City of New York for ninety-nine years to provide for the new building so urgently required by the United Nations International School.<sup>1/</sup>
2. In resolution 2176 (XXI) the General Assembly noted that the Secretary-General had accepted the site offered by the City of New York and authorized the Secretary-General to transfer to the Board of Trustees of the School, from the grants made available by the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller family, the amounts necessary to ensure the speedy completion of the new building.
3. The work on the site and on completion of the working drawings by the architect has gone forward according to schedule and the foundation contract is ready for award in the immediate future. Many difficulties have been faced which have necessitated changes in the plans to ensure that the building could be completed and equipped within the budget available; the major change agreed by the Board of Trustees to solve this problem was the reduction of the capacity of the building from 1,500 to 1,000 pupils, including reduction in the size of the gymnasiums, auditorium and other recreational facilities.
4. Within the past weeks, officials of the Ford Foundation have made new proposals to the Secretary-General designed to find a better solution to the problems of the School. These have now been considered by the Board of Trustees

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 83, document A/6507.

which has recommended that these proposals should be thoroughly explored and that work be halted on the site at 25th Street pending final assurances on certain vital questions concerning the temporary relocation of the School and the feasibility of the alternative proposal for the School. The Board is convinced that the new proposals are in the best interests of the children now attending the School as well as the long-term future of the institution.

5. The proposals made by the Ford Foundation may be summed up as follows:

(a) To locate the new School on a site lying between 39th and 40th Streets, west of First Avenue, in a new building to be constructed on a platform at the level of Tudor City apartments;

(b) To provide appropriate housing for United Nations staff and delegations in an apartment building above the School;

(c) To provide an interim building in the vicinity of the United Nations Headquarters which would accommodate all children in the Manhattan branch of the School before the end of 1967;

(d) To seek a solution with the City of New York to preserve the 25th Street site as a park with playing fields available to the United Nations International School.

6. The new location would consist of air rights to 80,500 square feet (7,480 square metres) of space over the proposed sub-station (distribution plant) of Consolidated Edison, which has agreed in principle to sell these rights to the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, a non-profit organization. That Association regards favourably the investment potential of purchasing the air rights and participating in the cost of constructing the platform to provide a building site. The Association would lease rights for the development of an income-producing residential facility for United Nations families above the School. This location would allow the School to be built fifteen blocks closer to the United Nations and related to plans now under study for improving the neighbourhood of United Nations Headquarters. It would provide workshops, clubrooms and recreational facilities which could be used jointly by the children, the United Nations Secretariat and delegations, as contemplated in the plan to build on the north end of the Headquarters site. Most important of all, it would allow a return to 185,000 square feet (17,200 square metres), which would provide places for 1,500 pupils, rather than the 1,000 places provided in the present plans. The

recreational facilities would be expanded and could include an Olympic ice-skating rink built as the new home of the Skating Club of New York.

7. Since the change in site and architectural plans would delay the opening of the new facility for two or three years (beyond the September 1968 date now scheduled for beneficial occupancy), the Ford Foundation has agreed that an interim location is essential to meet the problems of the over-crowded and unsatisfactory building at 70th Street and First Avenue. Officials of the Foundation have now located 47,250 square feet (4,390 square metres) of space at 418 East 54th Street, which appear to the Director of the School and to members of the Executive Committee of the Board to offer improved facilities immediately, as well as room for expanding the number of pupils before the new building is ready. The present school in Manhattan provides 36,000 square feet (3,345 square metres) of space. The Ford Foundation has agreed to pay the costs of remodelling the building for school use and moving the School. The Foundation has also agreed to bear the cost of renting these facilities if its original grant and the interest thereon do not meet the difference in cost of completing the riverside site and building and the total cost of interim headquarters for the School plus the new building at 39th Street.

8. All interested parties outside the United Nations have been consulted on this proposed change, including the Mayor of the City of New York and the representatives of the Rockefeller family who donated \$1 million towards the preparation of the riverside site. General agreement to co-operate in working out the new plans in the best interests of the School and the United Nations has been forthcoming.

9. It appears to the Board of Trustees and to the Secretary-General that the balance of the argument lies in favour of the new plan despite the disappointment which will be felt at postponing once again the occupancy of new permanent headquarters by the School. The assurance of a quick solution of the present plight of the School, a more adequate building in three years' time closer to the United Nations, housing and recreational facilities for United Nations Secretariat and delegations and outdoor playing space with no visible financial risks offer a combination which it is difficult to reject even at this late date.

10. In view of the fact that the General Assembly in its resolution 2123 (XX) of 21 December 1965 authorized the Secretary-General to sign a lease with the City of

New York for the construction of the School at 25th Street, the Secretary-General deemed it important to inform the Members of the Assembly before entering into all necessary negotiations to implement the new plan. Since the matter is not on the agenda of the present special session, it is not possible to discuss the question and the time-table of operations does not permit a delay until the opening of the twenty-second session. A full report will, of course, be presented to the General Assembly at the normal time in November 1967.

11. The Secretary-General also wishes to avail himself of this opportunity to call attention once again to the importance of governmental contributions to the Development Fund as requested in General Assembly resolution 2176 (XXI). Governmental contributions still stand at \$335,000 against an over-all target of \$3 million. This Fund is vital to provide scholarships and bursaries to broaden the participation in the School and to improve the quality of education which should serve as a model for both national and international schools. As noted in his report to the General Assembly in November 1966,<sup>2/</sup> if the minimum goal is not reached on a voluntary basis by August 1967, the Secretary-General will feel obliged to recommend other measures at the twenty-second session of the General Assembly.

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2/ Ibid.