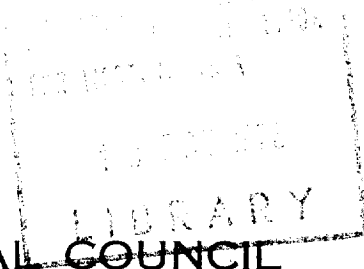


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UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

E/ECWA/33  
5 April 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA  
Third Session  
10 - 15 May 1976  
Doha, Qatar

SITE OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMISSION

Note by the Secretariat

(Item 7 of the provisional agenda)

1. Member States will recall that at its first special session in Beirut, 9-10 September 1974, the Commission decided to select Beirut as the provisional headquarters of the Commission for a period of five years, and, while maintaining the item on the agenda of the 1975 regular session, to take a final decision on the location of the permanent headquarters of the Commission at its third regular session in 1976.<sup>1/</sup> The secretariat reported to the Commission, at its second regular session 5-10 May 1975 in Beirut, on the progress made in the establishment of the provisional headquarters as well as on offers received for hosting the permanent headquarters of the Commission.<sup>2/</sup>

<sup>1/</sup> ECWA Resolution 6(S-1) on the Site of the Headquarters of the Commission  
<sup>2/</sup> E/ECWA/25

2. The present note will, therefore, deal with the interim as well as the permanent headquarters.

A. Administrative progress report on arrangements relating to the provisional headquarters

3. For reasons well known to member States it has not been possible to group all ECWA services into a single location. However, efforts have been made by ECWA to locate a building which would meet the requirements of the secretariat and negotiate terms of a lease which might be acceptable to both the landlord and the United Nations Headquarters. It is the belief of the secretariat that, as soon as circumstances permit, positive measures will be taken to eliminate or minimize the scattering of ECWA's services.

B. Site of the permanent headquarters of the Commission

4. This item has been under consideration by the Commission since its first regular session, 3 - 8 June 1974. At that session, the Commission had before it three offers from: The Republic of Lebanon,<sup>3/</sup> the Syrian Arab Republic,<sup>4/</sup> and the Republic of Iraq.<sup>5/</sup>

5. Briefly, the Lebanese offer consisted of a plot of land of 50,000 sq.m. for the construction of a Centre for International Conferences and the office building of ECWA, and a decision in principle by the Council of Ministers on an interest-free loan to the United Nations of half the construction cost of the building. The loan was to be refunded to the treasury in annual instalments.

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<sup>3/</sup> E/ECWA/7  
<sup>4/</sup> E/ECWA/7/Add.1  
<sup>5/</sup> E/ECWA/7/Add.2

The Syrian Arab Republic offer was a communication from the Deputy Foreign Minister and Chairman of the Delegation to the effect that the Syrian Arab Republic would welcome the opportunity of hosting the permanent headquarters of ECWA in Damascus. As to the offer by the Republic of Iraq, it consisted of a note by the Minister of Planning and Chairman of the Delegation indicating that the Republic of Iraq would also welcome the opportunity to host the headquarters of ECWA in Baghdad.

6. It will be recalled that no final decision was taken on this matter during the first session.

7. The item was further considered during the second regular session Beirut, 5 - 10 May 1975. In addition to the documents mentioned above, the Commission had before it, for consideration, E/ECWA/L.5 and Add.1 which contained a detailed offer by the Republic of Iraq and E/ECWA/L.5 Add.2 which consisted of a letter dated 7 May 1975 from the Chairman of the Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirming his previous communication to the effect that his Government was preparing proposals as requested in paragraph 2 of ECWA Resolution 6(S-I) of 9 September 1974.

8. After consultation among heads of delegations, the Commission further decided to postpone final decision until its third session in 1976, and invited member States interested in hosting the permanent headquarters of ECWA to submit, if they had not already done so, detailed proposals on the subject to the secretariat as soon as possible in order to allow time to consult with the competent authorities of the United Nations in New York and to distribute those proposals to member States at least six weeks before the opening of the third session.<sup>6/</sup>

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<sup>6/</sup> E/ECWA/28 paragraph 36

9. Following the second regular session, the secretariat received a Note Verbale dated 19 August 1975 from the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Beirut informing the secretariat of ECWA that the Republic of Iraq was prepared to bear the cost of building the headquarters of the Commission in Iraq and that the sum of eight million Dinars (approximately \$ 27 million) had been earmarked for the purpose. For ease of reference, the full text of the Note Verbale is attached as an annex to this note.<sup>7/</sup> Furthermore, in a Note Verbale of the same date, (see annex)<sup>8/</sup> the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq requested technical comments on the proposed headquarters building as contained in E/ECWA/L.5. Comments made by the United Nations Headquarters are reproduced in an annex to this note.<sup>9/</sup>

10. It is worth recalling that the secretariat distributed, for consideration by the First Special Session, a document setting forth the requirements of the permanent headquarters of ECWA.<sup>10/</sup> That document included a questionnaire which had to be completed by interested member States. In order to facilitate the task of the Commission E/ECWA/11/Rev.1 is attached as an annex <sup>11/</sup> in the expectation that the questionnaire contained therein will be duly completed and returned to the secretariat.

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7/ Annex I

8/ Annex II

9/ Annex III

10/ E/ECWA/11/Rev.1

11/ Annex IV

ANNEX I

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

BEIRUT

No.4/3/861

Date: 19 August 1975

The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Beirut presents its compliments to the Economic Commission for Western Asia and has the honour to inform it that the Government of the Republic of Iraq is prepared to bear the cost of building the headquarters of the Commission in Iraq and that the sum of eight million dinars (approximately 27 million dollars) has been earmarked for this purpose.

The Embassy takes this opportunity to convey the assurances of its highest consideration.

The Economic Commission for Western Asia

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

BEIRUT

No. 4/3/858

The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Beirut presents its compliments to the Economic Commission of Western Asia and, with reference to the first report on designs for the proposed permanent Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Western Asia in Baghdad submitted by the delegation of Iraq on the occasion of the Commission's meeting in Beirut on 5 May 1975, has the honour to convey the desire of the competent Iraqi authorities to be informed of the Commission's detailed requirements with regard to the designs submitted, so that they may be taken into account in the preparation of the final report and detailed studies for the proposed Iraqi project. The Embassy would appreciate receiving a reply as soon as possible.

The Embassy takes this opportunity to convey the assurances of its highest consideration.

19 August 1975

The Economic Commission for Western Asia

Review of Proposal from the Government of the Republic of Iraq for  
Permanent Headquarters of ECWA in Baghdad

The proposal from the Government of the Republic of Iraq for the Permanent Headquarters of ECWA in Baghdad as contained in document E/ECWA/L.5 dated 4 May 1975 has been reviewed and comments are indicated below.

In general, the project as proposed meets the requirements of E/ECWA/11/Rev.1 dated 2 September 1974 which detailed a programme for the ECWA Permanent Headquarters. This programme was characterized as a tentative indication of requirements based on assumptions and precedents established by other regional economic commissions. It is understood that in the light of experience and subsequent action by various legislative organs of the United Nations this programme could be subject to considerable revision.

Design Concept

The design concept of separating conference facilities from secretariat office facilities is a valid one that would result in a positive visual statement for each of the functions. It would also permit the divergent functions to be executed simultaneously without interfering with each other. It is recommended that where possible car parks be placed below ground level to the maximum extent possible to permit development of gardens surrounding the buildings. It is recommended that merging and crossing traffic patterns be eliminated from the proposed traffic plan.

Conference and Meeting Facilities

The one large conference hall and two medium-size conference rooms have been provided as required. Simultaneous interpretation booths have been indicated for the large conference hall and will also be required for each of the other two conference rooms. It is indicated that the two medium-size conference rooms might be combined into one large room. In view of the difficulty in providing an acceptable acoustic seal between the rooms, it is recommended that this feature not be considered. It is recommended that the conference area

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office space be relocated so that, contiguous to each conference room, there would be two offices, a secretarial area, and a caucus room seating eight persons.

#### Office Space

It is recommended that the width of the proposed office building be increased to permit better utilization of interior space for general service, file and storage functions, as well as stairways and elevators. For efficient utilization, it is recommended that elevators be consolidated. Stairways should be enclosed in fireproof walls and located to give maximum access to all persons. One stairway should incorporate a fire tower.

It is indicated that the office building might be developed in two or three stages. In the proposed configuration, the first stage would provide approximately 3,500 sq.m. of usable office space, including typical floors of 512 sq.m. each on the fourth to ninth levels. In the second stage, an additional 3,584 sq.m. of usable office space would be provided on floors nine to fifteen, bringing the total usable office space to 7,084 sq.m. The third stage would add another 4,096 sq.m. on floors sixteen to twenty-three, raising the total to 11,180 sq.m. of usable office space. In document E/ECWA/11/Rev.1, it was stated that a minimum of 7,200 sq.m. of net usable office space should be provided for ECWA plus a 15 percent allowance for special use areas. In addition, provision for common premises with other United Nations offices would require between 1,000 and 2,000 sq.m. of usable office space. It is recommended that the office tower be completed in one stage with no consideration given to possible vertical expansion in stages.

#### Housing Requirements

The number of units proposed is in accord with programme requirements. All of the proposed alternatives are viable solutions and it is felt that this is a matter that should be left to the discretion of ECWA staff concerning design preference.

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Summary

The project as proposed, subject to the comments indicated above, would appear to meet the requirements for the Permanent Headquarters of ECWA, as they are anticipated at present. The concept of a high rise office tower and a low rise conference building reflects the differences in function that each structure houses.

It is assumed that information requested in the questionnaire (E/ECWA/11/Rev.1., Annex I) on the adequacy of hotels, accommodations and other support facilities for the Commission secretariat and for representatives attending conferences in Baghdad, will be provided at a latter date.