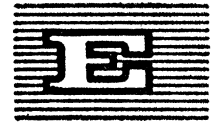




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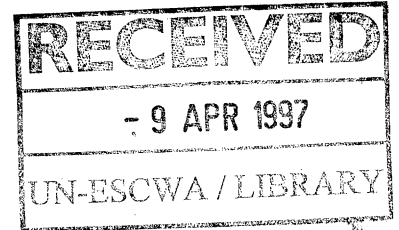
E/ECWA/L.24  
13 April 1976

Original: ARABIC

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Third Session

Doha, Qatar, 10 - 15 May 1976



SITE OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMISSION

Note by the Secretariat

(Item 7(b) of the provisional agenda)

The secretariat has received the following letter dated 8 April 1976 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the site of the permanent headquarters:

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Western Asia and has the honour to transmit herewith the project connected with setting up the permanent headquarters of the Commission in Damascus. The project contains replies to the questions posed in the Executive Secretary's report E/ECWA/11/Rev.1 dated 2 September 1975. It also includes the allocation of a plot of land, in the most appropriate location in Damascus, covering an area of twenty thousand square metres and valued at twenty six million Syrian Pounds, and an interest-free loan of fifteen million Syrian Pounds, together with the facilities requested in the above-mentioned report.

The Ministry takes this opportunity to express its deepest esteem and respect for the secretariat of the Commission!

P.S. The offer mentioned in the above note verbale is attached herewith as an Annex.

76-503

76-0503



Syrian Arab Republic  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
International Organizations and Conferences Department

A Project for the Establishment of Permanent  
Headquarters of the Economic Commission  
For Western Asia,  
in Damascus

A. Office Premises

1. The Syrian Arab Republic proposes the establishment of the ECWA secretariat in Damascus, which enjoys an excellent climate and a geographic location considered a focal point for all Arab countries members of the Commission. An appropriate site has been chosen, accessible to parking and quick local transport facilities to the different ministries, organizations, banks, and public services which the Commission may call upon (the New Damascus plan in Annex I shows the site chosen for the establishment of the Commission's headquarters on plot No. 73).

2. The Syrian Arab Government allocated a plot of 20,000 square metres, valued at 26 million Syrian Pounds, and decided to donate this plot to the Commission for the construction of its headquarters, according to the description and technical specifications it deems appropriate. It has also decided to extend an interest-free loan of 15 million Syrian pounds for the construction, to be reimbursed to the Government, in annual instalments over 15 years. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic shall exempt of all fees and duties the imports necessary for the building as well as the required equipment for the Commission.

3. It is noteworthy that the afore-mentioned plot is situated between two main roads, while its third side is adjacent to a spacious public park. It is located in a quite residential area, accessible to public buildings and

services which the Commission will need to get in touch and deal with continually (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Economy, Customs Department, Banks and United Nations Offices).

B. Conference Premises

The area of land being donated by the Syrian Arab Government is sufficient to establish a building for secretariat offices and large conference halls. If desired by the Commission, it will enable the construction of two buildings: one for offices, the other for conference halls, and, in addition, sufficient space for gardens around the Commission's headquarters (plan of the plot allocated for the Commission's building is shown in Annex II).

C. Secretariat Facilities

1. Equipment

- (a) - (b) All types of office equipment are available in the local market, as well as the maintenance, service, and spare parts needed.
- (c) - Electricity cost: 20 Syrian piasters per kwh.
  - Water cost: 20 Syrian piasters per cubic metre.
  - Telephone cost: Annual subscription - 10 Syrian Pounds, local calls - 10 Syrian piasters each, allowing 1000 calls a year free of charge.

2. Communications

- (a) Cost of cables: the price varies according to priority (normal or urgent); there is a special tariff for night cables.

	normal	urgent	nightly
		(Syrian Piasters)	
Cost per word to New York	136	272	68
Cost per word to Geneva	178.8	357.6	89.4

(b) Cost of a 3-minute telephone call

	<u>Person to Person</u> (Syrian Pounds)	<u>Station to Station</u> (Syrian Pounds)
New York	72.00	48.00
Geneva	38.50	28.50

(c) There is an automatic telex service. Subscription is possible for one or more numbers. The communication is automatic with any part of the world where a telex service is available. The annual subscription rate is 2,500 Syrian Pounds and installation cost is 1,106 Syrian Pounds.

Cost of communication with Geneva:

- 32.40 Syrian Pounds per unit, 10.80 Syrian Pounds for each additional minute.

Cost of communication with New York:

- 44.08 Syrian Pounds per unit, 15.00 Syrian Pounds for each additional minute.

(A unit = 3 minutes or less).

3. Other secretariat services

(a) Computer: There is a computer used by some government institutions. The Computer Department has indicated its willingness to avail its services to the Commission.

(b) Printing services in Arabic, French and English are adequately available in Damascus.

4. Conference services

Sound equipment will be available in the new building which will be constructed for ECWA. Furthermore, the Meridian and Sheraton Hotels have sound equipment available for simultaneous interpretation in three languages (Arabic, French and English). The service and maintenance of this equipment is locally available. Services connected with the translation from and into the three languages are available. Simultaneous interpretation from and into the afore-mentioned languages is partially available and may be extended in

the near future, especially when the ECWA permanent headquarters is being established in Damascus. A translator's salary amounts to 1200 - 1500 Syrian Pounds per month. The cost of simultaneous interpretation is similar to that in the countries of the region.

5. Local staff

It is possible to recruit local staff to work in three languages in the fields of typing, reproduction, shorthand, maintenance and general services. The salaries of this category of local staff varies between 500 and 1000 Syrian Pounds.

D. Living Conditions

1. The annual rent of one apartment of two or three bedrooms, reception and dining rooms, and a living room, covering an area of 200 sq.m. approximately, is estimated at about 40,000 Syrian Pounds in high-priced areas, 20,000 Syrian Pounds in medium-priced areas and 6,000 Syrian Pounds in low-priced areas.

2. Number of hotel rooms in Damascus:

Year	<u>International and luxury class</u>		<u>First class</u>		<u>Second class</u>	
	<u>rooms</u>	<u>beds</u>	<u>rooms</u>	<u>beds</u>	<u>rooms</u>	<u>beds</u>
Presently	275	550	231	462	658	1400
1977 (additional)	850	1700	40	80	-	-
1978 (additional)	200	400	-	-	-	-
1979	1600	3200	-	-	-	-
Total in 1979	2925	5850	271	502	658	1400

Prices in Dollars

	<u>Luxuary class</u> <u>(including breakfast)</u>	<u>First class</u> <u>(including breakfast)</u>	<u>Second class</u> <u>(including breakfast)</u>
Single	16 - 22	8 - 13	3 - 6
Double	22 - 26	11 - 17	5 - 8

Remarks:

- The prices of international class hotels will be specified later.
- Projects are underway to establish a large network of first and second class hotels in Damascus and elsewhere in the Syrian Arab Republic.

3. Medical services

- (a) There is a sufficient number of physicians of all medical specializations, including dentistry.
- (b) There are 20 hospitals to receive and treat United Nations staff; they include all medical specializations.

4. Schools

- (a) Kindergarten level: there are vacancies throughout the year in private schools. The kindergartens run by foreign bodies are:
  - i. The French School (French Embassy)
  - ii. The School of Nations (Foreign Embassies accredited in Damascus).
- (b) Elementary level: in addition to the two afore-mentioned foreign schools, there are other private schools. Furthermore, some schools stress French or English, such as: Al-Hurriyah, Al-Ukhuwah, Dar Al-Salam, Balabel Al-Mahabah and Al-Ri'ayah.
- (c) Preparatory and secondary levels: there are enough vacancies to accommodate any number of students in the above-mentioned private schools. Moreover, the French School provides all three levels (kindergarten, elementary and secondary).

- (d) University level: the university faculties conduct their classes in Arabic except for the English and French Departments. Admission requirements are governed by university regulations which are similar to those in foreign universities.

5. Recreational and cultural facilities

There are three first class theatres, and another first-rate theatre is under construction. There are five museums, nine luxurious movie theatres, and a great number of swimming pools, seven of which are first class. Some of these are located in hotels. In addition to the Al-Zahiriah Library, there is a cultural centre which contains a large library. The construction of "The National Library" has made considerable progress. It includes, in addition to the library, several theatres and many cultural activities, and is considered the largest cultural centre in the Middle East.

E. Travel Facilities

1. Damascus International Airport is 23 kilometres from the city.

There are 29 international carriers using it regularly during the 1976 summer season, vis: Syrian Arab Airlines, Egypt Air, Iraqi Airways, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Kuwait Airways, Libyan Arab Airlines, Tunis Air, Royal Jordanian Airlines, Pakistan International Airlines, Afghan Air, Australian Airlines, Air France, British Airways, Lufthansa, Pan American Airways, Royal Dutch Airlines, Scandinavian Airways System, Swissair, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, SABENA, Aeroflot, Bulgarian Airlines, Romanian Airlines, Polish Airlines, Hungarian Airlines, Interflug, Yugoslav Airlines, and the Czechoslovak Airlines.

2. The number of weekly flights from Damascus to each of the following destinations are:

- i. Africa - 28 flights: Cairo, Tripoli, Benghazi, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco.



- ii. Asia - 62 flights: Baghdad, Amman, Beirut, Jeddah, Kuwait, Riyadh, Dhahran, Medina, Aqaba, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Doha, Bahrain, Sanaa, Tehran, Ankara, Istanbul, Kabul, Karachi, Delhi, Bangkok, Singapore, and Abadan.
  - iii. Australia - one flight: Sydney and Melbourne.
  - iv. Europe - 54 flights: London, Paris, Rome, Frankfurt, Munich, Athens, Vienna, Geneva, Zurich, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Berlin, Moscow, Sofia, Bucharest, Budapest, Warsaw, Prague, Belgrade, and Brussels.
  - v. America - 2 flights: New York and Philadelphia.
  - vi. Domestic - 11 flights: Aleppo, Deir Al-Zur, Kamishli and Lattakia.
3. The entry of foreigners of all nationalities into the Syrian Arab Republic is permitted except for nationals of States unrecognized by Syria. As to United Nations Laissez-Passer holders, and those who work in International Organizations, they are treated in the following manner:

- (a) They are granted entry or transit visas to Syria by the Syrian Arab Missions abroad and at border points, free of charge.
- (b) They are granted residence permits according to the purpose of their entry. Thus United Nations staff members are granted the residence permits necessary for their work in Syria by virtue of a letter from the Organization in which they work.
- (c) They are granted exit and re-entry visas to facilitate their travel.
- (d) They are exempted from charges imposed on their entry and residence.

F. Access to Governments and Non-UN International Organizations

Annex III includes a list of diplomatic missions accredited in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as a list of non-UN international organizations in Syria.

G. Information Media

1. Information media are numerous and can be divided into four main categories:

- (a) Press: there is a substantial number of different newspapers and periodicals of diversified interests and specializations (6 daily newspapers, 12 weekly magazines, 2 bi-weekly magazines, 23 monthly magazines and 7 quarterly magazines).
- (b) Syrian Arab News Agency: SANA is headquartered in Damascus and has correspondents and reporters in all Syrian Governorates, in addition to its offices and correspondents in the Arab World and in a large number of international capitals. It maintains a close and regular co-operation ties with most international news agencies. There exist a number of co-operation protocols and exchanges of information between SANA and these agencies. SANA is equipped with a modern communication system and emits its bulletins in Arabic and foreign languages. It issues bulletins in Arabic and foreign languages covering all political, economic, cultural and other sectors.
- (c) Radio: the Syrian Arab Republic radio station is one of the most prominent stations in the Middle East. It operates 24 hours non-stop. Its directed programmes in different foreign languages cover large parts of the world.
- (d) Television: the Syrian Arab Television also occupies a prominent position among television stations in the Middle East. It is distinguished for its quality of production and now covers all of Syria and a number of its neighbouring countries.

2. Foreign correspondents

Foreign correspondents in Damascus represent 26 foreign newspapers and magazines, 9 Arab newspapers, 36 Arab and foreign news agencies, and 30 radio and television stations. They enjoy all the facilities and assistance to fulfill their tasks.

3. Newspapers and periodicals come to Damascus regularly through distribution agents, bookshops or by mail. While distribution agents concentrate on

the importation of widely known and largely circulating newspapers and magazines, such as Newsweek, Time, Der Spiegel, Stern, Le Monde, The Economist, the Financial Times, Le Point, Le Nouvel Observateur, etc..., they also provide general culture, recreation, art and women's magazines.

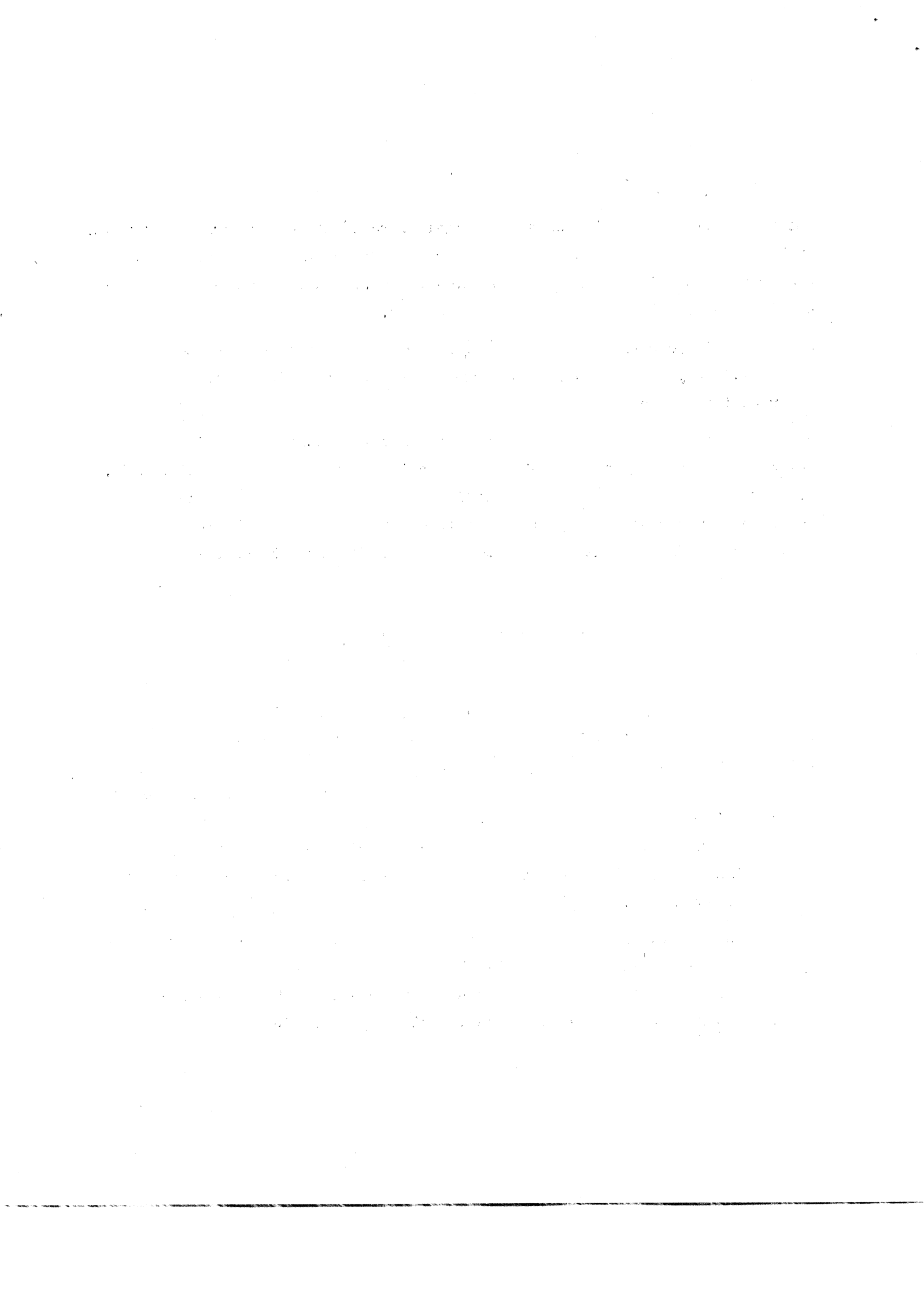
4. It is possible to obtain any periodical, magazine or newspaper through the mail. They arrive usually 24 hours after being issued, and are sent out to subscribers expediently.

5. There are also some local news agencies in Damascus which issue daily bulletins and deliver them to foreign subscribers in embassies and elsewhere. Furthermore, one of the main distribution agents delivers, on a daily basis, newspapers, magazines, and periodicals to embassies, official bodies and some subscribers. These publications come in Arabic, English, French, German and other languages.

#### H. Special Facilities offered by the Host Government

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is willing to provide all facilities to the Commission concerning financial transactions. It has decided that the Commission can make use of the principle of maintaining all income of the Commission and its staff in foreign currency. These incomes are deposited in banks, in Damascus, in non-resident accounts in the names of their holders. They can be transferred, drawn and exchanged in all types of payments, including foreign banknotes without obtaining prior approval, and simply upon request of the account holder.

2. The Commission and its staff enjoy the immunities and privileges enjoyed by other economic commissions established in different regions of the world. The special agreement which will be concluded between the host Government and the Commission will provide for these immunities and privileges.



Annex I

The New Damascus Plan is not reproduced here due to technical limitations of reducing it to size.



Annex II

The plan of the plot is not reproduced here due to technical limitations of reducing it to size.





Annex III

Diplomatic Missions accredited in Damascus

- Liaison Office of the Arab Republic of Egypt
- Liaison Office of the Libyan Arab Republic
- Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
- Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
- Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Embassy of the State of Kuwait
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco
- Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- Embassy of the State of Qatar
- Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Somal
- Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Sudan
- Embassy of the Republic of Tunis
- Embassy of the Yemen Arab Republic
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea
- Embassy of the Republic of India
- Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
- Embassy of the Empire of Iran
- Embassy of Japan
- Embassy of the Republic of Pakistan
- Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam
- Embassy of the Republic of South Vietnam
- Embassy of the Republic of Argentina
- Embassy of Brazil
- Embassy of the Republic of Chile
- Embassy of the Republic of Cuba
- Embassy of the United States of America
- Embassy of the Republic of Venezuela

- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Embassy of the Austrian Republic
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain
- Embassy of the Republic of France
- Embassy of the United Kingdom
- Embassy of the Republic of Greece
- Embassy of the Republic of Italy
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Holland
- Embassy of the Holy See
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Sweden
- Embassy of the Swiss Confederation
- Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
- Embassy of the German Democratic Republic
- Embassy of the People's Republic of Bulgaria
- Embassy of the People's Republic of Hungary
- Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland
- Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Romania
- Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia
- Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- Embassy of the Federal Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia
- Embassy of the Republic of Afghanistan
- Embassy of the Republic of Australia
- Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
- Embassy of Canada
- Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus
- Embassy of the Republic of Columbia
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark
- Embassy of the Republic of Finland
- Embassy of the Republic of Guyana
- Embassy of the Republic of Malta

- Embassy of the Republic of Mexico
- Embassy of the People's Republic of Mongolia
- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Embassy of Norway
- Embassy of the Republic of Senegal
- Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania
- Embassy of the Republic of Tchad
- Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago
- Embassy of the Republic of Uruguay
- Embassy of Zambia

Non-UN International Organizations

- The International Committee of the Red Cross.

