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PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II)

Rapporteur: Mr. Ahmed ABOUL GHEIT (Egypt)

1. The Committee considered the question of the inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences at the 1768th and 1770th meetings on 12 and 13 December 1975, respectively.
2. For its consideration of this item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/10348 and Corr.1) submitted in response to paragraphs 2 to 4 of General Assembly resolution 3350 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974, as well as the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon (A/10454).
3. In his report, the Secretary-General analysed and developed the facts concerning the offer of the Government of Austria of office and conference facilities at Vienna and the best means of ensuring the most rational and economic use of those premises and decided that he needed to have the decision of the General Assembly on certain questions relating to the acquisition of some additional space in the Donaupark complex in Vienna.
4. After analysing the potential space requirements of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the years ahead, and bearing in mind the situation in New York and at Geneva, the Secretary-General concluded that it would be prudent to take advantage of the opportunity to acquire for future use the space which would be available in the eight-storey office tower being constructed for IAEA in the Donaupark complex (Tower A-2), which IAEA was prepared to relinquish, even though its acquisition would entail additional cost and additional problems for the short-term future. In this connexion and as a corollary to his conclusion, the

Secretary-General invited the General Assembly to provide guidance on the use to which the space in question should be put so that he could make a more detailed assessment of the financial, operational, social and other implications of the transfer of specific units concerned and present more concrete proposals to the Assembly at the thirty-first session. The financial implications of the assumption by the United Nations of responsibility for Tower A-2 were enumerated by the Secretary-General in his report (A/10348 and Corr.1, annex IV).

5. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its report (A/10454) analysed the availability of office space in the Donaupark complex, the space which would become available in the A-2 Tower in 1979 and the likelihood of full utilization of the space, as well as the Secretary-General's estimates of financial implications on one-time costs and on annual recurring costs. The Advisory Committee concluded that, should the General Assembly decide to accept the offer of Tower A-2, it would be necessary, at the same time, to decide in principle that units with staff totalling 300 to 330 would be located in that tower in 1979. The Committee pointed out that it would be difficult to decide which additional units would be located in Vienna at a time when the structure of the United Nations was under scrutiny. It recommended that acceptance of Tower A-2 should be linked with a commitment to utilize space in the Tower before additional space is acquired in New York, at Geneva or elsewhere; in the absence of such a commitment, there would be a real danger that Tower A-2 would remain under-utilized at considerable expense to the United Nations.

6. The Advisory Committee pointed out that there thus existed a direct relationship between the response which the General Assembly would give to the invitation addressed to it by the Secretary-General in his report (A/10348 and Corr.1) and future action by the Assembly on questions of United Nations accommodation and that, to that extent, there would be advantages in considering the question of location or relocation of additional units in Vienna in the broader context of the accommodation question as a whole.

7. With regard to the financial implications of the assumption by the United Nations of responsibility for Tower A-2, the Advisory Committee recommended that they be considered in detail by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, and that such appropriations as may become necessary for 1977 be approved at that session.

8. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions introduced its report (A/10454) in an oral statement before the Fifth Committee at its 1768th meeting, on 12 December.

9. At the same meeting, the representative of Austria also addressed the Committee and introduced the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.1289) on behalf of Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany (Federal Republic of), Greece, Hungary, India, the Ivory Coast, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Singapore, Sweden and Togo:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 3350 (XXIX),

"Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/10348 and Corr.1) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/10454),

"Reaffirming the need to ensure the most rational and economic use by the United Nations of the premises available for the accommodations of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and for the International Atomic Energy Agency in the Donaupark project in Vienna after completion of its construction and best possible use of the office space provided therein by the Government of Austria,

"Noting that the Government of Austria has offered to the United Nations for its use the space in the building known as Tower A-2 in the Donaupark project which the International Atomic Energy Agency has declared its willingness to release,

"Considering that the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of the utilization of office accommodation in the United Nations system in New York and Geneva will be discussed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session,

"1. Authorizes the Secretary-General to inform the Government of Austria that the United Nations is willing to consider its offer of the additional space referred to,

"2. Approves the suggestion of the Secretary-General that the accommodation of United Nations organizations or units in the Donaupark project in Vienna would facilitate the securing of premises with regard to the future needs of various organizations and services,

"3. Expresses the opinion that, upon completion of the Donaupark project and in so far as full use has been made of all existing space at present Headquarters, no additional office space should be acquired by the United Nations in New York or at Geneva until first consideration has been given to the use of available space in Vienna,

"4. Requests the Secretary-General, after taking into account the comments and suggestions made in the course of the debate on this subject at the thirtieth session, to present to the thirty-first session - together with detailed information, as to the administrative, operative, financial and social implications involved and after consultations with other United Nations host countries which might be affected - a comprehensive report with regard to the optimum utilization of the office space by organizations and services of the United Nations, which will enable the General Assembly to reach a decision on the matter in full knowledge of the existing situation as well as the future needs and requirements of the organizations in this respect."

Algeria, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Senegal and Zambia subsequently joined the list of sponsors.

10. In the discussion which followed, a number of delegations expressed their appreciation to the Government of Austria for its generous offer.

11. At the 1768th meeting, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics orally proposed the insertion of the words "including those financed from extrabudgetary funds" in the last part of operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution (A/C.5/L.1289) after the words "utilization of the office space by organizations and services of the United Nations".

12. The representative of Austria accepted the USSR amendment on behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.5/L.1289).

13. At the 1770th meeting, on 13 December, draft resolution A/C.5/L.1289, as orally amended, was adopted by the Committee without objection (see para. 15 below).

14. The comments made by delegations in the course of the discussion of this question and the statement made by the Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the United Nations, as well as the replies given by the representative of the Secretary-General in response to queries raised, are reflected in the summary records of the Committee (A/C.5/SR.1768 and 1770).

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

15. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3350 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General 1/ and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 2/

Reaffirming the need to ensure the most rational and economic use by the United Nations of the premises available for the accommodation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency in the Donaupark project in Vienna after completion of its construction and the best possible use of the office space provided therein by the Government of Austria,

1/ A/10343 and Corr.1.

2/ A/10454.

Noting that the Government of Austria has offered to the United Nations for its use the space in the building known as Tower A-2 in the Donaupark project which the International Atomic Energy Agency has declared its willingness to release,

Considering that the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on the utilization of office accommodation in the United Nations system in New York and at Geneva 3/ will be discussed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session,

1. Authorizes the Secretary-General to inform the Government of Austria that the United Nations is willing to consider its offer of the additional space, referred to above;

2. Approves the suggestion of the Secretary-General that the accommodation of United Nations organizations or units in the Donaupark project in Vienna would facilitate the securing of premises with regard to the future needs of various organizations and services;

3. Expresses the opinion that, upon completion of the Donaupark project and in so far as full use has been made of all existing space at present Headquarters, no additional office space should be acquired by the United Nations in New York or at Geneva until consideration has been given first to the use of available space in Vienna;

4. Requests the Secretary-General, after taking into account the comments and suggestions made in the course of the debate on the inclusion of Vienna in the pattern of conferences at the thirtieth session, to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session - together with detailed information as to the administrative, operative, financial and social implications involved and after consultations with the Governments of other United Nations host countries which might be affected - a comprehensive report with regard to the optimum utilization of the office space by organizations and services of the United Nations, including those financed from extrabudgetary funds, which will enable the Assembly to reach a decision on the matter in full knowledge of the existing situation as well as the future needs and requirements of the organizations in this respect.

3/ A/9850, A/10279 and A/10280.