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PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Electronic equipment in conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its thirty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/117 A which, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, through the Committee on Conferences, a programme of systematic and progressive replacement and upgrading of the electronic equipment in the conference rooms at United Nations Headquarters.
2. In order to respond to this request, the Secretary-General has reviewed the capacity of the present facilities to meet the expanding conference requirements. In the light of this review, it is considered that a systematic programme permitting the revision and upgrading of the facilities in each conference room to the current state of the electronic art would be both appropriate and reasonable. The proposals outlined in the present document, as well as those to be submitted over the forthcoming budgetary biennia, will offer accelerated programmes designed to compress the first cycle of modernization and upgrading to approximately eight years.
3. This being said, the modification and upgrading of the equipment in question require the greatest care in its selection to ensure that the ultimate choice will fully meet the needs of the Organization for an extended period. Care must be taken as well that the substantive conference and committee work is subject to the minimum disruption.

* A/37/150.

4. It is with these considerations in mind that a modern multiplex conference system has already been installed in Conference Room 10 as a pilot project. In the light of the experience already gained as a result of this installation and given the periods during which certain conference rooms will be available during the remainder of the present biennium, it is proposed to undertake the following improvements to the electronic equipment in question.

(a) Conference Room 7

A multiplex conference system, basically similar to the one in Conference Room 10, will be installed which will result in the modification of the audio facilities in the Conference Room to provide an Arabic language facility for both delegates and other participants. New equipment will be installed at the delegates' tables (including signal lights for activated microphones); the interpreters' booths (including a new separate booth for Arabic); the control booth and at listening stations for other participants.

(b) Economic and Social Council Chamber

At the same time as an additional channel is being provided for delegates and conference participants which will ensure a full Arabic language facility for the Chamber, a modern multiplex system will be installed. In addition, in the press and public areas, modifications will be made to the present installations so that the Arabic language facility will also be available in those areas. For the interpreters' booths, the new installations will consist of equipment similar to that which is already available in Conference Room 10 and which will be installed in Conference Room 7, as explained in paragraph 4 (a) above. As a structural column now runs through a first-floor level interpreters' booth, this booth will be relocated to the second-floor level at the time the new interpreter equipment is installed.

(c) General Assembly Hall

The interpreters' booths will be provided with new equipment and the facilities available at the rostrum will be upgraded.

5. In summary, it is thought that sufficient resources exist in the present budgetary appropriations to finance the improvements mentioned above. The programme of work indicated will result not only in the extension of the language facilities in the conference rooms but will also improve the over-all technical arrangements which, after many years of service, require modernizations. Furthermore, this programme will enable the Secretariat to gain additional experience in the use of the new equipment to be installed so that the continuation of the programme can be pursued systematically to the extent that conference rooms can be made available for the purpose of improving their technical installations. It will also enable the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth session, in accordance with recommendations already made, further proposals for a phased programme of equipment replacement and upgrading as part of the 1984/1984 biennial budget.