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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1974-1975

Measures to improve the use of accommodations in Geneva

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the twenty-ninth session on the measures taken to improve the utilization of United Nations Secretariat accommodations in Geneva. 1/ The following information is submitted in reply to this request.

Assessment of the space situation in the Palais des Nations

2. As recommended in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on office accommodation in Geneva, 2/ an inventory of the utilization of office space was conducted, initially in the new wing and subsequently in the old areas of the Palais, to determine where and to what degree improvements could be made in the occupancy of space. The inventory was made on a floor-by-floor, office-by-office basis, taking into account the particular requirements of each service in regard to such matters as grade structure, organizational relationships, files and archives, storage requirements and confidentiality of work.

3. The inventory of space utilization in the new wing of the Palais indicated that a need existed to reconsider the occupancy standards along realistic, flexible lines which would take into consideration the differences in structure, functions and requirements of the various services and offices housed in the Palais. With this in mind, a revised set of standards was drawn up which takes into account the different

* A/9700.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/9030), p. 132, item (h) (ii).

2/ Document A/9164.

dimensions of offices existing in the Palais. For purposes of comparison the old and new basic standards are shown below in tabular form:

Grade	Old standards (square metres)	New standards (square metres)
USG/ASG	59.2	39 ^{a/}
D-2	23.6 - 39.6	23.2 - 39 ^{b/}
D-1	19.1 - 24.8	18.8 - 23.2
P-5	19.1 - 19.7	13.4 - 19.5
P-4	13	9.4 - 12.9
P-1/P-3	9.5 - 11.1	9.4 - 11.6
GS	6.5 - 9.8	5.02 ^{c/} - 9.4

a/ Plus reception area and small meeting room.

b/ The larger modules are allocated to Deputy Chiefs and Units headed by USGs and for heads of large divisions requiring meeting facilities.

c/ Pools only.

4. Through a careful application of the new standards, a small number of additional office units (an increase of 15, from 910 to 925), spread throughout the new wing, were made available. This space, however, would be insufficient to meet the requirements of any new services and merely allows existing services to bridge the gap between the present and such time as additional office space becomes available outside the Palais itself.

5. The survey of space occupancy in the old sections of the Palais has indicated that because of the size and configuration of the offices it will not be possible to recover any office units in that area. It does appear, however, that certain services will be able to absorb a limited number of additional staff as future growth requires.

6. Although, as indicated, the survey showed it to be possible to recoup some space, at the same time, a number of services were found to be very crowded and, in view of their anticipated expansion rate, in need of additional space. Chief among these services are the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Languages Division, the Division of Narcotic Drugs, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Finance Division. Further aggravating an already difficult

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situation is the pending take-over of the prefabricated buildings at Campagne Rigot by the University of Geneva, necessitating the absorption of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the Social Affairs Division into other premises.

7. It has thus been confirmed that an increasingly urgent need exists to find additional office space to accommodate the various services whose growth-rate would certainly exceed available space in the Palais by the end of 1974. Indeed, despite all efforts to contain services in their allotted areas, some temporary spill-over from UNCTAD and the Languages Division into the Conference Division reserve area has become necessary. The decision of the General Assembly to acquire the International Labour Office (ILO) annex at Petit Saconnex in early 1975 is one which will offer the earliest relief to this situation. This easing of the situation will be further improved in 1977 when the old ILO headquarters building becomes available for occupancy.

Proposed relocation of services away from the Palais des Nations

8. In considering which services should remain in the Palais, as opposed to those to be transferred to the Petit Saconnex and/or old ILO buildings, three main criteria were used:

(a) Necessity and frequency of use of conference facilities;

(b) Necessity to maintain close and continuous liaison with secretariat or substantive services which must remain centralized in the Palais;

(c) Necessity, in general, of maintaining in the Palais organizational units whose principal or main location is Geneva in contrast to branches or units whose principal headquarters are elsewhere.

9. In the light of these criteria, it has been determined that the following units should be relocated away from the Palais, the timing of the individual moves to depend upon both the need for the space in the Palais and the availability of suitable space in both the Petit Saconnex and old ILO buildings:

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Development Programme

Technical Assistance Office of the Economic Commission for Europe

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

United Nations Volunteers

Office for Science and Technology

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Division of Social Affairs

United Nations Environment Programme

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Inter-organization Board for Information Systems /and Related Activities/
Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA)
United Nations Statistical Office (Geneva Unit)

10. Except for UNICEF (whose move to the old ILO building is scheduled for 1977 when those premises become available), the other moves are scheduled to take place early in 1975, as soon as the Petit Saconnex is ready to receive them.

11. It should be noted that, in addition to the space which will be occupied by those units to be relocated in the Petit Saconnex, about one third of the Petit Saconnex buildings will be rented to the International Committee for European Migration from 1975 until such time in 1977 as the former ILO building will be ready for occupancy.

12. The allocation of offices in the Petit Saconnex will be in accordance with the standards of occupancy listed above to the extent permitted by the configuration of the offices. The latter is based on a standard module of 16 square metres, which is somewhat different from that in the new Palais.

13. The availability of space in the Petit Saconnex and the transfer of staff to these premises and to the old ILO building will progressively relieve the pressing needs for additional space of UNCTAD, UNHCR, ECE, Division of Narcotic Drugs and the Finance and Languages Divisions and will provide expansion space for these services. It will also permit the renewed availability of a number of offices that are required to accommodate conference staff, both substantive and servicing, particularly during the peak conference period, which now runs from April through September, and that are currently being used by other unrelated services.

14. The full effect of the additional space being made available in Geneva will not be felt until 1977 when the renovation of the old ILO building is completed. At that time, the International Committee for European Migration will move from the Petit Saconnex to the former ILO building. Firm plans have not yet been drawn as to which units will occupy the space in the Petit Saconnex vacated by the International Committee or the balance of the space in the old ILO building. In this connexion, consideration is being given to the fact that in 1977 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) headquarters will vacate its offices in the Villa Bocage and associated prefabricated buildings to occupy its portion of the old ILO building. Though it is possible that the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Centre, which is now housed in rented premises, may take over this space, it is considered premature at this time to draw up definite plans, and the problem is being studied within the context of the over-all office space requirements for the period 1975-1980.
