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UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Draft Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Jaime De PINIES (Spain)

1. The Fifth Committee considered the question of the United Nations International School at its 644th and 645th meetings, having before it a report of the Secretary-General (A/3688) submitted in response to resolution 1102 (XI).
2. Representatives taking part in the discussion paid a tribute to the purpose of the school and to the manner in which it was being administered by the Board of Trustees. The principal matter at issue was how best to resolve the problems referred to in the Secretary-General's report.
3. The delegations of Brazil, France, India and Poland submitted the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.497):

"The General Assembly,

A.

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations International School (A/3688),

Noting that the School is in urgent need of permanent premises, and that it is under notice to vacate its present temporary premises in June 1959,

Noting that in order to meet the needs of the greatest possible number of children of the United Nations staff members, delegates and others associated with the United Nations, such permanent premises should be located in Manhattan,

Noting further that in the view of the Secretary-General 'the provision of truly adequate accommodation for the School is in the best interest of the Organisation,'

Recalling resolution 1102 (XI) on this subject, and in particular the recognition contained therein of 'the continued functioning of the School as one of the important non-financial factors contributing to the recruitment and retention of international staff,'

1. Decides that in principle permanent premises for the United Nations School should be constructed either on the Headquarters site in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions or on a site in its immediate vicinity, if the latter would be financially feasible;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Board of Trustees of the School, to investigate possibilities for the site, develop plans for the building, pursue efforts to raise funds from private sources, and, if sufficient funds should become available, to proceed with the construction of the School;

3. Establishes a Committee consisting of representatives of the Governments of (to be specified) to advise the Secretary-General at his request on the action to be taken by him for advancing the construction of the School;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to use his good offices to assist the School in finding suitable accommodation pending completion of the permanent premises;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to present a progress report to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly, together with the comments, if necessary, of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

B.

Bearing in mind the discussions at previous sessions concerning a Delegation Building to be constructed in the area close to the United Nations Headquarters, and the increasing interest expressed by many delegations to have such facilities,

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Requests the Secretary-General to use his good offices in investigating practical possibilities for the provision of Delegation office facilities in the area close to United Nations Headquarters, and, if sound plans are elaborated meeting with the approval of a sufficient number of Delegations as tenants, to proceed with the implementation of the plan."

4. The aims of this draft resolution received wide support. Many delegations considered the International School to be a worthy experiment in education, an integral part of an International Secretariat and subsidiarily a valuable "non-financial factor" in the recruitment and retention of staff at the Headquarters of the Organization. They believed a decision in this matter was necessary as the lease on the present accommodations of the School would expire in June 1959 and there would not be time for making new arrangements if action were postponed until the thirteenth session of the General Assembly.

5. An amendment was proposed by the delegation of Chile which would add to the end of operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A the words "and obtainable without undue delay".

6. Other delegations, while recognizing the valuable achievements and objectives of the School pointed out that as an autonomous body, it did not come under the administrative control either of the General Assembly or of the Secretary-General. In the circumstances, they believed it would be appropriate for the Secretary-General to be requested to use his good offices to help the School and make a progress report to the General Assembly at its thirteenth session.

7. The representative of the United States, taking into account the provisions of the Headquarters agreement between his Government and the United Nations, considered that negotiations with the host country were a necessary preliminary to any decision to locate the School on the Headquarters site. Agreement would also need to be reached with the City of New York which had already made a very generous contribution to the amenities of the site the use of which for the International School might be authorized if and when appropriate negotiations with all interested parties showed that this was a practical possibility.

The representative of the United States proposed the following amendments to the four-Power draft resolution.

"In resolution A:

(a) To insert in preambular paragraph 3, after 'Noting' the words 'the view of the Board of Trustees of the School'.

(b) To replace operative paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 by a single new operative paragraph 1 reading:

Requests the Secretary-General to use his good offices to assist the Board of Trustees in finding a site in Manhattan for the School, in developing plans for the building, and in pursuing their efforts to raise funds from private sources for the construction of the School, and, if necessary, for the acquisition of a site therefor.

In resolution B:

(a) To delete the text in operative paragraph 1, following the words 'United Nations Headquarters';

(b) To add a new operative paragraph 2 reading:

Requests the Secretary-General to make a progress report to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly."

8. At the 645th meeting, the Fifth Committee received an amendment proposed by the sponsors of the four-Power draft resolution providing for the replacement of the first three operative paragraphs of Part A of the original draft resolution by two new paragraphs. The first of these would request the Secretary-General to consult with the appropriate authorities on the possibilities of constructing permanent premises for the School on the Headquarters site. The second would follow the text of the United States amendment but with the words "including the 'Headquarters District'" inserted after the word "Manhattan". The sponsors also amended part B of the draft resolution to provide for a request to the Secretary-General to use his good offices in investigating practical possibilities for the provision of Delegation office facilities in the area close to United Nations Headquarters and omitting the remainder of the original draft.

9. It was stated on behalf of the Secretary-General that he would consult all interested parties in the implementation of resolution A, which involved no financial consequences for the United Nations.

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10. The Chilean amendment having been withdrawn, part A of the amended draft resolution was adopted by 55 votes in favour, none against, with five abstentions.

11. As regards part B of the draft resolution, the representative of the Secretary-General stated that a number of delegations were interested in obtaining office facilities closer to the Headquarters site. No expenditure would devolve upon the United Nations in respect of any building construction undertaken for that purpose. The Secretary-General was prepared, however, to use his good offices in order to assist interested delegations.

12. Part B of the amended four-Power draft resolution was adopted by 43 votes to 6, with 13 abstentions.

Recommendation of the Committee

13. Pursuant to the above discussion, the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AND  
DELEGATION OFFICE FACILITIES

The General Assembly,

A.

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations International School (A/3688),

Noting that the School is in urgent need of permanent premises, and that it is under notice to vacate its present temporary premises in June 1959,

Noting that in order to meet the needs of the greatest possible number of children of the United Nations staff members, delegates and others associated with the United Nations, such permanent premises should be located in Manhattan,

Noting further that in the view of the Secretary-General "the provision of truly adequate accommodation for the School is in the best interest of the Organization,"

Recalling resolution 1102 (XI) on this subject, and in particular the recognition contained therein of "the continued functioning of the School as one of the important non-financial factors contributing to the recruitment and

1. Requests the Secretary-General to consult with the appropriate authorities on the possibility of constructing permanent premises for the United Nations International School on the Headquarters site;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to use his good offices to assist the Board of Trustees in finding a site in Manhattan including the "Headquarters District" for the School, in developing plans for the building, and in pursuing their efforts to raise funds from private sources for the construction of the School, and, if necessary, for the acquisition of a site therefor;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to use his good offices to assist the School in finding suitable accommodation pending completion of the permanent premises;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to present a progress report to the thirteenth session of the General Assembly, together with the comments, if necessary, of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

B.

The General Assembly

Bearing in mind the discussions at previous sessions concerning a Delegation Building to be constructed in the area close to the United Nations Headquarters, and the increasing interest expressed by many delegations to have such facilities,

1. Requests the Secretary-General to use his good offices in investigating practical possibilities for the provision of Delegation office facilities in the area close to United Nations Headquarters;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to make a progress report to the General Assembly at its thirteenth session.

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