

GENERAL
ASSEMBLYASSEMBLEE
GENERALEA/AC.7/W.12
15 March 1947

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY MEETING OF THE THIRD MEETING

Held in the Arsenal Building, New York City, New York, on Friday,
7 March 1947, at 11:00 a.m.

Present:

Chairman: Mr. Austin	(United States of America)
Mr. Keilway	(Australia)
Mr. Lebeau	(Belgium)
Mr. de Souza-Gomez	(Brazil)
Mr. Howe	(Canada)
Mr. Hsia	(China)
Mr. Castillo	(Colombia)
Mr. de la Tournelle	(France)
Mr. Dendremis	(Greece)
Mr. Vesugar	(India)
Mr. Finn Moe	(Norway)
Mr. Katz-Suchy	(Poland)
Mr. Rafik Asha	(Syria)
Mr. Bassov	(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Lawford	(United Kingdom)
Mr. Gavrilovic	(Yugoslavia)
Mr. Trygve Lie	(Secretary-General)
Mr. Bennett	(Committee Secretary)
Mr. Harrison	(Director of Planning)
Mr. Feller	(Legal Advisor)

Authorities of the City of New York:

Mr. Moses	(Co-ordinator of Construction)
Mr. Rogers	(President of the Borough of Manhattan)
Mr. Riedel	(Chief Engineer, Board of Estimates)

1. Adoption of the Agenda.

In the absence of objections, the agenda was adopted.

2. Consultation with the Representatives of the City of New York.

The CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. Moses (Co-ordinator of Construction).

Mr. MOSES (Co-ordinator of Construction) said that the time had

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arrived when an understanding between the United Nations and the City of New York with respect to the schedule of the United Nations in the construction of its permanent headquarters was essential. The necessary legislation had been passed by the State of New York; the Rockefeller option should be exercised next. The City was prepared to condemn additional land between East 47th and 48th Streets and present it to the United Nations.

Mr. MOSES (Co-ordinator of Construction) referred to a portion of the block between East 42nd and 43rd Streets, the property of the City Housing Authority, which was in the process of erecting an administrative building on that land. He explained that the land did not belong to the City of New York. The City Housing Authority was an independent agency, which issued public bonds and was responsible to the bond-holders. It was therefore not in a position to donate its land to the United Nations. While the United Nations might proceed to work around that plot of land, the solution did not appear practical. The United Nations might purchase the land from the City Housing Authority, and revise the plans of the building in the process of erection in such a manner as to make temporary use of it.

The City was planning considerable improvements around the United Nations site, involving the widening of streets, the construction of a tunnel under First Avenue for heavy traffic, the construction of a number of entrances and exits, and extensive rebuilding of East River Drive. When condemning the property between East 47th and 48th Streets, the City would reserve a strip of ground necessary for street widening, as well as frontage along First Avenue, to be used for the same purpose. In return for the latter land, the City would donate to the United Nations a strip of territory along the present East River Drive.

The City was faced with certain unexpected problems, such as the fact that a newspaper had planned to erect a printing plant in the immediate neighbourhood of the United Nations site; providing other land for that purpose would cost the City about \$850,000. Altogether, the City envisaged

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the expenditure of \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 in the next year or year and a half. While the City authorities were prepared to fulfill their commitments it was essential for them to be informed of the schedule of work adopted by the United Nations. Fortunately, comparatively few people would have to be evicted from the condemned buildings; nevertheless, in view of the severe housing shortage, it was undesirable to ask those people to move before the United Nations was ready to undertake work on that site.

Mr. MOSES stressed that the City authorities wished to be informed with respect to the authority of the Secretary-General and other officials of the United Nations to incur obligations and to spend and borrow funds. In establishing a time schedule, which should be realistic, the United Nations would have to consider agreement experts, the preparation and adoption of plans, labour, materials and priorities. If the first building were to be completed as early as November 1948, as Mr. Harrison suggested, certain materials, such as steel, would have to be ordered very soon. The City would do its part of the task. The only agency competent to effect the transformation of East River Drive was the Borough of Manhattan. A decision concerning the treatment of East River Drive should be made as soon as possible. According to an informal agreement, the United Nations was to furnish the funds for that purpose, and to submit plans. Mr. Moses enquired when the plans and funds might be forthcoming. Without such information, the City could not proceed.

Mr. MOSES said that he would be happy to answer questions.

Mr. ROGERS (President of the Borough of Manhattan) said that the City of New York was prepared to co-operate fully with the United Nations, and to co-ordinate its work in order to keep abreast with that of the United Nations. The City's expenditures would probably equal, if not surpass, those of the United Nations. The City's profile around the United Nations headquarters would be transformed, streets would be widened, approaches built; to achieve some of the improvements, sewers, water-lines, gas and electricity conduits

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would have to be moved. While improvements of East River Drive were expected to cost about \$2,500,000, the complete City programme would involve the expenditure of from \$60,000,000 to \$70,000,000. That programme comprised not only the widening of certain streets, the depression of First Avenue, the re-development of 42nd Street and the widening of 39th and 40th Streets, to provide a dispersal point where the depressed highway would emerge, but also the widening and corresponding improvements of Second Avenue. The City could not correlate those expenditures with its budget until information regarding the United Nations programme was available.

Mr. RIEDEL (Chief Engineer, Board of Estimates) also emphasized the need for an early decision on the part of the United Nations with respect to the plans for the permanent headquarters. Mr. Rogers, Mr. Moses, and their respective staffs had reached the point at which they required urgently additional information concerning those plans.

Referring to the City Housing Authority, Mr. RIEDEL agreed with Mr. Moses that, as a separate body existing under an act of the State of New York and owing a duty to its bond-holders, it was unable to make a donation. Should the City wish and be financially able to make the gift, special legislation would be required.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the gratitude of the United Nations to the City of New York for its generosity and its interest in the great cause of abolition of war, for which the United Nations stood.

Mr. GAVRILOVIC (Yugoslavia) associated himself with the Chairman's remarks. He felt sure that the Committee agreed that co-ordination between the work of the United Nations and that of the City of New York was vital. He was, however, less certain of the legal position, which the Secretary-General might be able to explain. He suggested that the Committee should pass a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to effect co-ordination between the work of the United Nations and that of the City. Should the Secretary-General require additional authority for that

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purpose, he might consult the Governments of the Members of the United Nations.

Mr. VESUGAR (India) also supported the Chairman's statement. The City programme, which affected a widely diversified area, might require more time for its completion than that of the United Nations. He enquired when the City expected to complete either the entire project, or that part of it which would be needed for the occupation of the first building.

Mr. MOSES (Co-ordinator of Construction) replied that, in view of the different nature of the difficulties involved, he believed that the work of the City would progress more rapidly than that of the United Nations. Certain portions of it, such as improvement of Second Avenue, would be undertaken at a later stage. First attention would be given to the improvement of streets needed to make the site accessible; a sum of \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 was involved. Once the transfer of land had been effected, action would have to be taken by the City Planning Commission, of which he and Mr. Riedel were members, with respect to the budget for the following year. The City Planning Commission would require definite information regarding United Nations plans.

Mr. ROGERS (President of the Borough of Manhattan) said in reply to the Indian representative that the City could not decide when the whole project might be completed until information as regards the plans of the United Nations had become available. The City could take no action with respect to East River Drive and First Avenue, for example, until it was known at what points entrances and exits should connect with the United Nations site. Improvements of the entrance to Queensborough Bridge, on the other hand, could be begun immediately. Once information was available, seven and eight months would be required for the completion of designs, and twenty to twenty-eight months for improvements along 42nd and 48th Streets, First Avenue and East River Drive, provided that no serious difficulties arose. If it were found possible to do so, that time would be reduced.

Mr. BASEOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the City of New York for the work which it had already performed, and expressed his

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confidence in harmonious co-operation in the future. He supported the Yugoslav proposal with respect to a resolution, and enquired whether the Secretary-General could provide information regarding financial resources. The members of the Committee would then be able to consult their respective Governments. Possession of such information was required so that plans could be made and the work of the City facilitated.

3. Executive Session (documents A/AC.7/W.9 and A/AC.7/W.11).

Mr. FELLER (Secretariat) stated, with reference to Document A/AC.7/W.11, that the option on the permanent headquarters site might have to be extended for a week beyond the date of 11 March 1947 given in the document. The delay was occasioned by the difficulty of title-searching. The property had a complicated history, since portions of it had been under water several centuries before, and had been filled in.

Replying to Mr. LEBEAU (Belgium), Mr. HARRISON (Director of Planning) stated that the filled-in portions were found only in the neighbourhood of 46th and 47th Streets, at the deepest points of which solid rock had been encountered at eighty feet. The rest of the site contained rock close to the surface. He foresaw no difficulties greater than those normally encountered by builders in the City of New York.

The Committee proceeded to the consideration of Document A/AC.7/W.9.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL suggested that the document should be discussed point by point. He stated that the Introduction required no comment, and requested the Committee's advice with respect to the appointment to the Board of Design of five additional members recommended by Mr. Harrison (Director of Planning).

Mr. HARRISON (Director of Planning) stated that the five architects recommended for the Board of Design: Mr. G. A. Soilleux, Australia; Mr. Gaston Brunfaut, Belgium; Mr. Ernest Cormier, Canada; Mr. Sven Markelius, Sweden; and Mr. Julio Vilmajo, Uruguay; were leaders in the world of architecture. He stated that Mr. Matthew Nowicki of Poland, Mr. Josef Havlicek,

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Czechoslovakia; Mr. John Antoniadis of Greece and Mr. Ernest Weismann of Yugoslavia were to be named as consultants; it is hoped that all will join the staff as working members in due time. As the plans progress these men will be called for consultation on specific problems.

Mr. LEBEAU (Belgium) expressed the gratification of his Government at the selection of a Belgian architect; the choice had not been an easy one, since the Belgian Government had submitted five names.

DECISION: The appointment of five additional members to the Board of Design was confirmed unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Mr. Havlicek (Czechoslovakia), whose name had not been included in the Document, had also been requested by Mr. Harrison (Director of Planning) to act as consultant.

At the request of Mr. BASSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. HARRISON (Director of Planning) began his explanation of the Time Schedule (Paragraph 2, document A/AC.7/W.9) with the improvements to be effected by the City of New York. He stated that the City would donate land in addition to the Rockefeller gift between 42nd and 43rd Streets, except the portion on which was the building of the City Housing Authority. The City intended among other matters, to widen First and Second Avenues along the entire length of the site, to build a tunnel under First Avenue the full length of the site enabling heavy traffic to proceed underground, to widen 39th and 40th Streets, and eventually re-arrange the tunnel on 42nd Street; furthermore, the City agreed to donate to the United Nations a strip of some forty feet along East River Drive, transferring the Drive itself closer to the East River, and building exits and entrances at both ends of the site. Only passenger cars would be permitted on First Avenue, and the tunnel would provide access to an underground parking space. In order to provide space for sewers, pipes and conduits, the United Nations would surrender the use of a strip about thirty feet wide along First Avenue, which could be landscaped as a grass plot. The proposed office building would be erected at the South end of the site. That

the immediate problem; no plans were yet being proposed regarding the ultimate treatment of the site.

The CHAIRMAN said that the meeting would be continued the following week. In the meantime, he called the attention of the Committee to Article 104 of the Charter, Rule 40 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, and the Resolutions of the General Assembly concerning permanent headquarters and the present Committee (pages 951-954, General Assembly Journal No. 75; Supplement A-64, Add.1).

He reminded the Committee that the body which possessed jurisdiction over the intermediate financing of construction was the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.
