



Seventeenth session
Agenda item 62

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1963

Office and related space at Headquarters

Twenty-first report of the Advisory Committee
on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to
the General Assembly at its seventeenth session

Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a report by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/942) on the problem of office and related space at Headquarters. In that report, the Secretary-General recalls that the 1963 estimates for section 9, chapter III, had included a provision of \$105,000 for rental of outside premises in New York City to alleviate the increasingly difficult situation in respect of office space, but that the negotiations for the rental arrangements to which the budgetary provision related had failed to materialize, for reasons beyond the Secretariat's control. Consequently, in its first reading on section 9, the Fifth Committee had eliminated the provision of \$105,000 pending the receipt of specific proposals concerning any new arrangements which might be made.
2. The Secretary-General indicates that, in view of the inability to conclude the rental arrangements originally foreseen and in the absence of suitable alternatives, and with the unexpected release by UNICEF of a certain amount of office and warehouse space, the situation has been reassessed. On the basis of this reassessment, it is proposed to attempt to meet the most pressing 1963 requirements without resort to outside rental, through steps described in paragraph 3 below, and to revert to the question of longer-term arrangements when the over-all office space survey has been completed in 1963.

Description of the project

3. The steps which the Secretary-General considers necessary to meet immediate requirements fall under three main headings:

(a) Further restrictions and limitations on allocation of space:

This would imply a re-arrangement of partitions to achieve either a reduction in the size of individual offices or an increase in the number of occupants. In addition, a more intensive use would be made of the core of the building by setting up offices in inside areas previously reserved for files, storerooms and machines. It is also planned to reduce the volume of files kept in offices. To implement such a programme, it would be necessary to make more than the normal annual minor alterations to premises. For this purpose (i) purchase of additional partitioning units at some \$15,000 is being given priority in expenditure of remaining 1962 credits in buildings accounts;^{1/} and (ii) it is requested that the provision of \$35,000 for minor alterations to premises included in the 1963 estimates (section 9) be increased by \$15,000, mainly for the purchase of partitioning units and other materials.

(b) Recovery of space on the 19th floor now occupied by records storage:

This space can be made usable for office purposes in its semi-finished state, but essential limited expenditures estimated at \$15,000 would need to be incurred to ready the 19th floor for occupation. The Secretary-General emphasizes, however, that the conditions on this floor and on the 20th floor, both of which were finished for use as archival and records storage at the time of the construction of the building, are sub-standard for use as office space. Nevertheless, the Committee has ascertained that, because of their initially intended use, both floors are of reinforced construction and, apart from the third basement built directly on solid rock, are the only areas in the Headquarters buildings offering a high load-per-square-foot capacity. This makes them especially suited for units requiring heavy equipment. Accordingly, with the progressive removal of Records Retirement stacks from the 19th floor to the basement area, the Machine Records Unit has been moved from the 37th to the 19th floor. The Advisory Committee understands that it is the intention to resettle on the 19th floor other

^{1/} The accounts involved are for the most part in section 7; a transfer of credits to section 9, where partitioning is properly charged, will be requested by the Secretary-General.

accounting units, particularly those having close relationships with the Machine Records Unit.

(c) Recovery of space in the third basement:

It is proposed that a special type of compact storage be installed consisting of mobile units which greatly reduce access (aisle) space requirements. The cost of an installation of this type of storage for the area involved is estimated at some \$50,000. The Secretary-General hopes to proceed in 1963 with such an installation which would release some 3,200 square feet (297.29 square metres) of office space on the 33rd floor, and would alleviate the warehouse space shortage through providing for the additional documents storage requirements foreseen for the next three years.

4. To implement the programme described in the preceding paragraph, the following additional provisions would be required for 1963:

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(a) Additional funds for minor alterations to premises (section 9) <u>[see para. 3 (a)]</u>	15,000
(b) Immediate expenses for occupancy of the 19th floor (section 7) <u>[see para. 3 (b)]</u>	15,000
(c) Funds for installation of compact storage (section 7) <u>[see para. 3 (c)]</u>	50,000
Total	<u>80,000</u>

Comments of the Advisory Committee

5. The Advisory Committee notes that this plan - and especially item (a) on more intensive utilization of space - is related to the space survey now undertaken by the Administrative Management Service in co-operation with the Office of General Services. In view of the increasingly critical space situation at Headquarters, this survey appears to be of particular importance and urgency and the Advisory Committee awaits its results with special interest. It would point out, however, that the space shortage is not a sudden or recent development and that such a survey might usefully have been carried out some time ago. Indeed, had this been

done, the Secretariat might not have found it necessary to embark on the project of renting outside warehouse space.

6. The Advisory Committee is hopeful that the floor-by-floor survey now being carried out will show the way to a more rational utilization of space. It therefore considers that no further effort to rent outside space should be undertaken until this survey is fully completed and all available space has been put to optimum use.

Recommendations of the Advisory Committee

7. On the basis of the evidence presented and subject to the observations and comments made in paragraphs 5 and 6 above, the Advisory Committee would recommend that the General Assembly approve the request of the Secretary-General for an additional provision of \$80,000 for 1963, including \$65,000 under section 7 and \$15,000 under section 9 as indicated in paragraph 4 above. At the same time it expresses the hope that some savings can be achieved in the implementation of this plan.
