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

1. By resolution 1982 (XVIII) the General Assembly, at its eighteenth session, appealed to Governments of Member States to take such measures as they might consider necessary to ensure that voluntary contributions for building and endowing the International School would be forthcoming at the earliest possible date from appropriate sources, governmental or non-governmental.
2. In his report to the General Assembly^{1/} the Secretary-General indicated that this action laid the groundwork for renewed efforts with foundations as well as an appeal addressed to Governments by the Secretary-General on 10 January 1964. On 19 September 1964, the Secretary-General was informed that the Ford Foundation would be prepared to grant up to \$7.5 million to cover the cost of building and equipping the new School if it could receive assurances that the United Nations attached real importance to this project and expressed in a tangible way the support of the Member States. The Foundation indicated its concern that the question of the site should be satisfactorily resolved and that an endowment fund should be established adequate to ensure the School's independence. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions joins with the Secretary-General in expressing its appreciation of the generous offer of the Ford Foundation.
3. The Advisory Committee recalled that a proposal to construct the United Nations International School on the Headquarters site was first made by the Board of Trustees in 1956 and a report by the Secretary-General on the proposal was

* Item 77 of the provisional agenda.

^{1/} A/5834 and Add.1.

discussed by the Fifth Committee during the twelfth session of the General Assembly in 1957.^{2/} While recognizing that the School's facilities had become increasingly inadequate, the Secretary-General had pointed out that the provision of accommodation on the Headquarters site, even with no financial obligation to the United Nations, would have implications requiring most careful consideration. He had mentioned, in particular, transportation, parking and traffic problems which would result from the daily attendance of some 700-750 pupils; problems of disturbance and property maintenance; and, generally, problems of possible impact on the efficient working of the Organization in the discharge of its main functions. On the other hand, certain members of the Fifth Committee stressed the convenience both to staff and to delegates of a school located on the Headquarters site, not to mention the financial advantages to the School. It was doubted whether the pupils would add to the problems which already existed in dealing with regular daily visitors to the Headquarters buildings. Mention was made, during the discussions in the Fifth Committee, of the necessity of preserving the independence of the School; reference was also made to the legal problems that would arise in connexion with construction on the Headquarters site. Upon the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, the General Assembly, in resolution 1228 A (XII) of 14 December 1957, requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to consult with the appropriate authorities on the possibility of constructing permanent premises for the School on the Headquarters site, and to use his good offices to assist the Board of Trustees of the School in finding a site for the School in Manhattan, including the "Headquarters District".

4. Since the twelfth session of the General Assembly, the efforts of the Board of Trustees have, with the assistance of the Secretary-General, been directed towards the acquisition of a suitable site in East Manhattan but outside the Headquarters area. As the Secretary-General explained in paragraph 3 of his report "further explorations revealed no available site in East Manhattan which was adequate and within the financial possibilities of the Board". It is in these circumstances that the Secretary-General decided to revert to the earlier proposal that the School be constructed at the north end of the Headquarters site.

^{2/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twelfth Session, Annexes,
Agenda item 52, document A/3688.

5. In document A/5834/Add.1, the Secretary-General has made available a series of plans of the proposed School which were prepared by the architects. They provide for a construction which conforms to the architecture of the United Nations complex of buildings and which is so located as to cause little or no inconvenience to existing United Nations activities. Some of the problems to which reference was made in 1957 by the members of the Fifth Committee (see paragraph 3 above) would appear to have been resolved. The Advisory Committee wishes, however, to call the attention of the General Assembly to one or two matters which it believes to be of considerable importance.

6. In the first place, authorization to use the Headquarters site would, in practice, be equivalent to a substantial donation towards the construction of the School. It is clear to the Advisory Committee, however, from information furnished by the architects, that little land suitable for building would remain should the General Assembly wish at some future date to extend the Headquarters premises. The only possibilities would be: (a) a part of the gardens immediately north of the visitors' entrance opposite 46th Street; (b) a small area adjacent to the south-east corner of the Secretariat building. With regard to the School's own possible need for future expansion, the Committee was informed that whereas a student body of about 1,000 was foreseen, the premises could, if necessary, be adapted to accommodate some 1,500.

7. In the second place, it is evident that the construction of the School on the Headquarters site would give rise to a number of legal problems. In this connexion, the Advisory Committee notes that it would be the Secretary-General's intention to submit to it in precise form the legal and administrative arrangements to be entered into between the United Nations and the School.^{3/}

8. Apart from the question of the specific site, there is one important matter which the Advisory Committee wishes to bring to the particular attention of the General Assembly. It concerns the contingent liability of Member States should construction be begun before the total financing of the School is assured. On

^{3/} At its 1328th plenary meeting, on 10 February 1965, the General Assembly adopted without objection resolution 2003 (XIX), previously submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/L.459, whereby, among other things, the Assembly approved in principle the use of the north end of the Headquarters site for the construction of the School, subject to a review of the legal arrangements by the Advisory Committee.

several occasions in the past, the Committee has requested an assurance from the Secretary-General that no commitments with regard to the construction of a new building would be entered into except on the basis of funds actually donated or firmly pledged, sufficient to cover all or a substantial portion of the cost of the project. The Committee notes that of the \$3 million which the Board of Trustees considers necessary for the Development Fund, some \$2 million remains to be raised. It is part of this sum - at least \$1 million, in the Secretary-General's opinion - which Members are being invited to contribute on a voluntary basis. The Committee cannot over-emphasize the importance of the establishment of an adequate Development Fund to ensure the School's financial independence. Without such a fund the School would in all likelihood continue to call upon the General Assembly each year to take measures to deal with an operating deficit. Basing itself on past experience, the Committee strongly recommends that construction should not start unless and until the greater part of the Development Fund has been received or firmly pledged.

9. In paragraph 12 of his report, the Secretary-General refers to the operating deficit for the current school year, estimated at \$45,000, and to the possibility that the General Assembly may, as in past years, agree to cover this deficit by a grant. Bearing in mind resolution 1439 (XIV) of 5 December 1959 providing for financial assistance to the United Nations International School for a period of five years, the General Assembly may wish to make a grant to the Development Fund for 1965 to cover the operating deficit of the school year 1964-1965. The Advisory Committee believes, however, that once the target of the Development Fund has been attained, the School can be expected to achieve a balanced budget and that no further assistance from the General Assembly should be required.
