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UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Report of the Secretary-General

1. It may be recalled that the General Assembly, recognizing the important role of the United Nations International School (UNIS) in providing international education facilities of a high academic and cultural standard for the children of the United Nations community in New York and the need to preserve the international character of the School, decided, by resolution 2990 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, to increase the maximum of the education grant to \$1,500, effective 1 January 1973, and to review this decision at its twenty-ninth session. At that time, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations International School undertook to present a full report from the Board to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session outlining the financial problems faced by the School and recommendations for dealing with them. The special report of the Board of Trustees, addressed to the Secretary-General in accordance with that undertaking, is annexed to the present report.
2. As the report reveals, growing steadily from its humble beginnings, the United Nations International School has at last established itself as a full elementary and secondary school in its new building. Its academic standards and achievements have received universal recognition. There is no doubt that the existence of the School is of great benefit not only to United Nations staff, but also to members of the United Nations Missions and other United Nations affiliated bodies.
3. The continually escalating costs of secondary and higher education, both in this country and elsewhere, have also affected the United Nations International School. The result has been a reduction in the number of United Nations parents who are able to afford to send their children to the School. One element which has aggravated the situation and which has led to the need to increase tuition fees still higher is the fact that it has been necessary to borrow funds from the Development Fund in order to pay the unmet construction costs of the School of about \$1.7 million. It should be added that this deficit was anticipated before the Board of Trustees authorized construction of the new School and that the School was built within the amount of the original budget. Nevertheless,

the withdrawal of this amount to pay construction bills has meant that it has not been available in the Development Fund for investment at interest and that this anticipated income has, therefore, not been available to apply towards the operating costs of the School. In turn, the availability of this income would have made it possible to hold down tuition increases somewhat.

4. The Secretary-General has noted especially paragraph 29 of the special report of the Board of Trustees. It will be recalled that, because of the conditions at the 70th Street location, in 1967 the General Assembly by resolution 2358 (XXII) urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices "with a view to reaching a fully satisfactory and speedy solution for both the interim and the permanent accommodation problems". Again, in 1968, by resolution 2477 (XXIII) the Secretary-General was requested to continue to extend his good offices to the Board of Trustees and to urge the Board to reach a speedy solution to the problem of a permanent accommodation for the School. The only solutions that could be achieved necessarily required the expenditure of fairly large sums of money. In fact, it became necessary to spend nearly \$2.3 million of amounts contributed by the Ford Foundation and by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for the additional costs connected with the operation of interim facilities for the School for the four-year period from February 1968 to January 1972. In the opinion of the Secretary-General, these amounts, which had to be taken out of available funds and used for the purpose of providing these interim facilities pending the completion of the new School, need to be restored. He would therefore propose a grant of \$2.3 million from the United Nations to the United Nations International School, preferably in a lump sum, but alternatively in two instalments. This will not only restore the Development Fund to the level of \$3.5 million and thereby help to provide a cushion against the escalating costs of elementary and secondary education in future years but will enable the School to be equipped so that it can reach its full potential.

5. The Secretary-General draws attention in this connexion to the circumstances surrounding the creation of a Development Fund for the School. In the resolutions cited in paragraph 4, the General Assembly recognized the need for an adequate Development Fund. This requirement was again stressed in 1969 in resolution 2612 (XXIV). It will be further recalled that a major condition for the \$11.5 million indirect grants for construction made available by the Ford Foundation was "that the United Nations International School, with the help of the United Nations, raise a \$5 million Development Fund". At the present time, despite the best efforts of all who have tried to assist, and despite United Nations contributions totalling \$2 million, the Development Fund stands at the level of \$1.8 million - a clearly inadequate amount. It would appear that \$6.5 to \$7.0 million is the minimum amount which can provide the level of assistance needed by UNIS. Over time, as this level is approached, it is hoped that it will be possible, as urged in General Assembly resolution 2990 (XXVII), to increase bursaries as a means of attracting additional children from members of the diplomatic and consular corps who do not receive a substantial education grant from their Governments.

6. As indicated in paragraph 1 above, by resolution 2990 (XXVII) the General Assembly approved an increase in the maximum education grant from \$1,000 to

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\$1,500, subject to review at the twenty-ninth session. Unfortunately, despite this increase, the steadily escalating cost of education continues to deter United Nations parents from sending their children to UNIS. The organizations participating in the common system produced figures before the International Civil Service Advisory Board (ICSAB) to justify an increase in the maximum of the education grant to \$2,000, which would allow the full 75 per cent of reimbursement to staff paying fees up to \$2,667 per annum. In its report, 1/ ICSAB noted that, for the most part, fees in the senior-most classes in schools had not yet reached the level of \$2,667. However, the Secretary-General feels that the figures produced by the organization continue to be valid. He would point out that the fees for the top four grades of the International School in Geneva for the year 1974-1975 do in fact exceed that amount and that the top fee at the International School in New York has now reached \$2,550. This means that the top fees in Geneva and in New York are at present \$1,240 and \$1,050, respectively, in excess of the present maximum grant of \$1,500. Undoubtedly, tuition fees at many schools will again increase for the year 1975-1976. The Secretary-General therefore reiterates his support for the proposal put forward by the organizations participating in the common system and recommends that the maximum grant be increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 to take effect for the academic year 1974-1975.

7. The Secretary-General has no comment on the proposal contained in paragraph 32 (c) of the report of the Board of Trustees regarding the extension of the scope of the education grant, except that the present restrictions with respect to the grant do limit considerably the potential United Nations clientele for UNIS and make it virtually impossible for certain categories of staff to send their children to that School.

8. In paragraph 4 above, the Secretary-General proposes that a grant in the amount of \$2.3 million should be made to the United Nations International School, preferably on a one-time basis but alternatively in two instalments. Therefore, should the General Assembly approve this proposal, it would be necessary for it to approve:

(a) Either an appropriation in that amount for the programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975, or

(b) An appropriation of \$1,150,000 to the programme budget for the biennium 1974-1975 on the understanding that the same amount would be included in the programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977.

9. With regard to the proposal in paragraph 6 above aimed at increasing the maximum of the education grant from the present level of \$1,500 to the proposed level of \$2,000 with effect from the scholastic year 1974-1975, the Secretary-General has estimated that an additional amount of \$310,000 will be required in the first year in which the new maximum would be applicable, including a corresponding increase in the flat rate for boarding from \$650 to \$900. Therefore, should the General Assembly approve the proposed increase, an additional appropriation in that amount would be required for the 1974-1975 biennium.

10. The implications of increasing the education grant maximum for the regular budgets of the organizations in the United Nations common system as a whole, excluding the United Nations, have been estimated at about \$880,000 for the first year of application.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/9630).

ANNEX

Special report of the Board of Trustees
to the Secretary-General

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I. HISTORY

1. The United Nations International School was founded by United Nations Secretariat parents with the assistance and co-operation of United Nations officials and outside educators to achieve a twofold purpose: (a) to initiate an experiment in international learning and living in the spirit of the United Nations; and (b) to provide education that would satisfy the various home-country requirements of United Nations children (United Nations delegation, Secretariat and other staff members of the United Nations family) and thus facilitate their transfer into any national school system, including their own.
2. The founders of the School also had in mind, as recognized later by the General Assembly, that UNIS could become one of the important non-financial factors contributing to the recruitment and retention of international staff, taking care of the children of the greatest possible number of members of delegations and staff at the United Nations Headquarters.
3. The School opened in October 1947 as a nursery school for 20 children from 15 countries. Adding one grade per year, commencing in 1949/50, 12 grades were in operation by 1960/61, when the enrolment rose to 375.
4. For the school year 1974/75, the current enrolment is 1,311 representing 95 nationalities (including approximately 200 pupils in the Parkway Village elementary branch). Of the total enrolment, at least 55 per cent is from United Nations-related and other foreign community families.
5. Starting with four teachers of four nationalities for the nursery School in 1947, the faculty numbers for the 1974/75 school year a total of 109 full-time teachers and 11 part-time teachers. This is in addition to the Director, Assistant Director, four House Principals, a Director of Admissions, Guidance Directors and Librarians.
6. Fifty-two per cent of the faculty are recruited from overseas, representing 35 nationalities. The administrative, maintenance and custodial staff, numbering 29, are recruited locally.
7. For 1974/75, with a school of 13 grades, school fees will range from \$1,825 to \$2,550. Remission of \$400 is given for United Nations and Mission parents who do not receive an education grant or allowance. School fees have risen steadily since the beginning of the School, and steeply since 1968, with the general inflationary trend, seriously affecting educational costs. Yet, school fees alone have never been sufficient to cover expenditures and the need for supplementary funds has been continuous.
8. While the financial burden to United Nations staff eligible for the education grant was not too great in the earlier years, as the fees have increased, the cost of attendance per child to the parent receiving the grant now range several hundred dollars over the maximum education grant of \$1,500, making it increasingly difficult for even these staff members to enrol their children in the School.

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Staff members not eligible for the education grant and without other financial resources have long found it beyond their means to send their children to UNIS, despite bursary assistance from the School to the extent that funds can be made available for this purpose out of the budget.

9. As a consequence, UNIS has found it necessary to accept more and more non-United Nations children despite the stated policy of the ratio of 75 per cent United Nations children to 25 per cent non-United Nations children. The ratio dropped to a low of 52 per cent United Nations children for the 1973/74 school year.

10. In 1973, after seven temporary, makeshift facilities and a constant search for a permanent home, the School moved into its own building constructed on landfill over the East River at 25th Street, a site leased by the City of New York to the United Nations for 99 years at \$1 per annum. The new, modern building, capable of housing 1,500 students, was constructed in large measure through the generosity of the Ford Foundation which granted to the Secretary-General a total of \$11.5 million for the purpose.

11. With the attainment of a full elementary and secondary school and a new building, there is the need to develop more fully an international education programme that will meet the needs of the future citizens of an ever-changing world and at the same time to keep it primarily as a school for those for whom it was started - the children of the international community. The question is how to make it financially available to them.

II. UNITED NATIONS INVOLVEMENT

12. Since the founding of UNIS in 1947, the General Assembly has been concerned with the School, recognizing its programme of international education as fulfilling a definite need of the staff. Financial assistance has been provided by the United Nations to the School in various ways, such as, in 1947, rent-free accommodation at Lake Success; in 1952, the first cash grant of \$8,460; and thereafter annual grants in varying amounts, the highest being \$65,000 in 1970. These grants have been made towards the operating budget of the School and on three occasions towards expenses of planning for the new building. In addition, under General Assembly resolution 2612 (XXIV), a contribution of \$2 million was approved for the UNIS Development Fund to be made over a period of four years. In total, the United Nations has contributed to the School, over 27 years, a sum in excess of \$3 million which includes about a half million dollars realized from the sale of a special issue of a United Nations postage stamp.

13. At the twenty-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2990 (XXVII) which recognized further the important role of UNIS in providing international education facilities of a high academic and cultural standard for the children of the United Nations community and the need to preserve the international character of the School.

14. The Assembly also expressed concern that owing to the financial difficulties of the School and the high cost of tuition to the parents, the international character of the School was being endangered by the diminution of the percentage of the enrolment of children of United Nations staff members and delegations. It decided to review the education grant at its twenty-ninth session.

15. This report therefore provides the background of the establishment of the School, its growth and development, and the continuing financial problems facing it. It also proposes various solutions which the Assembly might wish to consider.

III. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

16. From the second year of the School, curricular development has been a deep and constant concern of the Board of Trustees. Over the years, considerable progress has been made in not only improving the curriculum generally, but also in introducing innovative programmes. Notable among these are social studies, humanities, history, geography from an international viewpoint and the course on the United Nations. With modern laboratory equipment, electronic calculators and a computer centre, the language, science and mathematics departments have been vastly improved. In addition, there is a full choice in the creative arts. There are modern facilities for physical education in the school and at a camp outside of New York City at which there is also an environmental study programme.

17. In addition, there have been mother tongue classes for such languages as Arabic, Chinese, Danish, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Sinhalese, Swedish and Urdu. English-as-a-second language has been an indispensable programme for those children admitted to the School with little or no knowledge of English.

18. The School has distinguished itself in the International Baccalaureate programme (I.B.). With the growing desire of schools set up for children of overseas staff members of national and international organizations to develop a curriculum which would cover the highest requirements of most colleges and universities throughout the world, UNIS has been in the forefront as one of the first schools authorized by the International Baccalaureate Office in Geneva to prepare its students for the I.B.

19. The School is proud of its academic excellence. In recent years, graduates from UNIS have found places in some of the most prestigious universities in Europe, North America and elsewhere. In addition, those who have taken the full I.B. programme have been able to get special recognition at various universities, often securing exemption from the first year of study at such universities. UNIS is considered to be among the highest ranking of elementary and secondary schools throughout the world.

IV. BENEFITS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

United Nations Missions

20. The School has been enriched by the gradually increasing participation of the children of mission personnel in recent years, although the total number is still far short of the goal desired by the Board of Trustees. The present enrolment of children of 71 delegates is 142 or 10.8 per cent of the total enrolment. The main constraint on the enrolment of delegation children is, however, the high cost of tuition. Aware of this problem, the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session urged that, as increased funds became available in future years, consideration should be given to increasing bursaries and using them as a means of attracting additional children from delegations and the diplomatic and consular corps who do not receive substantial education allowances from their Governments. In keeping with the wishes of the Assembly, every effort has been made to provide substantial increases in bursary grants to the diplomatic community.

Press, Consular services, other United Nations-affiliated bodies

21. The School is no less important to such elements in the international community as staff of the specialized agencies and the Consular Corps as well as staff of the press services accredited to the United Nations, the accredited non-governmental organizations, and the official non-United Nations international organizations in New York City, many of whom desire an international education for their children.

Recruitment factor for the United Nations

22. Successive Secretaries-General and past General Assemblies have recognized that UNIS provides a vital service to the Secretariat in its recruitment of highly qualified staff. They have recognized that the welfare of their children, particularly as regards education, has been a deciding factor in attracting many highly qualified candidates to the international civil service. Satisfaction with the available education facilities and the ability to afford the costs of such tuition, are a large factor in retention of such staff.

V. INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL

23. The School is the realization of the dream of international education which began with the School's birth in 1947 in the little guest house on the grounds of the first headquarters site. The orientation of the School throughout the 27 years of its existence has been towards the United Nations as an experiment in international learning and living in the spirit of the United Nations and its Charter. It is perhaps the only place where such an experiment could have evolved fruitfully. The orientation of UNIS towards the United Nations is therefore essential to the further development of the School as the prime example of international education to serve as a pattern for schools throughout the world.

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24. The international community has come to recognize UNIS as an essential factor for service in New York City. It would be a great pity if, for lack of financial support, a growing number of parents from the international community were discouraged from accepting posts in New York, or if those already sending their children to the School were to withdraw them. It would be equally sad if financial constraints compelled the School to sacrifice the quality of teaching, the innovative programme and high standards of teaching which have given it the distinction of being the forerunner of international elementary and secondary learning.

VI. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

25. At the time of the growth of the School to a four-grade elementary school and the necessity for larger quarters and a move to Manhattan, the Mayor of New York City granted the use of a former public school building at 70th Street and First Avenue and, some years later, another school at 51st Street and First Avenue, both at nominal rentals. In 1965, the City leased the site at East 25th Street for 99 years at a rental of \$1 a year, thus solving the problem of finding a permanent site for the School.

26. The generosity of Governments, foundations, corporations and individuals has been extensive over the years. Of particular note is the generosity of the Ford Foundation, which granted to the United Nations a total of \$11.5 million towards the construction of the permanent school and that of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for its \$1.1 million towards preparation of the permanent site. Voluntary contributions of many Governments to the School, both in cash and in equipment, as well as by paying the salaries of their teacher nationals, have contributed greatly towards the growth and stability of the School. The educational programme of the School has gained enormously by donations of equipment and furnishings from private industry, including such major gifts as a large number of electric typewriters, electronic calculators, a computer centre, a planetarium and much of the physical education and play equipment.

27. Benefits have been organized by parents of UNIS children, as well as others not directly connected with the School, and there have been performances by prominent artists in the theatrical, musical and literary world. Of special note were the contributions of the late Pablo Casals and W. H. Auden, who donated all earnings of the "Hymn to the United Nations" to UNIS and of the late Pablo Picasso who provided a painting for a UNIS-United Nations postage stamp. Members of the Board of Trustees and its committees have also played a valuable role in fund-raising.

VII. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL TRENDS

28. The inflationary trend in the past several years has severely affected the cost of education. This cost is reflected in every facet of the School's operation,

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especially so in the actual cost of instruction. Out of the budget of \$3,302,650 for 1974/75, the faculty salaries and benefits, together with international recruitment costs, amount to \$2,300,320.

29. A significant factor in the financial situation of UNIS was the necessity of relocating the School to interim quarters pending construction of a new building. a/ This was essential because the building previously occupied by the School at 70th Street and First Avenue was totally inadequate and had been condemned. The net amounts expended for costs at the interim locations were, in fact, \$2.3 million. Necessarily, since there was no other source of funds available to UNIS, these amounts had to be drawn from the funds which had been contributed for the construction and equipping of the new School. This left UNIS without adequate funds to construct and equip the new building. While attempts were made to raise these amounts from outside sources prior to the completion of the new building, this did not prove to be possible. Accordingly, the School needs these amounts if it is to become financially stable. As a temporary financing measure, a loan of \$1.7 million has had to be made from the Development Fund to pay construction bills which, naturally, has resulted in a shortfall in the income which could be generated from that Fund and applied towards the operating expenses of the School.

30. As a consequence, despite extensive and continuing fund-raising efforts, the Board has had no choice but to substantially increase tuition fees almost every year for the past several years. Therefore many United Nations Secretariat and mission parents have had to withdraw their children from UNIS.

VIII. PROPOSALS FOR FINANCIAL SOLVENCY

31. The United Nations International School is at a crossroad in its history. After a quarter of a century of slow and difficult development, it has finally achieved its goal with the acquisition of a new building and an educational programme of merit. Yet the critical financial problems have not only remained unresolved but have increased. In the interest of the international community, it is of utmost importance that long-term solutions be found for the financial solvency of the School.

32. The Board of Trustees has been singularly mindful of the need to increase the income for the School and has come to the conclusion that a greater involvement of the United Nations is the only solution to maintaining the integrity of the School as the United Nations International School, since all other means of major financing have been exhausted. It is therefore suggested that consideration be given to the following proposals:

(a) The deficit in the construction cost of \$2.3 million be paid to UNIS under a special grant by the General Assembly;

a/ The principal interim locations were at 51st Street and First Avenue and at 54th Street and First Avenue.

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(b) That effective 1 January 1975 the education grant be increased to a maximum of \$2,000;

(c) Consideration be given to extending the education grant to Professional and General Service staff of all nationalities, including the citizens of the United States of America.
