



Eighth session  
Agenda item 41

HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Resolution 663 (VII), adopted by the General Assembly on 25 November 1952, requested the Secretary-General to submit a final report to the General Assembly at its eighth session on the construction of the Headquarters. The Secretary-General regrets that, contrary to earlier expectations, it will not be possible for him at the present session to render a final report and accounting on the Headquarters construction programme due to unforeseen delays in the completion both of the work within the United Nations site itself and of the additional work which the City of New York is carrying out on the approaches thereto. Work to be completed within the Headquarters site consists for the most part of some minor phases of the construction programme; certain adjustments in interior and exterior layouts required for the better operation, maintenance and security of the buildings; portions of the landscaping programme; and the installation of artistic objects of a decorative nature, including some of a monumental character, donated by Member States.

II. CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

2. All the principal structures have been substantially completed and both the buildings and the garage areas are now fully occupied. Occupancy of the Secretariat building commenced in August 1950, eighteen months after the signing of the construction contract. The first Council meetings were held in the new chambers early in 1952, and the General Assembly held its first plenary meeting in its new Hall in October of the same year. The remaining construction items

included, among others, completion of the guard houses on First Avenue at 43rd and 47th Streets; the installation of numerous illuminated and non-illuminated directional signs and bulletin boards; the installation of a complete security alarm system providing proper coverage of the entire group of buildings; interior painting; construction and installation of revolving doors at the north end of, and at the delegates' entrance to, the General Assembly building, and completion of the podium in the General Assembly Hall. It now appears that these items will not be completed, and the final financial settlements made, until the spring of 1954.

3. Work within the general area of Headquarters, for which the City of New York has assumed responsibility, has been proceeding simultaneously with the construction of the Headquarters itself. The First Avenue tunnel was opened in the spring of 1953, 42nd Street and 47th Street have been widened and beautified and similar improvements have been carried out in the two park areas north and south of 42nd Street at the west side of First Avenue. The reconstruction of First Avenue as well as the erection of the fence on the boundaries of the site is approaching completion. It is gratifying to note that the City of New York has renamed First Avenue between 42nd and 47th Streets "United Nations Plaza". The Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, including the overpasses from the Drive to First Avenue at 42nd and 48th Streets, has also been re-aligned and rebuilt from 37th to 52nd Streets. Due to unforeseen circumstances, work which the City is undertaking, has not proceeded as rapidly as was originally anticipated and this, in turn, has resulted in some delay in the completion of certain adjacent work within the Headquarters site.

4. The landscaping of the grounds started early in 1951 when trees and ground cover were planted west of the Secretariat building and east of the Library. In 1952, with the completion of the General Assembly and the Conference buildings, the landscape work south of the General Assembly building was consolidated with the work previously completed in the Secretariat building area and the south garden was also finished.

5. The north area, which was being used by the United Nations and City contractors for storage of materials and contractors' offices, became available in the spring of 1953. A contract was immediately let for the entire landscaping of the north gardens. The landscape area, consisting of the rose gardens,

containing some 1,500 roses, 185 flowering cherry trees, as well as a fine group of hawthorns, sweet gum and honey locust trees, together with ground cover will be substantially completed late this fall. A considerable part of this planting has been donated by individuals or groups of individuals.

6. The landscaping of the remaining areas has been unavoidably retarded as a result of delays in the completion of the tunnel and reconstruction of the surface of First Avenue. The balance of the landscape work, namely, the area west of the Library at 42nd Street and west of the ventilator at 45rd Street and First Avenue has been contracted for. The planting of those trees and shrubs which will not be affected by frost will be completed this fall but the minor items of ground cover and seeding must be delayed until spring. The property line curbs and fence work which tie in to the landscape programme are now progressing and should be completed by the City of New York by early spring.

7. It was anticipated that the construction work connected with the removal of the pier at 46th Street and the repair of the bulkhead along the East River would be completed this year. Last spring, however, a cargo ship sank just off the 46th Street Pier and the United States Army Engineers, who have jurisdiction over all navigable streams, have been unsuccessful to date in raising the wreck. The Secretary-General is advised that another contract for its removal is under preparation and that it is now expected to complete this operation by the first of the year, thus permitting the United Nations to proceed, early in the spring of 1954, with the work it is obligated to undertake with respect to the pier and bulkhead. This latter work must be done and paid for by the United Nations as provided for by agreement with the City of New York.

8. The Secretary-General plans to submit separately as a supplementary budgetary item a proposal for the extension of the Delegates' Dining-Room and Cafeteria facilities.

### III. FINANCIAL REPORT

9. The General Assembly, at its sixth session, approved a request of the Secretary-General for authorization to incur any necessary additional expenditure not exceeding \$3 million in excess of the original authorization of \$65 million for the purpose of completing the permanent Headquarters. One million dollars of this amount was appropriated in the 1952 budget (resolution 592 (VI)) in addition to which the Secretary-General was authorized to draw upon the Working Capital Fund, as required, in a total amount not exceeding \$2 million. At its seventh session, the General Assembly appropriated in the 1953 budget a further one million dollars for Headquarters construction purposes (resolution 674 (VII)) and continued the authorization to draw from the Working Capital Fund sums not exceeding the remaining one million dollars for the same purposes (resolution 676 (VII)).

10. As of 30 September 1953, approximately \$67 million had been expended, obligated or budgeted for the completion of the Headquarters construction programme. It is anticipated that after the remaining work is completed, an amount of not less than one million dollars out of the total of \$68 million will be available for surrender in 1954. It is therefore proposed to release the sum of one million dollars from the authorization presently standing against the Working Capital Fund and to return any residual balance remaining in excess of this amount to the appropriate appropriation account. These savings are the result of determined efforts on the part of officials responsible for the construction of the Headquarters in effecting all possible economies in the expenditure of the funds available and in securing advantageous settlement of contractors' claims against the United Nations.

11. The non-interest bearing loan of \$65 million made available by the Government of the United States of America under Public Law No. 903, as set forth in the Headquarters Loan Agreement, has been withdrawn in its entirety by requisition and expended. As of now a total of \$3,500,000 has been repaid by the United Nations to the United States Government. Withdrawals against the supplementary request of \$3 million have been made in the amount of \$1,500,000. The Headquarters Planning Office construction accounts through 31 July 1953 have been audited by the Board of Auditors.

#### IV. ART AND GIFTS

12. The procedure of clearing with the Board of Art Advisers all matters relating to the selection of art objects, decorative materials and gift offers is still in effect.

13. Various gifts of statuary, decorative objects and furnishings have been received from a number of governments and other organizations, while other proposals are under discussion. Some of these gifts require, in connexion with their installation, considerable construction work which will therefore extend over into 1954. A complete list of such gifts, together with the names of the donors, will be submitted in the final report to be transmitted to the General Assembly at its ninth session.

#### V. DRAFT RESOLUTION PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14. The Secretary-General has the honour to submit the following draft resolution for the consideration of the General Assembly:

#### HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

##### The General Assembly

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the permanent Headquarters of the United Nations;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a final report to the General Assembly at its ninth session on the construction of the Headquarters.