



UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



GENERAL

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Sixth session

HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 461 (V) adopted by the General Assembly on 12 December 1950, the following progress report on the permanent Headquarters of the United Nations is submitted to the General Assembly at its sixth session.
2. The Secretary-General feels much satisfaction in reporting that the permanent Headquarters was officially established early in January 1951, on the Manhattan site in New York City. This significant milestone in the life of the Organization was passed a little more than three years after the approval of the architectural plans by the General Assembly during the latter part of its second session in 1947, and slightly less than two years after actual construction was started. The accommodation at Lake Success has now been vacated and that at Flushing will be vacated in the near future.
3. In view of the fact that considerable descriptive material was included in the Secretary-General's report on the Headquarters submitted at the fifth session of the General Assembly (A/1392/Rev.1, dated 26 September 1950), the present report is confined mainly to a statement of progress\*.

II. CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

A. Secretariat Building

4. The Secretariat Office Building was in sufficient readiness in the summer of 1950 to permit some of the staff to move from Lake Success to their permanent locations. Between August 1950 and June 1951, the entire staff was accommodated in the building, together with liaison officers for specialized agencies, and

\* The Headquarters Advisory Committee considered and approved the report in draft form.

offices for the Press and other public information organizations.

5. The Secretariat Building has now been accepted from the contractors and the originally specified work has been completed. It should be pointed out, however, that initial plans had envisaged the immediate use of only thirty-five of the thirty-nine floors; four were to be left uncompleted as an expansion area. As a matter of necessity, in order to provide office facilities for unforeseen staff requirements, such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and the Technical Assistance Board, the Technical Assistance Administration, and liaison offices for the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, all but two floors of the building have been finished and are in use.

#### B. Conference Building

6. The Conference Building, housing the Security Council Chamber, the Economic and Social Council Chamber and the Trusteeship Council Chamber, as well as three large conference rooms for the Main Committees of the General Assembly, together with appropriate offices, lounges and corridors, is now in the final stages of completion. All except the Trusteeship Council Chamber will be finished by 1 January 1952. On the upper story of this structure, a delegates' restaurant and a staff cafeteria will soon be ready for use. The lower levels of the Conference Building, containing document reproduction areas, work spaces, storage platforms and the service road, have been completed and in use for several months.

#### C. General Assembly Building

7. The General Assembly Building, containing the auditorium for plenary meetings, a fourth large conference room for Main Committee meetings, other smaller committee rooms, public areas, telecommunications control centre, studios and appropriate offices, lounges and circulation areas, is scheduled for completion in the summer of 1952. The structural steel has been erected, stone is being set, and it is now hoped that, in spite of a number of delays in the delivery of materials, the building can be closed in before inclement winter weather sets in. It is therefore most likely that the building can be finished on schedule.

#### /D. Garage

#### D. Garage

8. The garage, constructed on three underground levels to house a total of 1,500 automobiles, has been completed, and about two-thirds of the space is in use, the remainder being occupied temporarily by construction facilities and storage.

#### E. Library

9. The Manhattan Office Building, the seven-story office building acquired from the City of New York at the time of the acquisition of the entire site, has now become the Library and is in use. The top floor will continue to be occupied by the Military Staff Committee. Essential alterations have been made, and until such time as an extensive plan of reconstructing and remodelling the building can be undertaken to harmonize it with the adjacent new buildings and to provide expanded facilities for the Library, the present arrangements will continue.

#### F. Telecommunications

10. An important part of the Headquarters construction project is the telecommunications equipment which is now being installed. Under this heading may be included the six-channel simultaneous interpretation system for the three Council Chambers, the four conference rooms, the four committee rooms and the General Assembly hall; sound re-enforcement for the various meeting rooms, studios and recording equipment for seven broadcasting studios; a dial telephone system for communication between various operation centres; a loudspeaker office distribution system from the meeting rooms to certain offices; television equipment; a centrally controlled clock system; and miscellaneous paging and public address devices. Much of the equipment from Lake Success and Flushing has been used, while other units are new and of the latest design. The general quality of the sound will be considerably above that which has been obtained in the various temporary meeting rooms. A new and much lighter ear piece for delegates and advisers is one feature which is being added; other improved features will be evident in the television and radio broadcasts.

#### G. Landscaping

11. Preliminary landscaping plans for the entire site have been made and some detailed plans, including paving and planting, have already been executed in the areas adjacent to the Secretariat Building and the Library. Large green open

/spaces will

spaces will characterize the site north of the buildings, with suitable approaches for the main public entrance at the north end of the General Assembly Building. The plaza at the 47th Street entrance will be carried across the site to the river.

12. As a part of the landscaping, a small playground is to be constructed for young children on a plot 100 ft. x 140 ft. (30.48 m. x 42.67 m.) at the extreme north-eastern corner of the site. This area will not only serve as an interesting feature of the site development, but will compensate those living in the neighbourhood of the United Nations for the two City playgrounds which were displaced when the site was assembled. Use of the space will be entirely controlled by the United Nations.

### III. NEW YORK CITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE HEADQUARTERS AREA

13. The authorities of the City of New York have pressed forward their programme for improvements around the site, although they have been handicapped somewhat by an inability to get building materials on time, and costs estimates for the work to be carried out by the City have increased very markedly because of the general price rises throughout the entire construction industry. It is a fact worthy of note that the City has continued its original plan of improving 42nd Street, First Avenue, 47th Street and 48th Street in the face of the tremendous rise in costs over those on which the preliminary estimates of 1947 were based, when the joint programme of the United Nations and the City was undertaken. The present schedule provides for the completion of work by the City in 1952 and this schedule appears to be reasonable if all the materials can be obtained. Work on the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, which has been done by the City with United Nations funds, has been practically completed. It will be realized that the cantilevering of the buildings and the northern part of the site over the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive has resulted not only in an increased area of land for the United Nations but also has added greatly to the monumentality and handsomeness of the Conference Building design. Improvements on the drive at 48th Street and 42nd Street will add greatly to the efficient flow of traffic to and from the Headquarters area.

### IV. FINANCIAL REPORT

14. In the preliminary plans for the Headquarters, which were first submitted to the General Assembly in 1947 (A/311), the cost for the completed project was /estimated at

estimated at \$84,831,450. After consultation with various authorities, the budget was reduced to \$65,000,000 and work was immediately begun on the revision of the plans to fit within the new estimated figure of cost.

15. Reductions were made in the size and scope of the project in order to meet the new budgeted cost. As late as the spring of 1950, it was felt by the Headquarters Planning Office that the total project could be completed within the newly-established budget. These plans were quickly upset by the world-wide increase in costs and by material shortages which have entailed considerable delay. It became apparent in the autumn of 1950 that the loan funds might not be sufficient; this fact was called to the attention of the Fifth Committee by the Assistant Secretary-General for Administrative and Financial Services and the Director of Planning when they appeared before that Committee. The problem was discussed with the Chairman of the Board of Auditors, and it was decided at that time that, because of lack of knowledge as to the full impact of price increases upon the construction programme, the matter of a request for additional funds should be deferred until the sixth session of the General Assembly, at which time definitive figures would be available to present to the Assembly.

16. A new budget is being prepared giving effect to the estimated increased cost and will be submitted later to the General Assembly at its sixth session, together with proposed plans for financing.

17. Under the procedure specified in the Loan Agreement with the Government of the United States of America, seventeen requests for funds have been issued through 31 August 1951. The total of these requests amounts to \$53,568,825.03 withdrawn against the loan fund of \$65,000,000 provided for the construction of the permanent Headquarters.

18. A re-payment of \$1,000,000 to the United States Government was made on 1 July 1951 from regular United Nations appropriated funds, pursuant to the terms of the Agreement. The next instalment of \$1,000,000 will become due on 1 July 1952.

#### V. ART AND DECORATION

19. As reported at the fifth session of the General Assembly, thought has been given to the subject of art and decoration in the Headquarters buildings, and a Board of Art Advisers, appointed in 1950 for the purpose of assisting the Secretary-General in policy decisions and in the consideration of various offers

/of art

of art objects, has continued to function. There are a number of spaces in the Secretariat Building, the Conference Building and the General Assembly Building which have been planned to receive decorative treatment, such as mural paintings and sculpture, as an integral part of the architectural design.

20. Throughout the past year, the most significant developments have been the selection and procurement of interior decorations and furnishings for the Secretariat Building and the Conference Building. In this connexion, the decoration of the three Council Chambers through gifts from Denmark, Norway and Sweden has progressed and will be nearly completed by the end of 1951. Special floor coverings, wall coverings, railings, doors, ceiling designs and some art objects have been installed.

21. In general, however, the selection of large works of art for the embellishment of special spaces now being completed has been postponed until the construction has reached its final stages. Interior finishes have been determined in most cases by the architectural requirements of the rooms and corridors. Although many artists, sculptors and their representatives have applied for opportunities to participate in the final decoration, no art works have been purchased and no commissions have been given except those by Member States in connexion with gifts.

22. It may be mentioned here that much of the interior furnishings and furniture has been procured outside the United States of America as a result of the world-wide purchasing programme. Sixteen countries are represented in furniture and textiles. All the floor covering in the Conference Building, a total of 14,170 linear yards (12,957 metres), was procured from France and the United Kingdom. Fabric for curtains and draperies, totaling 5,762 yards (5,269 metres), came from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

## VI. GIFTS

23. Throughout the year increasing interest has been shown by the governments of Member States and other agencies in making donations and appropriate gifts to the United Nations for use in the Headquarters. In addition to the gifts of Denmark, Norway and Sweden for the decoration of the three Council Chambers, the United Kingdom has undertaken the interior design and furnishing of a committee

/room, to be

room, to be known as Committee Room Seven, located in a central place in the General Assembly Building.

24. Offers of most suitable gifts, in the form of woods native to the respective lands, have been accepted from the Philippines for the walls of the General Assembly auditorium, from New Zealand for the Assembly lobby, from the Union of South Africa for the elevated podium and rostrum of the Assembly auditorium, and from Australia for the executive offices in the Assembly Building. Canada is giving decorative metal doors for the main north entrance to the General Assembly Building. Greece is providing statuary to be placed in the landscaped area, and many other countries are considering gifts which will probably include different types of art objects, floor coverings, wall coverings and furniture.

25. The Secretary-General is gratified to be able to report the growing interest among delegations in participating in the final decorative treatment of the Headquarters. Representatives of the various Members have co-operated very closely with the Headquarters Planning Office in an effort to make donations of a character which will harmonize with the architecture of the buildings. This co-operation is much appreciated, and it is believed that the result will be an achievement in which all participating can take satisfaction.

26. One of the most interesting and valuable donations is the \$50,000 fountain which the schoolchildren of the United States of America are providing for the circle in the Secretariat Building courtyard. The money was collected in small denominations in the schools of the various states and territories, under the sponsorship of the American Association for the United Nations. It is planned to complete this project in time to hold a dedication ceremony in June 1952.

27. In the report presented at the fifth session, mention was made of a possible donation by the City of New York of a monumental gateway and fence around the site. While there has been no definite offer on the part of the City, City officials have indicated that it is their intention now to make a gift of 80 per cent of the cost of such a protective fence; the United Nations under this arrangement would pay for 20 per cent of the cost.

#### VII. DELEGATIONS BUILDING

28. Paragraph 3 of resolution 461 (V) adopted by the General Assembly on 12 December 1950 requested the Secretary-General "to submit tentative plans

/and methods

and methods of financing the construction of a delegation building".

29. In carrying out this request of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General asked the Headquarters Advisory Committee for assistance, and a Sub-Committee composed of representatives of Australia, Colombia, Greece, Poland and Syria studied the problems involved in planning and constructing a delegations building. The report of the Sub-Committee is annexed to the present report.

30. The Sub-Committee concluded that many delegations were at present undecided about their future preference for office space. Interest and enthusiasm in a delegations building project are not great at the present time, and under the circumstances, the Sub-Committee recommended that no elaborate and detailed architectural planning should be undertaken, but that the Secretary-General should postpone further planning for the time being.

31. After careful consideration, the Secretary-General has decided to accept this recommendation, but he still believes that the value of the Headquarters will be greatly enhanced and the efficiency of the Organization increased when facilities can be provided on the site for most if not all the delegations.

#### VIII. HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

32. Many phases of the problems connected with the Headquarters project have been discussed throughout the year with the members of the Headquarters Advisory Committee. The Committee has held three formal meetings; the Sub-Committee on Delegations Building also held three formal meetings. The Secretary-General wishes to express his sincere thanks for the steadfast assistance and constant advice given to him by the Committee at both the formal meetings and on other occasions. It is his hope that the Committee will be continued in the future.

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

33. The Secretary-General has the honour to submit for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixth session the following draft resolution:

##### 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. Decides that the Headquarters Advisory Committee, established by

/General Assembly



General Assembly resolution 182 (II) on 20 November 1947,  
shall be continued with the existing membership;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly  
at its seventh session on the progress of construction of the Headquarters.

ANNEX

REPORT TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON DELEGATIONS  
BUILDING OF THE HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

17 September 1951

1. At the tenth meeting of the Headquarters Advisory Committee held on Thursday, 5 April 1951, you requested that a Sub-Committee be established to assist you in making a special study on the possibility of the construction of a delegations building. This study was to be used in connexion with the preparation of your report on headquarters to the sixth session of the General Assembly. Australia, Colombia, Greece, Poland and Syria were named members of the Sub-Committee.
2. Paragraph 3 of resolution 461 (V) adopted by the General Assembly on 12 December 1950 "requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixth session on the progress of construction of the Headquarters and to submit tentative plans and methods of financing the construction of a delegation building".
3. The Sub-Committee held three meetings; the first was held on 9 May 1951; the second, 13 June 1951; and the third, 5 September 1951. The representative of Greece was elected Chairman at the first meeting. The representatives of Cuba, the United Kingdom and the United States of America participated in some of the Sub-Committee's discussions. The representative of Cuba had brought up the subject of a delegations building in the fifth session of the General Assembly.
4. Earlier in the year, in January, the Secretariat had made an effort to ascertain the wishes of the delegations relative to moving into an office building either on the site or adjacent to the site. This study was carried forward by the Sub-Committee and an attempt was made to determine what office space requirements existed among the delegations from which plans might be made for a building.
5. After sending two questionnaires and after several informal conversations with various delegations, only forty-five out of the sixty delegations have replied. Of this number, thirty-one expressed some interest in office space. The total of all stated requirements amounts to only 137,328 square feet (12,758 square metres) of space. More than one-half of this appears to be very uncertain and very little could be considered definite. This is considered quite small as

/compared

compared to an earlier study made in 1948, when a building with about 450,000 square feet (41,805 square metres) of space was envisaged to house delegations and one or more of the specialized agencies which at that time had not made final decisions regarding permanent locations.

6. The Sub-Committee, realizing that the requirements of the delegations were smaller than had been expected, investigated the legal possibilities of accommodating such functionaries as consulates, government information offices and other non-United Nations agencies of Member countries. Legal opinion was obtained from the General Counsel and Principal Director of the Legal Department of the Secretariat to the effect that any accommodation for governmental activities not connected with the United Nations would involve the United Nations in situations inconsonant with its rights and obligations under the Headquarters Agreement.

7. Assuming that there could be established definite requirements for office space for delegations, the Sub-Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare cost estimates and other data on a construction project. A small building housing 153,300 net square feet (14,242 square metres) of offices could be built, and according to present estimates its cost would be \$6,938,665. This would be a fifteen-story building, 175 ft. x 73 ft. (53.34 m. x 22.25 m.), and would have no garage and no special landscaping. A possible plan would be the following:

Building - 175 ft. x 73 ft. (53.34 m. x 22.25 m.)

(3 basements, a lobby, a pipe gallery  
and 15 floors of office space)

Gross square feet: 12,775 per floor (1,186.79 sq. m.)

Net square feet: 10,220 per floor ( 949.43 sq. m.)  
(80 per cent of gross)

153,300 for total building (14,242 sq. m.)

Gross cubic feet: 3,117,100 for total building (88,261.66 cu. m.)

3 basements	12,775 x 3 x 12'	=	459,900 cubic feet	(13,022.21 cu. m.)
1 lobby	12,775 x 1 x 15'	=	191,625 "	" { 5,425.92 " }
1 pipe gallery	12,775 x 1 x 13'	=	166,075 "	" { 4,702.47 " }
15 floors	12,775 x 15 x 12'	=	2,299,500 "	" { 65,111.06 " }

3,117,100 cubic feet (88,261.66 cu. m.)

/Cost estimates

Cost estimates

Building - 3,117,100 cubic feet at \$2.00 per cu. ft.	\$6,234,200.00
Architectural, engineering, administrative, supervision:	374,052.00
Contingency	330,413.00
	<u>\$6,938,665.00</u>

Financial plan

Estimated annual expenses:

1. Financing - interest at 3 per cent and amortization charges over a 30-year period on a loan of \$6,938,665.00	\$354,005.55
2. Operating costs - maintenance of 153,300 sq. ft. of office space at \$1.25 per sq. ft.	191,625.00
	<u>\$545,630.55</u>

Estimated annual income:

1. Rental receipts on 145,635 sq. ft. (13,529.45 sq. m.) (153,300 sq. ft. less 5 per cent allowance for vacancies) of office space at \$3.75 per square foot	<u>\$545,630.55</u>
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It should be noted that the rate of \$3.75 per square foot is less than current rentals for modern, air-conditioned space in mid-Manhattan at the present time.

Conclusion

8. At present many delegations appear to be undecided as regards their preference for future office space on the Headquarters site in a delegations building. Thirty-one delegations, without implying any commitments at all, have stated requirements of 140,000 sq. ft. (13,006 sq. metres). This is about one-third of the amount of space envisaged in the original scheme for a building for delegations and shown on all site plans and models of the Headquarters area. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that interest and enthusiasm in a delegations building project now is not great.
9. No feasible financial plan has been advanced except a loan from one or more governments. In view of the lack of enthusiasm and interest, it is not considered necessary to go further on financial planning. Private financing apparently is not feasible, due to restrictions against mortgaging or pledging the land and building as security for a loan.

10. Under these conditions, any architectural planning involving an expenditure of any sizable amount of funds for tentative plans has not been justified.
11. The Sub-Committee recommends that the Secretary-General, therefore, postpone further planning for a delegations building for the time being.

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