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UNITED NATIONS ACCOMMODATION AT NAIROBI

Progress report of the Executive Director

1. The Governing Council will recall that it is the intention of the Executive Director to report for its information on the status of the construction project to provide permanent headquarters facilities for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), as well as accommodation for the specialized agencies and other United Nations offices at Nairobi.
2. As a result of the acceptance by the Fifth Committee of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/32/8/Add.10) and the adoption of resolution 32/208, the total cost of the project (\$24,233,500) will be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations, on the understanding that rent would be charged for space to be occupied by the staff paid from extra-budgetary resources, as well as by staff of the specialized agencies and other organizations in the United Nations system.
3. Rent will therefore be charged to the programme and programme support costs budget, at less than commercial rates, for office space occupied by UNEP staff paid from the Environment Fund. However, since it is not expected that the buildings will be completed and occupied before 1982, no rental provision will be required under the programme and programme support costs budget until the biennium 1982-1983.
4. By then, the loan for construction of the existing temporary buildings will have been cleared, and this will offset to some degree the total accommodation charges for which the programme and programme support costs budget will be liable in any one biennium.

5. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the construction of United Nations accommodation at Nairobi (A/C.5/33/15), in which the Secretary-General reported that the project was proceeding according to the schedule proposed last year: the preparation of architectural and engineering drawings for the project was under way, construction was expected to commence during 1979, and the buildings were expected to be occupied in 1982.
6. The Secretary-General stated in his report that Habitat should also be accommodated at the permanent headquarters site, as soon as possible, to minimize the additional costs of operating at two separate locations, and to facilitate the close links between UNEP and Habitat. The Secretary-General also stated that he would be submitting to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session estimates of the precise amount of additional space that would be required by Habitat, and he would therefore defer until 1979 the submission of a full report on the construction of additional space for Habitat. The overall concept is sufficiently flexible to incorporate the requirements of Habitat when the decision of the General Assembly becomes known.
7. It is intended that the design of the buildings and the development of the 40-hectare site, which has been generously donated by the Government of Kenya, will exemplify the environmental concerns of the United Nations in general and UNEP in particular. However, the incorporation of such aspects of design will result from careful analysis of cost, benefits and maintenance requirements. The building design will emphasize the use of local materials, natural sources of light and, where possible, solar energy, and mechanical equipment will be kept to the minimum.
8. Primary responsibility for the supervision of the construction project rests with the Executive Director of UNEP. A small Headquarters Planning Unit reporting to the Chief, Division of Administration (UNEP), has been established, the cost of which is provided for in the regular budget.
9. The design has been developed by a firm of private architects and engineers in close co-operation with UNEP and the Office of General Services at United Nations Headquarters, which provides technical advice, undertakes periodic progress inspections and reviews all major decisions prior to their adoption.

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