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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1976-1977
AND MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1976-1979

ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY CO-ORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC
ENERGY AGENCY

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the utilization of office
accommodation in the United Nations system

Comments by the Secretary-General

1. The Inspectors note that the above report is largely a summary of their studies on the utilization of office accommodation in Geneva which have earlier been sent to the Secretary-General and the heads of the respective agencies. It is for the heads of the agencies to evaluate and comment to their governing bodies upon the reports dealing with their organizations. Accordingly, apart from the Secretary-General's comments on the situation in the United Nations Office at Geneva, this document includes only observations received from the other Geneva-based organizations which relate to matters in the report which concern all of the agencies.

I. UNITED NATIONS - GENEVA

2. The Secretary-General wishes to confirm the observations of the Inspectors concerning the continued difficulties which will be encountered by the United Nations in meeting office space requirements until additional facilities become available in 1977 in the old ILO building and when the United Nations takes over offices in the Villa Le Bocage and the adjacent prefabricated buildings now occupied by GATT. The acquisition of these facilities should provide space for some 550 to 575 persons which will permit adjustment of the current over-crowding as well as provide expansion space until about 1980.

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3. As regards the observations by the Inspectors concerning the importance of selecting an appropriate size for an office space module, the Secretary-General is pleased to note that the module (approximately 12 m²) which the United Nations has recommended in planning new construction since 1970 in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Santiago, Vienna and Nairobi was also used by the ILO in its new building in Geneva. The Secretary-General also notes that the Inspectors endorse the current planning standards of the United Nations regarding the importance of movable partitions. Having said this, the Secretary-General would have to draw attention to the fact that neither a satisfactory office module nor movable partitions will be available in the premises to be occupied by the United Nations in the former ILO Headquarters building in Geneva, and consequently optimum space utilization cannot be expected on those premises.

4. The Secretary-General welcomes the Inspectors' comments regarding space management, planning and co-ordination. He considers that regular consultation between the agencies either on a formal or informal basis should be carried out both with respect to current space management and the planning of future facilities. As regards the latter point, he fully agrees with the comments of the Inspectors regarding future expansion of international organizations in Geneva.

5. Finally, the United Nations has initiated a review of its policies with respect to the occupancy of space by the travel agency and the bank in Geneva and has also undertaken to obtain detailed information on this subject from the other agencies. Owing to the several different arrangements in effect in Geneva in the various organizations, it is desirable to develop a co-ordinated approach, even if this may require extended consultations. In the meantime, in New York, where the United Nations can act independently, the Secretary-General intends to institute changes in the arrangements with the bank and travel agency effective 1 January 1976. The revised agreements will be of an interim nature pending conclusion of a thorough analysis of the situation and the consideration of a co-ordinated policy among the international organizations.

II. SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

6. The following observations on the report have been communicated to the Secretary-General by the agencies in Geneva to which reference was made by the Inspectors:

A. International Labour Organisation

"The report is, perhaps, in some ways, over-severe in its judgement of the extent of co-ordination by the organizations in Geneva among themselves and with the local authorities. In so far as the ILO is concerned, there was extensive co-operation with other agencies on short-term requirements for accommodation, in particular with regard to the construction and use of the Petit-Sacconnex annex mentioned in paragraph 15 of the report, a

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substantial part of which was occupied for a time by the World Health Organization, prior to completion of its present main building. In planning its new building, the ILO also bore in mind the position in other organizations, taking into account both the availability of accommodation for the annual International Labour Conference at the Palais des Nations and the possibility of leasing temporarily vacant space in the new building to other organizations.

"The comments in paragraph 68 of the report do not perhaps take sufficiently into account the difficulties inherent in the attempt to reconcile all requirements in arranging accommodation. The disadvantages of the present location of the United Nations, WHO and ILO buildings mentioned by the Inspectors are, in a sense, the price of the advantages to the organizations of being close to each other and to local facilities. The difficulty with regard to the supply of electricity was temporary and has now been overcome."

B. International Telecommunication Union

"With reference to part III, section G, of the report, this office has as a part of its normal practice exchanged information with other agencies on building and space questions. There is already co-ordination of policies and practices. As regards conferences and meetings, the ITU major meetings are predetermined some years in advance, and the provisions for eventual change in individual dates are prescribed in the International Telecommunications Convention."

C. World Health Organization

"Factual information on WHO included in the report is substantially correct. We are in general agreement with views expressed by the Joint Inspection Unit and while we believe that the measure of past co-ordination among Geneva-based organizations with respect to office space matters is somewhat understated in report, we do not object to the recommendation to establish more formal interagency co-ordinative arrangements for this purpose."

D. World Intellectual Property Organization

~~"We have no comments to make on this report."~~

E. World Meteorological Organization

"... would raise no objection to the implementation of the recommendation that there be an interagency group in Geneva in order to co-ordinate office accommodation matters."