



# **Report on the utilization of office accommodation at the Headquarters of the World Meteorological Organization**

*Prepared by  
Albert F. Bender Jr. and C. E. King  
Joint Inspection Unit*

**Geneva  
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THE UTILIZATION OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION  
AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

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FOREWORD

The Inspectors wish to record their gratitude to the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), to the Chief of the Administration and External Relations Department and to other members of the WMO secretariat for the extensive assistance given in the course of the preparation of this report. The Inspectors particularly appreciated the fact that such co-operation was forthcoming at a time when the secretariat was heavily engaged in the preparations for the Seventh WMO Congress scheduled for April and May 1975.





## I. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF STUDY

1. At the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, its Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee discussed the item "construction, improvement and major maintenance of premises", and in that connexion considered, inter alia, a Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on Office Accommodation for United Nations staff in Geneva (JIU/REP/73/2 (A/9164)). The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the JIU be requested "to study the use of office accommodation within the United Nations system and to submit its recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session" [underlining inserted]. At its 2206th plenary meeting on 18 December 1973, the General Assembly approved this recommendation. It was understood that the requested study related only to office accommodation at the headquarters of the organizations in the United Nations system.
2. In January 1974, the JIU decided to include the study of the utilization of office accommodation in its programme of work for 1974/75 and Inspectors Bender and King agreed to undertake the study.
3. The Inspectors decided that rather than prepare one consolidated report concerning all the organizations, it would be preferable to prepare separate reports on each organization so that the organizations could receive individual reports concerning them at the earliest possible dates. This course would also make it unnecessary to burden each organization with reports relating specifically to other organizations.
4. It should be noted that the General Assembly's request to the JIU called not only for a study of the general question of the utilization of office accommodation but also for a study of the particular question of the provision of such accommodation for extra-budgetary staff. In its report on the utilization of office accommodation at United Nations Headquarters (JIU/REP/74/6 (A/9854)), the Inspectors included a special chapter (chapter IV) concerning the provision of office accommodation for extra-budgetary staff at that headquarters. They have now decided, for several reasons, to discontinue this practice in subsequent reports. Instead, in reports such as the present, they will deal only with the general question of the utilization of office accommodation at the headquarters of various specialized

agencies. They will deal with the special problem of the provision of office accommodation for extra-budgetary staff in a single separate report relating to the entire United Nations system.

## II. PRIOR HISTORY OF THE OFFICE ACCOMMODATION PROBLEM AT THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

5. The First WMO Congress in 1951 decided to accept the invitation of the Canton of Geneva to locate its headquarters there. However, no decision was taken at that time concerning a permanent headquarters building and, commencing in 1951, the secretariat of the Organization occupied 28 offices in a temporary building (Campagne Rigot) on the Place des Nations.
6. Up until 1956, WMO explored the possibility of sharing common premises with the Geneva Office of the United Nations and/or the International Telecommunication Union. However, in 1956, it decided that it should be housed in a separate building near the Place des Nations. The Canton of Geneva undertook to construct the building which was completed and occupied in June 1960.
7. The building was constructed on land belonging to the Canton of Geneva and, at that time, it also belonged to the Canton.<sup>1/</sup> WMO was given the right of occupancy for an indefinite period with a right to purchase. During the period of occupancy, WMO paid rent which could be applied against the purchase price.
8. By 1963, the need for additional accommodation became apparent and during the fourth financial period (1964/1967), it became necessary to lease 14 offices in a nearby building. Since it was evident that a longer-term solution was required, in 1965 negotiations were conducted with the Canton of Geneva concerning the construction of a permanent extension to the building. Shortly thereafter, the Swiss authorities established the Fondation des immeubles pour les organisations internationales (FIPOI) with the objective of providing financial assistance to international organizations which had the need to construct office buildings in Geneva. Accordingly, the proposal that the extension to the building should be constructed by the Canton of Geneva was abandoned in favour of a plan for WMO to arrange for the construction of the extension, with financial assistance being furnished by the FIPOI.

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<sup>1/</sup> WMO purchased the building in 1970 (see paragraph 10).

9. In the spring of 1967, the Fifth WMO Congress decided to build an extension to the headquarters building (see paragraphs 12-14 for a description) sufficient to house 150 staff. To help finance the construction, the FIPOI granted to WMO a loan of Sw F 6,500,000 (\$1,500,000 at the then rate of exchange), repayable over a period of 30 years with interest at the rate of 3 per cent per annum. The construction of the extension was commenced in February 1969 and completed in June 1970. The building was occupied in July 1970.

10. Since the extension to the headquarters building would be paid for by, and would belong to WMO, whereas the original building belonged to the Canton of Geneva, the loan by the FIPOI was made on condition that WMO would purchase the original building. The Fifth WMO Congress agreed to make the purchase which was completed in 1970. The net purchase price was Sw F 2,360,189 (\$546,340 at the then rate of exchange), to be paid over a period of 30 years with interest at the rate of 3 1/4 per cent per annum.

### III. THE PRESENT SITUATION

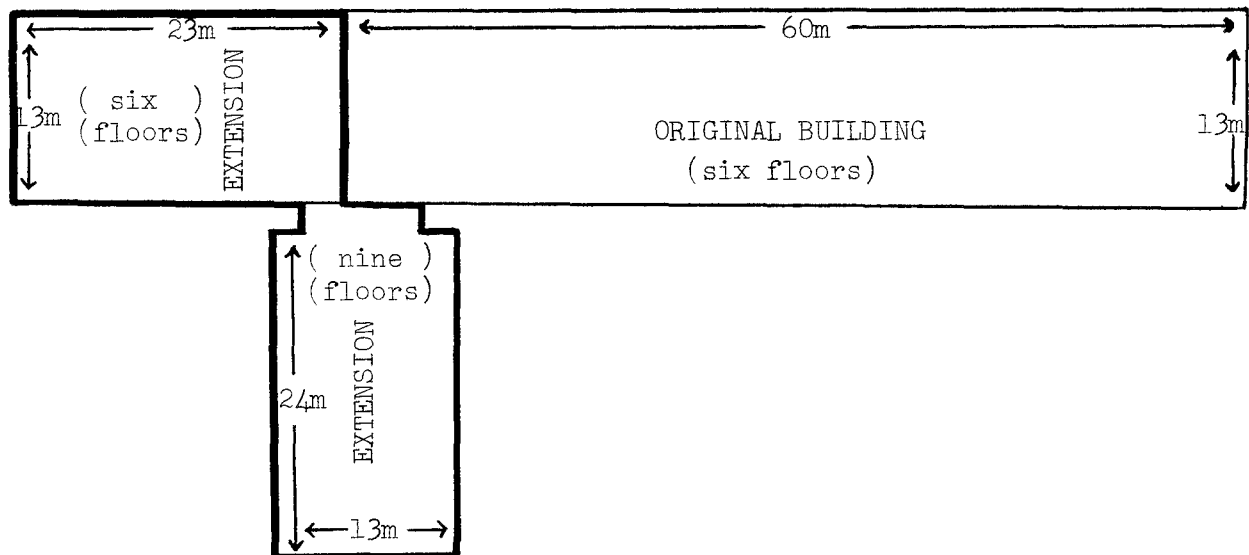
#### A. The headquarters building

##### (1) Capacity

11. WMO headquarters is accommodated in one building which is owned by the Organization but is located on land belonging to the Canton of Geneva.

12. As indicated earlier, the headquarters building was constructed in two phases. The original building, commenced in 1958 and completed in 1960, consisted of six floors (including the ground floor) with one underground basement level occupying a rectangular area 60 metres in length x 13 metres in width ( $780 \text{ m}^2$ ). Ten years after the construction of the original building, an extension was added. A part of the extension consists of a 23 metres long x 13 metres wide ( $299 \text{ m}^2$ ) prolongation of the original structure, i.e. six floors (including the ground floor) but with two underground basement levels. The remainder of the extension consists of a perpendicular wing having nine floors (including the ground floor) with a partially covered roof area and two underground basement levels covering an area of 24 metres long x 13 metres wide ( $312 \text{ m}^2$ ).

13. The ground plan of the building is as follows:



14. The new construction, completed in 1970, also includes two levels of subterranean garages under the rectangular area formed by the angle between the original structure and the extension, each garage having an area of 894.3 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2/</sup>

15. The net usable office space in the building totals 3,283.80 m<sup>2</sup> and is distributed as indicated in Table 1:

Table 1

TOTAL USABLE OFFICE SPACE  
IN THE WMO HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

Floor	m <sup>2</sup>
8th	121.50
7th	160.30
6th	160.30
5th	631.15
4th	191.15
3rd	804.45
2nd	726.25
1st	477.90
Ground	10.80
Total	3,283.80

16. It will be noted that floors 2 and 3 contain the largest amounts of office space. Floor 1 contains a reduced amount of office space because it houses the cafeteria and the staff lounge. Floor 4 contains little office space because five conference rooms and related facilities are located there. Floor 5 contains less office space than floors 2 and 3 because a part of it is taken up by the air-space

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<sup>2/</sup> These garages provide space for 84 cars and a fee of Sw F 30.00 per month is charged for parking there. In addition, there are 11 unassigned spaces outside on WMO grounds for which no fee is charged, and there are five outside parking spaces reserved for visitors.

above conference room No. I which is located on the fourth floor. Floors 6, 7 and 8 contain limited amounts of office space since they exist only in the wing of the extension of the building which was completed in 1970. Floor 9, which also exists only in the new wing, consists primarily of a terrace, although it also houses a small kitchen and machinery for elevators and air conditioning; it contains no office space.

17. It is generally accepted in the United Nations system that, as a maximum, an average of about  $11.5 \text{ m}^2$  of net office space is required per occupant of modern office buildings. Applying this principle to the WMO building, one would expect that the capacity of the building would be  $(3,283.80 \div 11.5)$  at least 285 persons. Actually, the building was considered by the administration to be "virtually occupied to maximum capacity" when it housed 285 occupants. In its reply of 17 January 1975 to the Inspectors' questionnaire, WMO stated, in part, that "existing facilities are almost completely utilized with only a token reserve of unoccupied space .... The only measure which can be taken is to increase the application of multiple occupancy since there is no possibility of repartitioning nor does any interior space exist. Space presently used for storage is not adaptable to conversion to office space. It is estimated that an additional 20 staff members could be accommodated by stringent application of multiple occupancy standards but at some cost to the effective performance of duties."

18. However, the Inspectors note that in paragraph 19 of document Cg-VII/Doc.49 of 29 January 1975, it is stated that "The present headquarters building can accommodate a maximum of 305 secretariat personnel but only by the introduction of rather stringent standards for the allocation of office space.". Occupancy of the building by 305 persons would reduce the average space allocation per occupant to just under  $10.8 \text{ m}^2$ . This is the present average per capita space allocation in the main World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters building in Geneva which is considered to be somewhat overcrowded. This per capita allocation would compare with  $9.7 \text{ m}^2$  per occupant in 1974 at the United Nations Headquarters building in New York where the overcrowding was considered to be serious.<sup>3/</sup> However, in connexion with these

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<sup>3/</sup> It is not possible to calculate readily the average per capita space allocation in the new International Labour Office (ILO) building since the building is not fully occupied and certain amounts of reserve space have been included in allocations made to departments. It would be possible to make such a calculation by applying ILO occupancy standards to its present manning table but no such calculation exists at this time.

comparisons, it would appear that because of the difference in the grading patterns of the organizations and the fact that today WMO has a much smaller percentage than the other organizations of senior staff (P-5 and above) requiring substantial space allocations, the average per capita space allocation in WMO should be less than in the other organizations. This might also be true during the next financial period (1976/79) since, even with the increase in senior staff proposed by the Secretary-General, "the percentage of the Professional staff in grades P-5 and above, would be considerably below the average of other organizations in the United Nations system" (Cg-VII/Doc.3, paragraph 89 of the Introduction). However, functional requirements might affect the situation.

19. For these reasons and others mentioned below, the Inspectors believe that a considerable reduction in occupancy standards in the WMO building is justified. They consider that the capacity of the building, assuming the application of new and more stringent occupancy standards, is at least 305 persons, as suggested by the Secretary-General, and may be somewhat greater. The actual capacity will depend upon (a) the degree of success of the efforts of the secretariat to modify occupancy standards while giving due weight to functional requirements, and (b) the possibility of converting 70 office space areas now used for other purposes.

(2) Occupancy

20. The occupants of the headquarters building as of 1 January 1975 were as listed in Table 2:

Table 2

OCCUPANCY OF THE WMO HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AS OF 1 JANUARY 1975

Secretariat (having contracts for at least one year) <u>a/</u>		Consultants and temporary staff	Concessionnaire <u>b/</u>	Total
<u>Professional</u>	<u>General Service</u>			
109	154	8	2	273

a/ 206 secretariat staff members were financed from the regular budget and 57 were financed from extra-budgetary funds.

b/ American Express Company. It has two employees occupying 19.1 m<sup>2</sup> on the 1st floor and it pays a rental of Sw F 220 per month by contractual agreement.



(3) Occupancy standards

21. WMO has, in general, three types of offices, characterized as "small", "medium" and "large":

- (a) small - 12.532 m<sup>2</sup> (two windows)
- (b) medium - 19.039 m<sup>2</sup> (three windows)
- (c) large - 25.546 m<sup>2</sup> (four windows)

22. In its response of 17 January 1975 to the Inspectors' questionnaire, WMO stated that:

"No formal standards of occupancy are established for the staff according to their grades. Office space is allocated on the basis of individual requirements taking all factors such as the need for departmental or division cohesion into consideration. Until the present time, it has been the practice to provide Professional categories with office accommodations on a single-occupancy basis. Wherever possible, officers at the Director or head of department levels have been allocated 25.5 square metres of office space, Chiefs of Divisions or Branches and Scientific Officers at the P-5 and P-4 levels have been allocated 19 square metres of office space and junior Professional staff at P-3, P-2 and P-1 levels have been accommodated in 12.5 square metre offices. Clerical staff, depending upon the requirements of their job, may occasionally be accommodated in single-occupancy offices of 12.5 square metres but more usually are allocated multiple-occupancy accommodations with an average working space of about 8 square metres per person."

23. The "informal" occupancy standards of WMO - it is stated that they are departed from in some cases depending upon the functional requirements, but that they are followed in most cases - are set forth in Table 3. Occupancy standards used in the new ILO building are also included in that Table for comparison purposes since (a) that building is the most recently constructed of the international organization office buildings in Geneva and (b) it can be presumed that ILO office accommodation standards are at least adequate for the staff of international organizations.

24. The comparison with ILO makes it clear that space allocation to WMO staff is higher for all staff at the P-1 to P-4 levels, for some staff at the P-5 level and for some General Service staff. In this connexion, it was stated in a memorandum of 22 February 1973 addressed to the Inspectors by the then Chief of the Administration and External Relations Department of WMO that, "No attempt has been

Table 3

## OCCUPANCY STANDARDS IN THE WMO AND ILO HEADQUARTERS BUILDINGS

Grade level	WMO space allocations	ILO space allocations
<u>Professional</u>		
Secretary (Director)-General	54.5 m <sup>2</sup> (nine windows)	30 m <sup>2</sup> (five windows) as a working office. Also 72 m <sup>2</sup> (representational office) <u>a/</u>
Deputy Secretary (Director)-General and Assistant Directors-General in ILO	38.5 m <sup>2</sup> (six windows)	36 m <sup>2</sup> (six windows)
D-2	- <u>b/</u>	30 m <sup>2</sup>
D-1	25.5 m <sup>2</sup> (four windows)	24 m <sup>2</sup> (four windows)
P-5	25.5 m <sup>2</sup> (four windows) when chief of department. Otherwise, 19 m <sup>2</sup> (three windows)	18 m <sup>2</sup> (three windows)
P-4	19 m <sup>2</sup> (three windows)	12 m <sup>2</sup> (two windows)
P-3	12.5 m <sup>2</sup> (two windows) <u>c/</u>	9 m <sup>2</sup> (share three-window offices) <u>d/</u>
P-2	12.5 m <sup>2</sup> (two windows) <u>c/</u>	9 m <sup>2</sup> (share three-window offices) <u>d/</u>
P-1	12.5 m <sup>2</sup> (two windows)	9 m <sup>2</sup> (share three-window offices) <u>d/</u>
<u>General Service</u>		
	13.8 m <sup>2</sup> (single offices) <u>e/</u>	
	8.75 m <sup>2</sup> (share two-, three- and four-window offices) <u>f/</u> )	9 m <sup>2</sup> (share three-window offices) <u>g/</u>

a/ Used for receiving distinguished visitors, holding small receptions etc.

b/ WMO had no D-2 staff as of 1 January 1975.

c/ In WMO, 3 P-3s and 3 P-2s have single occupancy of 19 m<sup>2</sup> offices.

d/ In ILO, some P-3s and P-2s have single occupancy of 12 m<sup>2</sup> offices on the basis of functions.

e/ This is an average allocation for 9 GS staff having single occupancy of 19 m<sup>2</sup> offices and 37 GS staff having single occupancy of 12.5 m<sup>2</sup> offices.

f/ This is an average allocation relating only to the 77 GS staff sharing offices; 50 of these have allocations of 9.5 m<sup>2</sup>.

g/ In special circumstances, GS staff occasionally have single occupancy of 12 m<sup>2</sup> and 18 m<sup>2</sup> offices. It was originally planned that for typing pools, three typists would share 18 m<sup>2</sup> offices. However, as ILO has excess space at present, only two typists share 18 m<sup>2</sup> offices.

made to relate these criteria for the allocation of office space to those used by other Agencies in Geneva. It is realized that in later years as staff increases, it will be necessary to reduce the standards used."

25. Although the total usable office space in the WMO building, and present occupancy standards, suggest that it should be possible to reduce those standards considerably, it must be recognized that there are certain built-in limitations on such reduction because of the manner in which the building is constructed. WMO states that "There is little if any possibility of adapting present office space by the use of movable partitions. Only 18 large modules ( $25.5 \text{ m}^2$ ) are susceptible to such an approach, it being possible to divide these into two smaller modules of  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$  either by movable or permanent partitions."

26. However, the possibilities of reducing occupancy standards in the WMO building are not quite as limited as indicated in the quotation in paragraph 25. It is true that the layout of the WMO building makes it impossible to create offices of a reasonable size less than  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$ . At the same time, there are opportunities for converting single occupancy of certain offices to double occupancy, for example, by doubling-up junior Professionals (P-1s to P-3s) in  $19 \text{ m}^2$  offices now having single occupancy. Unlike the situation in WMO where, "Until the present time, it has been the practice to provide Professional categories with office accommodations on a single occupancy basis", the practice of doubling-up junior Professionals is followed in ILO, WHO and in the new office building of the Geneva Office of the United Nations. As mentioned in paragraph 17, WMO itself has alluded to the possibility of increasing the application of multiple occupancy.

27. Although all of the  $19 \text{ m}^2$  offices are presently occupied, primarily by P-5s and P-4s, it should be possible to make at least some of these available for the purpose of doubling-up junior Professionals, by placing certain P-4s, and perhaps even some P-5s, in the  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$  offices which would be vacated by those junior Professionals. In this connexion, WMO has advised the Inspectors that it has attempted "to identify a number of 3-window offices presently occupied on a single-occupancy basis which could be converted to dual or triple occupancy by accommodating the present occupant in a 2-window office".

28. It is true that in their report on the utilization of office accommodation at WHO headquarters, the Inspectors expressed the view that WHO was allocating too limited space to P-4s (and some P-5s) who had supervisory functions or who were required frequently to invite two or three other persons to their offices at the same time. However, in that case, the offices which the Inspectors considered to be inadequate for P-4s (and some P-5s) contained only  $9.6 \text{ m}^2$  and were roughly 5 metres long x 2 metres wide. In the case of WMO, the Inspectors consider that offices of  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$ , having dimensions of 4.82 metres in length and 2.6 metres in width, should be adequate for a number of P-4s and perhaps some P-5s.

29. The following are examples of what might be accomplished by applying reasonably reduced space standards:

(a) Of 41 offices of  $19 \text{ m}^2$  now occupied by Professional staff below the chief of department level, 24 might be vacated and the staff now occupying them moved to  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$  offices - single occupancy.

(b) The 24 junior Professionals now occupying the 24 offices of  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$  required for (a) above, would move to 12 of the vacated  $19 \text{ m}^2$  offices mentioned in (a) - double occupancy.

(c) The remaining 12 offices of  $19 \text{ m}^2$  vacated under (a) above, would be used for 24 of the 37 General Service staff now accommodated alone in  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$  offices - double occupancy.

(d) The effect of the above would be to release 24 offices of  $12.5 \text{ m}^2$  for occupancy by other staff.

(e) It may also be possible, consistent with ILO standards and the functional responsibilities of the WMO officers involved, to move P-5s from  $25.5 \text{ m}^2$  offices to  $19 \text{ m}^2$  offices vacated by staff at the P-4 level and below. Each of these  $25.5 \text{ m}^2$  offices which was vacated might be used, with or without partitions, to house two P-4 officers or to house three or even four clerical personnel.

(f) Apart from creating additional capacity in the WMO headquarters building by moving Professional staff as suggested above, there is the possibility of doubling-up clerical staff now occupying  $19 \text{ m}^2$  offices

on a single-occupancy basis, and there are 13 offices which are so occupied. Indeed, it may be possible to have treble occupancy in some of these offices and it is noted that two instances of treble occupancy of 19 m<sup>2</sup> offices already exist. With respect to treble occupancy, the Inspectors note that the administration is attempting "to identify a number of three-window offices presently accommodating two clerical staff which could, with some crowding, accommodate an additional clerical staff member, as is done in some cases". The Inspectors also note that there are instances in which there is treble occupancy of 25.5 m<sup>2</sup> offices by clerical staff and it may be that an additional occupant could be added in these cases.<sup>4/</sup>

30. The above are only examples of what might be done by reducing space standards. It is possible that this type of relocation could be carried further. It should be noted in connexion with all of the suggestions which have been made that the offices involved are exterior offices with large windows providing natural light.

31. The decision on how much and in what way to modify space standards should be made by WMO after considering not only the standards of other organizations but also the possible adverse effects on the work of the secretariat caused by such a modification. But in making this decision, WMO should also carefully consider the possibility that even more adverse effects could result from the only alternative solution, namely, renting outside space. Rental of outside space is expensive.

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<sup>4/</sup> It should be noted that at United Nations Headquarters in New York, secretaries assigned to officers of the grades P-1 to P-4 normally are allocated only 6.3 m<sup>2</sup> of space; and that normally in open areas, secretaries and clerks have a space allocation of only 7.9 m<sup>2</sup>; typists, other than those in pools, have an allocation of 5.6 m<sup>2</sup> and typists in pools have an allocation of 3.9 m<sup>2</sup>. At WHO headquarters in Geneva, it is normal to house three General Service staff in an office of 19.2 m<sup>2</sup> and at times there are situations, which the Inspectors have criticized, when as many as six typists are housed in a 19.2 m<sup>2</sup> office. As indicated in footnote g/ to Table 3, ILO originally planned that for typing pools in its new building in Geneva, three typists would share 18 m<sup>2</sup> offices. Although this practice is not followed at present (only two typists share 18 m<sup>2</sup> offices) since ILO now has excess office space, it can be anticipated that present space allocations to typists will be modified if and when ILO no longer has excess office space.

Also, it could reduce the efficiency of the secretariat by introducing problems of communication and might adversely affect the morale of the units which have to move away from the main building.

32. On this entire matter of increasing the capacity of the building by reducing occupancy standards, the administration has made the following observations which the Inspectors consider to be valid:

"The maximum number of additional staff which could be accommodated in the offices of the WMO building is, of course, theoretically much larger than the estimate given that an additional 20 staff members could be accommodated if it is prescribed that every 3-window and 4-window office should accommodate a minimum of 2 professional grade staff or 3 to 4 clerical grade staff members. However, the practical limits of the extent to which these measures can be implemented are dependent largely on the question of the extent to which it is desirable to compromise requirements for departmental, division and branch cohesiveness and must also take into consideration the bona fide requirements of some staff members for adequate working space. A too-rigid application of these standards eventually becomes counter-productive in terms of the reduced efficiency of the staff, either from physical separation from their assigned unit or from over-crowded office accommodations."

33. Finally, it should be noted that the problem of housing additional staff in the WMO headquarters building will become more difficult and complicated if the Seventh WMO Congress approves the Secretary-General's request for two D-2 posts and for an increase in the number of D-1 and P-5 posts, since the occupants of these posts will require the allocation of a considerable amount of office space. On the other hand, the Inspectors understand that WMO is giving consideration to moving to the field certain staff, now located at headquarters, who deal with regional programmes. If this were done, the office accommodation problem at headquarters would be eased accordingly.

(4) The possibility of converting conference rooms to office space

34. The Inspectors inquired into the extent of the use of those conference rooms on the fourth floor of the headquarters building which did not appear to be absolutely essential for meetings of the Executive Committee or for large conferences. They found that the two smallest rooms, namely IV and V, appeared to be used only infrequently. Although both of these rooms are routinely "blocked" for possible

use during meeting periods of the Preparatory Committee of the Executive Committee and the Executive Committee itself, and for certain conferences such as the North Atlantic Ocean System (NAOS) Conference in 1974, the Inspectors were informed that there are no records of their use for meetings related to those bodies during such periods in 1974.<sup>5/</sup> The records which are available are said to indicate that room IV was used on only 14 days in 1974<sup>6/</sup> and that room V was used on only 20 days in that year.<sup>7/</sup> It is the impression of the Inspectors, after discussing the matter with WMO officials, that there have been no periods in which it was absolutely essential to use all five conference rooms simultaneously and that WMO could have managed at all times without conference rooms IV and V, although at some cost in terms of convenience.<sup>8/</sup> If this is true, then there is a case for concluding that the need of WMO to use these two rooms for office accommodation should be given priority over the convenience of having available two extra conference rooms which are used very infrequently.

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<sup>5/</sup> Except for the three-day meeting of the Executive Committee Panel on Environmental Pollution (12 participants including secretariat staff) held in room V, 20-22 May 1974, when the Preparatory Committee of the Executive Committee was meeting.

<sup>6/</sup> Four of these days were 25-28 February when the Working Group on the Study of the Need for Changes in the WMO Convention met in room IV. This was at the same time as the NAOS Conference was in session; however, it appears that it was not essential that the four-day meeting should be held at that time. The remaining ten days on which room IV was used were 10-19 December, when other rooms appear to have been available.

<sup>7/</sup> Of these 20 days, two were 11-12 February when there was a meeting of the Intersecretariat Committee on Scientific Programs related to Oceanography. This was at the same time as the NAOS Conference was in session; however, it appears that it was not essential that the two-day meeting should be held at that time. Room V was used for a further three days for the Executive Committee Panel mentioned in footnote <sup>5/</sup>. The remaining 15 days on which room V was used were 7-11 October, 18-22 November and 25-29 November. It appears that either there were other rooms available on those dates or that other rooms could have been made available by slight adjustments in the meeting programme.

<sup>8/</sup> It seems likely that any possible need for conference rooms IV and V would disappear completely if plenipotentiary conferences such as the NAOS Conference in 1974 could be scheduled in the Palais des Nations instead of in the WMO building.

35. Conference rooms IV and V each contain  $38.56 \text{ m}^2$  of usable floor space. They could be partitioned in several ways to create either three two-window offices, two three-window offices or one four-window office and one two-window office. However, the best use of such rooms might well be to retain them in their present condition and to use them as "open space" typing pools. WMO states that it has one typing pool, consisting of 17 typists and 9 proof readers and assistant proof readers. However, these members of the pool are housed in 16 different offices. It might well be possible to group at least six or seven of these persons in each of the two conference rooms in question. If this were done, it would liberate a minimum of six or seven offices, which are now occupied by members of the present typing pool, for occupancy by other staff, particularly Professional staff. It should be noted that the placing of six persons in each of these rooms would result in a per capita space allocation of about  $6.43 \text{ m}^2$  and that the placing of seven persons in a room would result in a per capita space allocation of about  $5.1 \text{ m}^2$ . These allocations would compare with "open space" allocations at United Nations Headquarters in New York of  $3.9 \text{ m}^2$  to typists in pools.

B. Space management and planning at WMO

36. The Inspectors have been advised by WMO that the Chief of the Administration and External Relations Department, which includes four branches and nine units, "is responsible for both the day-to-day management of office accommodation and the planning to meet future requirements", and that "There is no separate unit within the secretariat for dealing with office accommodation.". The Inspectors also understand that, on an ad hoc basis, a member of the External Relations Branch is asked to devote some time to this matter.

37. It appears possible to the Inspectors that the arrangements mentioned in the preceding paragraph, calling as they do for only the part-time attention of a senior officer having other important responsibilities, plus ad hoc assistance, may not be fully adequate for dealing with WMO's office accommodation problems. It is true that WMO is a relatively small organization and should not be overloaded with unnecessary administrative bureaucracy. However, office space has become a very expensive commodity, particularly in Geneva, and it must be managed as carefully as possible. This is particularly important when an organization is continuing to



expand and constant attention is required to make certain that existing office accommodation is used to the best possible advantage. Further, when an organization faces the possible need to rent outside, as WMO does, and the possibility of engaging in new construction in the not too distant future, as WMO does, it is important that there should be proper planning and a careful evaluation of alternative courses of action.<sup>9/</sup>

38. It has been possible for WMO to pay relatively little attention to space management in the last few years without running into difficulties because it has had sufficient space to be able to afford generous space allocations. However, WMO now faces the situation which was referred to two years ago by the then Chief of the Administration and External Relations Department when he stated to the Inspectors that "Future increases in the staff will result in reserve accommodation being used first, then progressively lowering the standards of accommodation to house more people within the same space. This had to be done in the old building before the extension was built and we know that it is a painful and most disagreeable experience."<sup>10/</sup>

39. Given the fact that WMO faces both (a) the "painful and most disagreeable experience" of reducing space allocations in the headquarters building and (b) the need to plan for and deal with the rental of outside space and the possible construction of a new building (or an extension of the present building) in the near

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<sup>9/</sup> WMO might consider consulting other Geneva-based organizations which have had to deal with similar problems in order to benefit from the experience of those organizations.

<sup>10/</sup> It should be noted that WMO's efforts to deal with the situation will provide a test of the wisdom of the policy it has followed thus far in managing its office space, i.e. the policy of giving staff "the maximum space available at all times". As pointed out in paragraph 36 of JIU/REP/73/2 (A/9164) concerning office accommodation in the Geneva Office of the United Nations, because of the difficulty of recovering space once it has been made available for use, the larger specialized agencies in Geneva, "do not make space designed for expansion available for use by the unit for which it is intended until it is actually needed in accordance with normal occupancy standards". Indeed, one major agency stated that "normally, this expansion space will be closed and allocated or used for other temporary assignments, until such time as it is required by the unit concerned". WMO, which has followed a contrary policy, will now have the burden of demonstrating that its policy was a realistic one.

future, it is suggested that the Secretary-General review present administrative arrangements for dealing with office accommodation problems to ensure that they are adequate. In saying this, the Inspectors do not wish to imply any doubts as to the ability or competence of those WMO officials now dealing with accommodation problems on a part-time or ad hoc basis. The Inspectors have been impressed with the detailed knowledge of the situation which these officials possess (as is evidenced by their replies to the Inspectors' questions) and with the action they propose to take to deal with the situation. The Inspectors wish merely to emphasize that the problems to be dealt with are difficult and that those who are responsible for solving them must have the necessary resources for doing so.

#### IV. FUTURE PROSPECTS

40. In January 1975, the Inspectors were informed by the WMO secretariat that "Staff proposals [of the Secretary-General] for the seventh financial period (1 January 1976-31 December 1979) will, if approved, increase the number of regular, extra-budgetary and other staff for whom accommodations must be provided [at headquarters] to a total of between 325 and 335 by 31 December 1979.". In document Cg-VII/Doc.49 of 29 January 1975, the Secretary-General indicated that, if his staff proposals were approved, the total staff would number 332 by 31 December 1979.<sup>11/</sup> The resulting occupancy level of 334<sup>12/</sup> would represent an increase of 61 above the occupancy level of WMO's headquarters building as of 1 January 1975.

41. The Inspectors have been advised by WMO that "There are, at present, no plans for the acquisition of additional premises.". However, in paragraph 91 of the Secretary-General's introduction to his programme and budget for 1976-1979 (Cg-VII/Doc.3), it is stated that "As the intention is to increase the staff gradually over the four-year period, it seems likely that for the first half of the next period the existing premises will suffice provided the present standards of accommodation are reduced. It is likely, however, that during the second half of the financial period 1976-79 the Secretariat will have to rent additional accommodation outside the building. It also appears probable that in the following financial period, 1980-83, the Organization will need to examine whether an extension to the present building is required and how this could be obtained. Budgetary provision has accordingly been made in these proposals to enable some additional premises to be rented during the second half of the financial period and to enable a study to be made at that time of a possible extension of the present building in preparation for Eighth Congress.".

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<sup>11/</sup> The staffing level at headquarters would, of course, be less than 332 if it were decided to move to the field certain staff who deal with regional programmes (see paragraph 33).

<sup>12/</sup> 332 staff plus 2 concessionnaire employees.

42. In document Cg-VII/Doc.49 (paragraph 21), the Secretary-General pointed out that there had been included in part VI/G of his proposed programme and budget for 1976-1979, an amount of \$210,000 for the "Rental of temporary accommodation for two years.". This provision was based on a conclusion stated in paragraph 19 of Cg-VII/Doc.49, that "The present Headquarters building can accommodate a maximum of 305 Secretariat personnel but only by the introduction of rather stringent standards for the allocation of office space.". It was this estimate of the capacity of the building which led to the further conclusion that rented space would be required in the second half of the 1976-1979 period. It now appears possible that if WMO can reduce occupancy standards to the extent suggested in chapter III and can also convert an amount of conference space into office space, as also suggested in that chapter, the capacity of the building may well exceed 305 persons and that expenditure on outside rented space during the next financial period can be reduced significantly, or perhaps even avoided completely.

43. In response to the Inspectors' questions concerning the rental possibilities open to the Organization, they were informed by WMO as follows:

"The supposition was, at the time of the preparation of the document Cg-VII/Doc.37, that it would be possible to rent accommodations in the newly constructed headquarters of the ILO and rental costs were determined on that basis. The Organization has since been informed that no space will be available in the ILO headquarters.

"Alternatively, the World Intellectual Property Organization whose premises adjoin WMO is currently engaged in construction of new facilities. It is possible, therefore, that upon completion of the construction in 1977, some space may be available in WIPO's original building which could be rented by WMO, the date of availability corresponding rather closely to the date when it is estimated that WMO will have to seek additional premises. No specific contacts have yet been made on this matter however."

44. In response to an inquiry by the Inspectors, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) stated that "we expect to occupy our new building in 1977", and that "When this happens, we visualize that our present headquarters building which comprises 3,000 square metres of usable space [about 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> of office space] will be initially available for letting in toto and gradually at a decreasing level as the demands of accommodation for our own staff grow.". It stated further that, in

present circumstances, "it is difficult to forecast our staff requirements with any degree of certainty and consequently it is also difficult to forecast the period for which full occupancy of our present building could be let to other parties.

However, it would be reasonable to assume that its re-occupation by WIPO would not commence before 1980, at which time one floor would be required and that at each interval of two years afterwards a further floor would be required.". The WIPO building has four floors of office space, each approximately 500 m<sup>2</sup> in area.<sup>13/</sup>

45. It should be noted that a special procedure is envisaged with respect to the renting of space in the WIPO building. That Organization has advised the Inspectors that "we propose to inform FIPOI of the position and to invite that body to nominate tenants. Tenancy lettings would be made after consultation with FIPOI."

46. In response to the Inspectors' questions concerning the construction possibilities open to WMO, they were informed as follows:

"The Organization does not own or have construction rights on any additional property. Property adjoining that of the Organization on the south and west is private property containing dwellings. It may be possible to purchase this property in due course. Alternatively, as was the case with ILO, consideration might be given to construction of an entirely new headquarters at some other location and the attendant sale of the existing headquarters building.

"The possibility to add additional floors to the present building is one of the options which will be considered. It is believed that the design specifications for the original 5-storey building's foundation will not permit the addition of more floors on top but that allowance was made for this possibility in the design specifications for the construction of the 5-storey extension and 8-storey annex in 1969-70. The extent to which this would be possible would need to be discussed with the designers and would also have to take into account local building codes including any restriction on the maximum height of structures."

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<sup>13/</sup> The WIPO building also has an additional 943 m<sup>2</sup> of space usable for storage, 356 m<sup>2</sup> on the ground floor and 587 m<sup>2</sup> underground.

47. In document Cg-VII/Doc.49 (paragraph 21), the Secretary-General pointed out that there had been included in part VI/G of his programme and budget for 1976-1979, an amount of \$30,000 for "Studies on construction of additional accommodation.". Given the lack of a separate unit in the secretariat to deal with accommodation problems, plus the fact that many aspects of the problem require study, as mentioned in paragraphs 43 and 45, the Inspectors can understand the Secretary-General's need for funds to make the necessary studies relating to proposed additional construction. Building is an expensive business and it is essential that proper studies be made before it is undertaken. In the Inspectors' view, such studies should not be confined to the technical problems of the location and constructional details of a new building (or of an extension to the existing building) but should also take account of the expected growth rate of the headquarters staff, so far as this can be determined, and of the possibility (and desirability) of fixing an optimum level of headquarters staff with a view to stabilizing the accommodation situation for as long as possible. The Inspectors feel that inadequate attention has been given to these latter aspects of the problem in some organizations when formulating construction plans. Finally, any study concerning possible construction must include a careful exploration of the means of financing the construction.

## V. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Capacity and occupancy of the WMO headquarters building

1. As of 1 January 1975, the WMO headquarters building was occupied by 273 persons (271 staff and 2 employees of a concessionnaire). The WMO administration estimates that the building can accommodate a maximum of 305 persons but only by the introduction of rather stringent standards for the allocation of office space. The Inspectors consider that the capacity of the building is at least 305 persons and could be increased beyond that figure if appropriate measures are taken (paragraphs 11-19).

### B. Occupancy standards

2. Although WMO states that it has no formal occupancy standards, the practices it has followed in allocating space have resulted in more generous space allocations than is the case in other modern buildings constructed by international organizations in Geneva. For example, the space allocations to Professional staff at the P-1 to P-4 levels and some staff at the P-5 level, as well as to some General Service staff, are more generous than the allocations in the new ILO building. There is little doubling-up of junior Professionals and 46 General Service staff have individual offices. The Inspectors believe that, consistent with functional requirements and without reducing occupancy standards below those of other international organizations, a considerable additional number of staff can be accommodated and they have suggested certain specific steps which might be taken to achieve this objective. They find that, in general, the WMO administration is in agreement with the approach of the Inspectors and is planning to take measures accordingly (paragraphs 20-33).

### C. The possibility of converting conference rooms to office space

3. It appears that conference rooms IV and V, each 38.56 m<sup>2</sup> in area, are used for only a relatively few days each year. The Inspectors suggest that these rooms be converted to office space, either by partitioning, or, preferably, by using them in their present condition to accommodate typing pools. Each room should accommodate at least six or seven persons if used to accommodate a typing pool; and the use of the two rooms in this fashion would liberate six or seven rooms now occupied by members of the present typing pool for occupancy by other staff, particularly Professional staff (paragraphs 34, 35).

D. Space management and planning at WMO

4. The Chief of the Administration and External Relations Department of WMO is responsible for both the day-to-day management of office accommodation and the planning to meet future requirements. There is no separate unit within the secretariat which deals with office accommodation. On an ad hoc basis, a member of the External Relations Branch devotes some time to the matter (paragraph 36).

5. The Inspectors consider that these administrative arrangements may not be fully adequate for dealing with WMO's present and prospective office accommodation problems. Given the fact that WMO faces both (a) "the painful and most disagreeable experience" of reducing space allocations in the headquarters building and (b) the need to plan for and deal with the rental of outside space and the possible construction of a new building (or an extension to the present building) in the near future, the Inspectors suggest that the Secretary-General review the present administrative arrangements to ensure that they are adequate (paragraphs 37-39).

E. Future prospects

6. The Secretary-General's staffing proposals to the Seventh WMO Congress for the financial period 1 January 1976-31 December 1979, would bring the headquarters staff level to 332 (unless certain staff dealing with regional programmes were moved to the field, as is now under consideration). The resulting occupancy figure of 334 would be 61 above the occupancy level of the headquarters building as of 1 January 1975 and 29 above the level of 305 which the WMO secretariat estimates to be the capacity of the building. Accordingly, the Secretary-General is asking the Seventh WMO Congress for an appropriation of \$210,000 for the rental of temporary office accommodation during the last two years of the financial period. The Inspectors consider it possible that the measures they have suggested for reducing occupancy standards and converting certain conference rooms to office space might well reduce the amount required to be spent for outside rented space, or even completely avoid the necessity of such rental during the financial period (paragraphs 40-42).

7. Although WMO is not certain about the possibility of renting office accommodation in the future, in the years 1978 and 1979, and for some time thereafter, there appears to be a possibility of renting space in the present headquarters



building of WIPO (which is immediately adjacent to WMO) after that Organization moves into its new building in 1977 (paragraphs 43-45).

8. In so far as future construction is concerned, WMO "does not own or have construction rights on any additional property" and "there are, at present, no additional plans for the acquisition of additional premises" (paragraphs 41 and 46).

9. The possibility of adding more floors to the present building is one of the options which will have to be considered. This possibility is not believed to exist with respect to the original five-storey building but it may exist with respect to the extension added in 1969-1970 (paragraph 46).

10. The Secretary-General has requested, in his programme and budget for 1976-1979, an amount of \$30,000 for "Studies on construction of additional accommodation.". Given WMO's present situation, the Inspectors believe that such studies are called for. They suggest that the studies should relate not only to the location and details of the construction of a new building (or an extension to the present building) and to the anticipated rate of growth of the staffing level at WMO headquarters and the possibility of establishing an optimum level, but also to the means of financing any construction which might be undertaken (paragraph 47).





