



# **Report**

## **on Office Accommodations**

## **for United Nations Staff in Geneva**

*by*  
*Albert F. Bender, Jr.*  
*Joint Inspection Unit*

**Geneva**  
**June 1973**

REPORT ON OFFICE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR

UNITED NATIONS STAFF IN GENEVA

by

Albert F. Bender, Jr.

Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva,  
June 1973.

## Table of Contents

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Pages</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 11	1 - 4
A. Scope of the report	1 - 4	1
B. Background of the report	5 - 11	2 - 4
II. THE PROBLEM	12 - 16	5
III. DISCUSSION	17 - 94	6 - 33
A. Obstacles to effective space management in the Palais	17 - 28	6 - 9
B. How space is managed in the Palais	29 - 51	10 - 19
C. The present space situation in the Palais	52 - 68	19 - 25
D. The possible acquisition of new space	69 - 90	25 - 32
E. The possible use of new space which might be acquired in the immediate future	91 - 94	32 - 33
IV. CONCLUSIONS	95 - 102	34 - 35
RECOMMENDATIONS	1 - 12	36 - 38
ANNEX		

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Scope of the report

1. The scope of this report is somewhat more limited than that which was envisaged when the work programme of the JIU for 1973 was drawn up. The reason for this limitation is the desire to ensure that the most important aspects of this accommodations problem are presented in the form of a report at a date early enough to make possible their consideration by the Secretary-General and the ACABQ before the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly.
2. The report deals primarily with the situation which now exists in the matter of office accommodations for UN staff in Geneva, with certain of the causes of this situation, and with the prospects for the immediate future; and it makes certain recommendations for possible remedial action. It deals with the specialized agencies in Geneva only to the extent that (a) certain of the practices of these agencies provide useful points of comparison with UN practices in the matter of office accommodations, (b) the agencies have or expect to have office space which might be made available to help meet UN accommodations needs, and (c) they use the conference facilities in the Palais des Nations.
3. In making this study the Inspector did not attempt to conduct an office-by-office inspection of the entire Palais, as has been done by the Administrative Management Service in the past, to verify occupancy and the application of appropriate occupancy standards. He did visit every floor in every area of the Palais, and made spot checks concerning occupancy. Further, he asked for and was given floor plans for all areas of the Palais, showing the occupancy of each. For other information concerning the Palais, he has had to rely upon the Geneva Office and the units housed in the Palais.
4. In preparing this report, the Inspector has had the full co-operation of the Director-General of the Geneva Office and his staff and of the Assistant Secretary-General, General Services, and his staff in New York. He has also had the full co-operation of representatives of the specialized agencies in Geneva.

B. Background of the report

5. At the last session of the General Assembly, in response to requests from that body made in 1969 1/ and in 1971 2/, the Secretary-General presented a report (A/C.5/1458) entitled "Office accommodations at Headquarters" and a related report (A/C.5/1462) entitled "Rental of office space at Headquarters".

6. In the first of these reports (A/C.5/1458), the Secretary-General dealt inter alia with the availability of space at United Nations offices outside New York, since any such availability might make it desirable to consider transferring staff from New York where a serious office accommodations problem existed. With respect to the office space situation which was expected to exist in Geneva in 1973, he stated in paragraphs 34-36 of that report the following:

"34. A detailed analysis of current and potential office space in Geneva is contained in annex V. It indicates that with the completion of the new office facilities it will be possible to move back to the Palais des Nations (old and new premises) all of the staff who have been located in outside rented premises; to provide adequate space for the permanent services already located in the Palais which have been overcrowded owing to growth; to provide space for new activities recently established in Geneva; and to provide a margin of space for temporary staff required to service conferences, for officials temporarily assigned to Geneva and for consultants, and to meet other emergency needs.

35. Within the past year, space in Geneva has been made available for the European Regional Office of UNICEF, formerly located in Paris, and for requirements of UNCTAD, UNDP (including the United Nations Volunteers Programme), the Office of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, a UNITAR office, the Secretariat of the Environment Conference, the Fund for Drug Abuse Control, Chinese language staff and various special projects such as the Inter-organization Board, the International Computer Centre and the Centre for Economic and Social Information. These assignments, which had not been foreseen at the time of the design of the new facilities, have committed most of the space currently available in both the new and old sections of the Palais.

---

1/ A/Res.2618 (XXIV)

2/ A/Res.2895 (XXVI)

36. The Secretary-General nevertheless believes that through modification of some of the contemplated moves, redistribution of space assignments, including those designed to provide for expansion in certain units, and utilization for offices of space which was not originally intended for such purposes, it would be possible, on a temporary basis, to make available in Geneva in 1973 office space to house about 75 staff members ..."

7. In his related report (A/C.5/1462), the Secretary-General suggested (paragraph 6) the transfer to Geneva of "The Division of Human Rights, consisting of about 70 persons, whose functions could be carried on as effectively in Geneva, and which, from an operational standpoint, could be transferred in the course of 1973". He indicated in paragraph 7 of that report that space for this purpose could be made available in the Palais des Nations from the space which was still uncommitted, but which had been reserved for the expansion of existing Geneva units or for new units. This appears to be the same space referred to in paragraph 36 of the Secretary-General's main report (A/C.5/1458) which is quoted above.

8. In its report (A/8708/Add.17), the ACABQ dealt with the matters which were the subjects of the Secretary-General's reports mentioned above. With respect to the availability of office space in the new building in Geneva, it stated the following in paragraphs 5 and 6 of its report:

"5. The situation at Geneva appears to the Advisory Committee to call for special comment. The Secretary-General's report on office accommodation reveals that the absorptive capacity of the new office building at the Palais des Nations (which can accommodate about 1,350 staff) has been almost eliminated by (a) the recent transfer of the European office of UNICEF (about 110 staff) from Paris to Geneva, (b) the need to provide additional space for units located within the Palais which have been expanding, and (c) the requirements of new units that were not foreseen when the building was planned (A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 6 (c)). In addition, part of the new office space is occupied by staff who in recent years have been located in commercial rented premises in Geneva. Unfortunately, the assignment of space in the new office at the Palais seems to have been planned without sufficient regard to the over-all space difficulties of the United Nations, in particular those which exist in New York: as a result, the options that the Secretary-General can now propose to the General Assembly, in terms of relocating units of the Secretariat, have been considerably reduced. (Underlining inserted)

6. Thus, the move of the European office of UNICEF to the Palais, which took place in 1972, does not appear to have taken account of the Organization's accommodation difficulties. The offices which UNICEF occupies are being made available rent-free. The Advisory Committee was informed that UNICEF saw administrative and other advantages in locating its European office in Geneva; however, its accommodation in United Nations space should be subject to the needs of the United Nations itself. This was recognized in the case of UNICEF headquarters in New York, which were located in the United Nations Headquarters complex while space was available there, but later moved to rented premises. In the present circumstances, therefore, the Committee does not believe that strong reasons exist for accommodating UNICEF in the new office building at the Palais. Accordingly, it suggests that the Secretary-General might be asked to review with the Executive Director of UNICEF the decision taken previously, with the object of relocating UNICEF's European office at another site in Geneva when a suitable opportunity occurs. Alternative space might, for example, be available on a rental basis in premises to be vacated by the International Telecommunication Union or by the ILO. 7/

---

7/ A/C.5/1458 and Corr.1 and 2, para. 36; annex V, paras. 7 and 8."

9. With respect to the Secretary-General's suggestion concerning the transfer of the Division of Human Rights to Geneva, the ACABQ stated (paragraph 13) the following: "On balance the Advisory Committee concluded that, since surplus space exists at the Palais, and since the Secretary-General considers that the functions of the Division of Human Rights could be carried on as effectively at Geneva as in New York (A/C.5/1462, paragraph 6), there would be advantage in transferring the bulk of the Division during 1973, as the Secretary-General suggests."

10. In paragraph 14 of its report, the ACABQ recommended that the Secretary-General should report to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session on the possibility of further transfers of staff to Geneva before 1975 - for example, 100 posts from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs - in the event that the European office of UNICEF was relocated outside the Palais as the ACABQ had suggested.

11. The General Assembly endorsed inter alia the recommendations of the ACABQ contained in the following paragraphs of its report: 6 (re UNICEF), 13 (re the transfer of the Human Rights Division) and 14 (re the possibility of further transfers to Geneva before 1975).

## II. THE PROBLEM

12. Early this year it came to the attention of the JIU that, despite the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly concerning the availability of space in Geneva to house the Human Rights Division, the Geneva Office had informed Headquarters that "permanent" space to house the Human Rights Division was not presently available in Geneva and that it was not possible to accommodate the whole Human Rights Division in Geneva unless and until the Human Environment secretariat completed its move to Nairobi, Kenya. According to the Geneva Office, it had made this situation very clear to Headquarters last fall, when the Secretary-General's report on office accommodations at Headquarters was being prepared. However, the relationship between the movement of the Human Rights Division to Geneva and the movement of any other unit out of the Palais was not mentioned in the Secretary-General's report to the Assembly, nor was it referred to in the report of the ACABQ or in the Fifth Committee discussion of the item.

13. It also became known to the JIU early this year that, although the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, paragraph 17 of annex V) stated that some room for expansion had been left in the space reserved in the new building for UNHCR and UNCTAD "and that this should take care of increases in staff up to 1975", neither of these organizations appeared to agree.

14. Further, reports were current that one of the reasons for what now appeared to be a "shortage" of space in the new building was the fact that in a number of cases space occupancy standards had been disregarded.

15. Finally, despite the General Assembly's approval of the ACABQ's suggestion that the movement of the Paris office of UNICEF to the new wing of the Palais be reviewed with the object of relocating this office elsewhere in Geneva, UNICEF staff continued to move into office space in the new wing of the Palais which continued to be newly partitioned to meet specific UNICEF needs.

16. In view of these developments and in the light of the ACABQ criticism of the manner in which space had been allocated in the new Geneva building, the JIU decided to make a study of the present status of United Nations office accommodations in Geneva, including the manner in which office space had been and was being allocated and used, and of the prospects for the immediate future.



### III. DISCUSSION

#### A. Obstacles to effective space management in the Palais

17. Before commenting upon the present office accommodations situation and upon the manner in which the use of office space in the Palais has been managed and controlled, it appears desirable, in order to ensure a proper perspective, to point out some of the special problems which exist with regard to office space management in the Palais des Nations.

18. The first major obstacle to ensuring the effective use of space in the Geneva Office stems from the architecture of the old Palais, which was constructed between 1929 and 1937, and to which a new wing (building "D") was added in 1951-1952. As was said in the AMS report of 1965 "The building is not a 'modern' office building, specifically designed with maximum space utilization possibilities in mind. There are wide variations in the size of offices; and since the building was not planned on the basis of a standard space module, and the partitions are 'permanent', the possibility of alterations is limited by both structural and financial considerations".

19. A major reason for the variation in the size of offices in the old Palais is the fact that the original planners and architects conceived the building as consisting of two distinct blocks, one the official and ceremonial block which included the Council, Assembly and Library buildings and the wings connecting the Assembly to the Council and Library buildings, and the other the administrative block including the Secretariat building. Each of these two blocks contains about 50 per cent of the office space of the Palais.

20. As a result of this situation, there are no formal established standards of occupancy or scales of space allowance in force in the old Palais. Given the structure of the building, it would undoubtedly be difficult to establish and impractical to apply a standard based on a given number of square meters. The most that can be said with respect to the old Palais is that some common practices of office occupancy prevail. These were described in the AMS report of 1965 as follows:

- (a) Staff members of the level P-4 and above (and in some cases P-3) are allocated individual offices, the size of which depends on the sector of the building where the group is located;
- (b) Professionals at the levels P-1 to P-3 performing similar functions shall share an office, the number of occupants depending on its size;
- (c) Secretarial and clerical staff, with few exceptions, share offices;
- (d) Staff whose functions require privacy are allocated individual offices.

21. Although the offices in the old Palais vary considerably in size, they are on the average considerably larger than the offices in the Headquarters building in New York. The AMS report of 1965 (and there has been very little change since) stated that 85 per cent of the offices in the old building exceeded 15 square meters, 52 per cent of the offices exceeded 20 square meters and 23 per cent exceeded 25 square meters. In comparison, it should be noted that in the New York Headquarters the space standard for all staff of grade P-5 and below, that is more than 95 per cent of the staff, is a maximum of 13.4 square meters. Thus, the Geneva staff which have occupied the old Palais up to the present have been accustomed, in general, to generous allowances of office space.

22. There has been one other significant difference between the use of office space in the old Palais and that in the New York Headquarters which now creates a problem. Almost invariably in the old Palais, secretarial staff have occupied offices with windows, whereas in New York most general service staff have occupied interior offices without windows.

23. The occupancy situation in the old Palais, and the lack of standards for the use of space there have had an impact on the use of space in the new office wing of the Palais where an attempt has been made to apply occupancy standards more along the lines of those used in New York. Because of the more spacious accommodations to which staff in general have been accustomed in the old building, and because of a lack of "discipline" in the use of space in the old Palais, there has been considerable staff resistance to the application of the new and more "austere" standards proposed for the new building.

24. However, it should be recognized that there is a more serious obstacle to the application of space standards in the new office wing of the Palais. Although this wing is much more modern in concept than the old Palais, it was not designed in a manner which makes it simple to apply uniform occupancy standards. There is no standard "module" - such as those which exist in the UN building in New York and the specialized agency buildings in Geneva - which can be used as a basis for allocating space to staff of different grades and functions. The minimal units resulting from what can be considered a normal partitioning of the space in the new office wing vary from 8 square meters (this would be interior space for a secretary or typist) to 9.4 square meters to 13.03 square meters to 19.47 square meters (all the last three would be exterior space) depending upon the area of the building in which the space is located. Thus it is difficult to give equal treatment to staff having similar functions and the same grades. Further, the width of the windows is so great - 2.3 meters as compared with 1.2 meters for the windows in the new ILO building - that flexibility in partitioning offices has been lost. And finally, the building does not have moveable partitions such as those in the New York Headquarters and in the present WHO building and new ILO building.

25. Apart from the structure of the old Palais and of the new office wing, there are several other important factors which make it more difficult to use space rationally in Geneva than in New York. There is, first of all, the so-called "accordion" aspect of the occupancy of the Palais, resulting from the conference schedule. The most extreme example of this is the occupancy of some 125-150 offices, mostly in the Assembly building, in turn by WHO and ILO officials for a total of about two months each year during the annual conferences of these two organizations. Since these offices cannot be occupied by UN staff during the two months in question (May and June), they cannot be used for permanent offices for UN staff.

26. Another important factor, which makes it more difficult to manage office space rationally in Geneva than in New York, is that there are in the Palais so many different units whose staffs are subject to different authorities. There are, for example, the staffs of ECE, UNCTAD and UNHCR, whose heads hold the same rank of Under-Secretary as does the head of the Geneva Office. Then there are the staffs of UNICEF, UNDP, the Human Environment secretariat, the United Nations Fund for

Drug Abuse, etc., who are subject to the authority of different individuals. Given this situation, it is extremely difficult for the head of the Geneva Office and his staff to insist successfully on the acceptance of uniform occupancy standards or to control the actual use of office space which has been allotted. Individual units in general tend to consider simply their own needs and desires for space, rather than the over-all needs in Geneva, and to compete with each other for more space, rather than to attempt to reduce their own space requirements by the more efficient use of space.

27. There is in addition the fact that space management in Geneva is affected, often considerably, by decisions taken elsewhere. The Inspector has been informed that the decisions to house in the Palais such units as the secretariats of the Environment Conference, the Centre for Economic and Social Information, the UN Volunteers Programme, the Fund for Drug Abuse Control and a UNITAR office were made in New York and then notified to the Geneva Office. As indicated earlier, the decision to move the Human Rights Division from New York to Geneva was made by the General Assembly, on the suggestion of the Secretary-General, although the Geneva Office had warned New York that it could not accommodate the Human Rights Division unless another unit, such as the Human Environment secretariat, was moved out of the Palais. And early this year the New York Headquarters instructed the Geneva Office to take over the administration of the International Trade Centre, without regard to the fact that this would require absorbing some ten officers into the Administrative and Financial Services of the Geneva Office, which did not at the time have adequate office space to house them. The Geneva Office cannot be held completely responsible for the effective management of space on the basis of advance planning, if decisions are made elsewhere, without reference to such planning, which require the use of additional space in the Palais.

28. There is finally the fact that UN organizational units in Geneva are particularly reluctant - and understandably so - to accept minimal space allocations made to them, when there appears to be no assurance that provision will be made for even moderate future expansion. The feeling that it is necessary to protect future expansion requirements appears to have increased as Geneva units have become aware of proposals to move additional staff from New York to Geneva.

B. How space is managed in the Palais

29. The responsibility for the day-to-day management of space in the Palais falls primarily on the Chief of the Conference Division of the United Nations Office in Geneva with the responsibility for the routine allocation of space handled by a number of his staff in the Meetings Co-ordination and Servicing Section. Matters requiring new policy decisions or involving differences of opinion between the Chief of the Conference Division and the various organizational units requiring space are referred to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva or to the Assistant Director-General.

30. In earlier years the planning, day-to-day management and routine allocation of office space had been the responsibility of the then Building Management Division and the Office of the Assistant Director-General. Four years ago this responsibility was assigned to the newly created Conference Division. It was considered that the Geneva Office was essentially administering a conference centre rather than a substantive secretariat and that the necessities of the conference programme required that the Conference Division have the possibility of periodically redistributing not only office space normally earmarked for conference servicing but also adjacent space occupied by permanent staff, more often than not language staff. The Conference Division having thus become the focal point for allocating and distributing space used in connexion with conferences, it was deemed advisable to give it responsibility for all space allocation and use in the Palais, under the directives and authority of the Director-General and the Assistant Director-General.

31. This arrangement is a questionable one functionally. One can understand the Chief of the Conference Division being charged with responsibility for conference offices. However, it is difficult to find an acceptable rationale for making him responsible for the allocation and use of office space of substantive units, particularly major essentially autonomous units such as ECE, UNCTAD, UNHCR and UNICEF. Moreover, his very heavy responsibilities with respect to the Geneva conference schedule and conferences elsewhere which are serviced by Geneva staff make it impossible for him to give anything like full-time attention to office accommodations problems.

32. Either of two alternatives to the present arrangement would appear preferable. One possibility would be to consider the planning and management of space in the Palais and other UN owned or rented buildings in Geneva to be a staff function of the Office of the Director of Conferences and General Services and to assign to a small unit reporting to that Director the responsibility for both substantive and conference space now borne by the Chief of the Conference Division. A second and perhaps more desirable alternative is suggested by the varied nature of the units accommodated in the Palais, by the almost completely autonomous nature of some of them, by the fact that questions of protocol and priorities are frequently involved in office space allocation and use in the Palais, and, not least importantly, by the serious nature of the space problems facing the Geneva Office now and in the coming years. This alternative would be to place the responsibility for the planning and management of office space at the highest possible level and accordingly to attach a small unit of the type mentioned above directly to the Office of the Director-General of the Geneva Office where substantive and protocol advice would be readily available.

33. As mentioned earlier, the objectives of the construction of the new office wing of the Palais were to bring into the Palais staff located in outside rented premises, to provide adequate space for services already in the Palais, to provide a margin of space for temporary staff required to service conferences and for officials temporarily assigned to Geneva, and to meet other emergency needs. In connexion with the anticipated completion of the new wing, the Conference Division has made during the last two and a half years a review of the needs of all organizational units attached to the Geneva Office to determine whether they should be located in the old or new Palais buildings and how much space they should occupy. The movement of units as a result of this review is still under way, and it is not possible to evaluate the results in all cases.

34. Following this review, the Conference Division assigned space in either the old or the new building to each of the organizational units. This was done by allotting to units a number of square meters of space calculated on the basis of the present staff level plus a projection of growth until 1975 and on the assumption that the over-all average space use would be about 11.5 square meters per staff member. The application of this assumption meant different average figures for each unit because of its composition and the area in which it was

located - for example, in the case of UNCTAD space in the new building it was assumed that the average space use per staff member could be reduced to 11 square meters. The Conference Division also made a recommendation to each unit, in the form of a floor plan showing examples as to how the space could best be used for the various grades of officers. 1/ It was accompanied by a statement, in some cases verbal and in some cases written, that the space allocated was the maximum which could be made available until 1975 at the earliest and that it was up to each unit to determine how to make the best use of its space. It was left to these units themselves to determine how much space was to be allotted to each officer within the unit, and also to determine whether or not to allot all the available space to present staff or to hold some in reserve for future needs.

35. The theory behind this method of allocation is said to have been that units would be compelled to work out their own best use of space for expansion purposes during the next few years, since they would know in advance that they could not obtain additional space, at least until 1975. It was believed that by that time, units assigned space in the new building would have reduced their average space use to approximately 11 square meters or less per person.

36. Apart from the theory mentioned, the principal reason for leaving the determination of individual space needs to the heads of units appears to have been that mentioned earlier, namely, the fact that the individuals in most units are subject to the direction of the heads of their respective units and not to the Director-General of the Geneva Office.

37. The Inspector questioned representatives of several specialized agencies in Geneva about the manner in which they allocate space to units when there is an expansion factor built into the allocation. Although one of the smaller agencies follows the practice of giving the staff "the maximum space available at all times", the larger agencies 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. One major agency stated that "normally, this expansion

---

1/ See annex for floor plan provided to UNHCR.

space will be closed and locked, or used for other temporary assignments until such time as it is required by the unit concerned". Further, although the larger agencies do allocate blocks of space for units to divide up as they believe is required for the proper functioning of the office, the central administrations insist that normal occupancy standards be applied at all times.

38. The method of allotting space which has been used in the Palais has had obvious disadvantages. It has not provided for the objective, impersonal and uniform judgement which, hopefully, would be applied by a space expert from outside each unit. Further, since the heads of units themselves obviously have not considered themselves called upon to devote their time and attention to the space requirements of each individual officer, the task of allotting space has normally been delegated to an administrative officer, who in some cases has left certain aspects of the matter to Division Directors. This has meant that a number of individual and different judgements concerning the proper utilization have been brought to bear. It has also clearly resulted in the giving to many officers more generous space allocations than proposed by the Geneva Office.

39. It should be recognized that the Geneva Office has in most cases suggested standards of occupancy very close to those followed in New York and in the major specialized agencies in Geneva, although with respect to professional staff, it has in general been more generous than a strict comparison with New York would call for. The following figures show the comparison for professional staff:



Standards for the Allocation of Office Space in New York and Geneva  
(in square meters)

Level	UN - Geneva New Building Suggested by Conf. Div.	UN - New York	ILO New Building	WHO Proposed New Building
U-S-G	59.2	39 <sup>1/</sup>	35.28	35.62
D-2	23.6 - 39.6 <sup>2/</sup>	24.5 - 31.2	29.40	26.92
D-1	19.1 - 24.8	17.8 - 23.9	23.52	-
P-5	19.1 - 19.7	13.4	17.64	13.46 - 20.19 <sup>3/</sup>
P-4	13	8.9	11.76	13.46
P-1 - P-3	9.5 <sup>4/</sup> - 11.1	8.9	8.82	10.09

<sup>1/</sup> In New York Under-Secretaries-General normally also have a reception area outside their offices and also a conference room.

<sup>2/</sup> An office of 39.6 square meters is suggested for deputy chiefs of units headed by an Under-Secretary-General and for heads of large divisions requiring large conference tables.

<sup>3/</sup> An office of 20.19 square meters is allocated to P-5's who are unit chiefs.

<sup>4/</sup> In certain cases, primarily in the Language Division, the Conference Division has suggested that junior or temporary P-1's - P-3's share an office of about 13 square meters, thus having an individual allocation of only 6.5 square meters.

40. With respect to General Service staff, the Geneva Office has suggested space allocations in the new building of 6.5 - 9.8 square meters (except for typing pools). At UN Headquarters in New York, the vast majority of secretaries and clerk-typists (G-1's - G-5's) are allocated 7.9 - 9.5 square meters (except for typing pools), with larger allocations made to G-5 secretaries for D-1's and above. The standard for General Service staff in the new ILO building is 8.82 square meters and in the proposed new WHO building it is 6.7 square meters for G-1's - G-5's and 10.09 square meters for G-6's and G-7's.

41. As might have been expected, the suggesting of occupancy standards did not ensure compliance with them. Despite the suggestions made by the Conference Division, one finds that it has become the general rule for D-2's in the new building to occupy an office of 39.6 square meters, that is an office as large as that of an Under-Secretary-General in New York, and considerably larger than that of any D-2 in New York. One also finds D-1's in general occupying offices of 28.5 to 31.5 square meters and, in at least one instance, an office of 39.6 square meters. The most glaring example of a variation from the norm is the occupancy by a D-1 of an office of 59.2 square meters, that is an office larger than that of the Secretary-General in New York.<sup>1/</sup> What is particularly disturbing about this situation is the fact that the individual in question is a director of a division under the direct control of the Director-General of the Geneva Office, that he made this generous allocation of space to himself from space allotted to his division, and that nothing has been done to correct the situation.

42. It is also true that the present system of allotting space has meant a lack of uniformity in applying the principle that professional officers at the P-3 level and below should double up. In a number of cases P-2's and P-3's are occupying individual offices of the size suggested for single occupancy by P-4's and P-5's. In some units this matter of doubling up P-3's and below has been left to individual division directors, who make their own judgements based on the functions of the officers in question, their personalities, whether or not they smoke, etc. The resulting differences in treatment are not conducive to assuring staff that standards are being applied equitably.

---

<sup>1/</sup> The Secretary-General's office in New York is approximately 48.4 square meters.

43. In fairness to the Conference Division the Inspector wishes to call attention to the following explanation which has been given to him by that Division with respect to the situation described above:

"It had been the intention of the Geneva Office, 'after all the services would be settled in their new quarters - in both the new and old buildings - to make an inventory of the space actually occupied, of the staff currently on board and of expected additions to the staff as authorized for 1973 and possibly 1974, in order to determine whether and to what extent the areas allotted on the basis of earlier forecasts had to be adjusted and whether there was any residual vacant office space'.

Inasmuch as the Inspector's study was undertaken before the movements of all the units involved in the relocation could be completed - some significant movements are still pending for technical reasons - and before experience could be gained of the use of the combined old and new conference facilities during the peak conference period, the verifications and adjustments referred to above could themselves not be initiated, if anything for lack of time and staff. As a result, some of the anomalies and over-sized allocations could not be systematically identified and reported on, as intended, in order for appropriate remedial action to be taken by the competent authorities."

44. The Conference Division has also suggested that the occupancy of a P-4 or P-5 type office by a single staff member of level P-3 or below is only provisional in nature, that such an office is generally earmarked for occupancy by two or more such staff, and that in most cases offices of this kind constitute built-in expansion space. This is a plausible position in theory, but there are difficulties in its application. First, it is necessary that not only the Conference Division, but also the unit concerned and the staff member involved accept the position that the single occupancy is provisional and, as of now, there is no assurance that this is the case. And even if it is true initially, it is not long before a staff member enjoying single occupancy tends to feel that he has an acquired right to such a status, so that in many cases he will be reluctant to accept shared occupancy in the future. In such a situation, the unit concerned is more likely to turn to the Geneva Office for additional space than to insist on double occupancy.

45. There has also developed a problem which warrants particular attention. It has arisen because of the proposed use of interior space by certain General Service staff. Such a use has been proposed because the dimensions of certain of the office space available suggest the use of interior space for secretaries as the most efficient use of available space.

46. Some of the units in the new building have avoided or rejected the use of interior space for secretaries, apparently on the theory that it would represent a discrimination against them. One unit, UNICEF, uses some interior space for secretaries and finds no particular difficulties with this practice. The experience of UNCTAD has been different.

47. In 1971 the UNCTAD administration prepared plans for the partitioning of the floor space allotted to it in the new office building, and proposed that a number of the offices be partitioned so that Professional staff could occupy exterior space with their secretaries occupying interior space. These plans were executed and the partitions installed. However, UNCTAD staff have demonstrated what the Secretary-General of UNCTAD has characterized as an "extreme reluctance ... to occupy interior offices". On 6 November 1972, the UNCTAD staff approved unanimously a resolution which, after stating that "some of their colleagues will have to work, winter and summer alike, in artificial light and in claustrophobic surroundings, while the rest are more comfortably installed", requested "the Secretary-General to reconsider, as a matter of great urgency and importance, the accommodation offered to his personnel, with a view to obtaining additional space, or any other ways of finding a solution whereby all its members may enjoy working conditions which enable them to give to him and to the United Nations the quality of work which he rightly expects of them". The staff representatives also proposed to the Secretary-General the repartitioning of certain offices to avoid placing secretaries in rooms without windows. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD replied to the staff representatives, stating that "I share the concern of the staff about the accommodations in the new wing, and I appreciate the constructive attitude shown by you and your colleagues at our meeting on 6 November", and that he had instructed his Deputy and the Director of Administration to consider the staff proposals in consultation with the Directors of UNCTAD. The issue has not been resolved, and the interior offices remain unoccupied by staff. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD informed the Director-General of the Geneva Office on 14 February 1973 that UNCTAD staff "are for the moment waiting patiently to see what solution can be found. If satisfaction is not granted on this point, it is certain that the resulting tensions and turnover of staff will continue to offer a serious handicap to our work".

48. The UNCTAD administration has informed the Inspector that UNCTAD does not consider that the use of interior space "need to be a problem as it is feasible to partition offices in such a way that virtually all offices would have access to window space, either by means of deep one-window offices or L shaped offices. The morale and output of the staff would seem to greatly outweigh the cost of arranging partitions in this manner. The alternative is certain to be a continuing confrontation with the Staff Sub-Committee, established to deal with this question, and dissatisfaction and turnover until it is settled".

49. It is difficult to judge how much weight should be accorded to the UNCTAD experience in this matter. The partitioning of some UNCTAD offices providing interior space for secretaries appears to have had, as its objective, the providing of more window space on the lake side of the building for Professional officers, rather than the better utilization of space; indeed such partitioning has resulted in a net loss of usable space. Such partitioning is not likely to appeal to a secretary occupying interior space. Further, although translucent glass has been used for the partitions between the offices of UNCTAD officers and their secretaries, a solid wall has been maintained between the secretaries' offices and the corridors. This does not accord with the practice prevailing on most floors of the Secretariat building in New York, where the walls along the corridors are glass. In addition, in many cases the effectiveness of the glass partitions between the two offices has been destroyed by placing large cabinets against the glass.

50. It is true as indicated earlier that in the old Palais secretaries were and are almost invariably given offices with windows, and the same practice appears to be followed in the specialized agencies in Geneva. At the same time, it is equally true, as stated by the AMS in its 1963 report on the use of space in the Secretariat building in New York, that in that building "as a general practice, however, the general service personnel are accommodated in interior space, either directly in front of the private offices, or in the centre of the north and south ends of the building". It appears that no effort has been made to make this fact clear to the Geneva General Service staff. If this were done, they would know that if they are asked to occupy interior space in the new Palais wing, they are being treated in accordance with the practice which has been applied to and accepted by the vast majority of General Service staff at Headquarters for more than twenty years.

51. The central administration has not taken a firm position on this issue, and has left the matter for each unit to decide for itself. The Chief of the Conference Division has informed the Inspector that the position of the Geneva Office has been the following. When plans for the use of space submitted by units to the Conference Division provided for interior offices, "inasmuch as the latter were to be fully air conditioned and to have ample daylight, no effort was made by the Geneva Office to discourage such utilization of the space. While it is not the practice in Geneva to assign interior offices with no air conditioning and poor or no daylight - such as those in the old building - to staff employed on a continuing basis, it was not intended that the same restrictions would apply to new, fully air-conditioned and well-lit office space, especially when this alternative distribution of the space was made at the initiative and request of the organizational units concerned".

C. The present space situation in the Palais

52. The over-all space situation in the Palais can perhaps be appreciated from the following. In 1969, when plans were being made for the occupancy of the new building, the Geneva Office set, as its objective, the reduction of the figure for per capita space utilization of the Palais from the level of 12.4 square meters (which then prevailed in the old Palais) to a level of 11.5 square meters for the old and new premises combined. The achievement of this objective would make possible the occupancy of the entire premises by about 2,850 staff members (A/C.5/1263). It was anticipated that this level would not be reached until four to five years after the completion of construction of the new building. As of now, however, the Geneva Office estimates that "the total population to be housed in the Palais at one time or another in 1973 is expected to vary between 2,800 and 3,070 persons". In other words, because of the location of new units in the Palais since 1969, and the expansion since that date of units already here, the optimum capacity of the Palais has just about been reached.

53. There appears to be little prospect of reducing the average space to be occupied by individual staff members significantly below the 11.5 square meter average which has now been achieved. However, in the opinion of the Geneva Office, there is still sufficient expansion allowance built into present space allotments to absorb a staff expansion of about 3 per cent this year and in 1974.

It seems clear that such an absorption will be possible only if all organizational units in the Palais co-operate fully in making the most effective and economical use of available space - and indeed in some areas austerity measures may be called for.

54. The following examples illustrate the "tightness" of the space situation. Early this year there was the need (which has now been deferred pending reconsideration by the General Assembly) to find space for some seventy members of the Human Rights Division who require fifty to sixty offices. The only space available to house that Division was determined to be the space now occupied in the old Palais by the Human Environment secretariat which is scheduled to move to Nairobi, Kenya, on 1 October of this year. Pending that move, the Human Rights Division would have had the possibility of bringing some thirty staff members to Geneva and housing them in the Villa La Pelouse (which had been reserved to accommodate the UNITAR staff in Geneva, a varying number of "visiting interns on UNITAR attachment programmes and seminars" and eventually the proposed UN staff college). The problem was even more complicated since it then developed that the Environment secretariat would not only expect to leave in Geneva a small liaison staff, but "would also expect accommodation in Geneva for project personnel spending in turns some time in Geneva on meetings related to environment, or on consultations with specialized agencies, as well as ECE/Environment Unit staff, financed by the Environment Voluntary Fund; their total needs for these combined purposes is said to be no less than twenty-five offices". No decision was made as to where twenty-five offices could be found for the residual Environment secretariat, and it was stated to the Inspector that "the location of these offices could best be determined in due course, when the magnitude of the eventual requirements of the Environment, ECE, Human Rights and other organizational units will be more clearly defined".

55. Thus, in the old Palais it is possible today, as was the case before the new office building was constructed, to accommodate new units of any significant size only by playing a game of "musical chairs", which will invariably wind up with moving units or parts thereof into conference space when major conferences are not in session, and then compressing them into sub-standard space when major conferences occur. Such a game is the source of very costly disruptions of work.

56. A second example of the difficult space situation in the Palais today is that relating to UNCTAD in the new office building. UNCTAD was allotted 4,400 square meters of office space which the Geneva Office estimated should meet UNCTAD's needs through 1974, since, on the basis of an average of 11 square meters per person, the space should be sufficient to house 400 staff members. However, in February of this year the Secretary-General of UNCTAD informed the Director-General of the Geneva Office in writing that it already had a space problem, and that additional space would be required by 1974 at the latest. The Geneva Office has advised the Inspector that, although it has made no formal reply to this letter, it has informed UNCTAD that it maintains its view that, if UNCTAD uses all its available space, including interior space, and applies the suggested occupancy standards, it has adequate space to house its staff through 1974, since the total, both regular budget and overhead, will reach only 366 in that year (and the figure 366 assumes no vacancies). It recognizes that additional expense for the removal of present partitions and the installation of new ones may be required if UNCTAD's interior space is to be put to its best use and some of its larger offices are to be reduced in size. However, it cannot estimate this cost until UNCTAD decides how it wishes to modify its present occupancy layout. The Geneva Office has also informed UNCTAD that it is prepared to have its space experts work with UNCTAD to arrive at an occupancy plan which will assure the housing of all UNCTAD staff in its present space through 1974. Further, it has advised UNCTAD that it will help to relieve the pressure on that organization by housing in the conference area to the extent possible, personnel (e.g. consultants, trainees, etc.), visiting UNCTAD's Geneva office for short periods of time.

57. In support of its position that UNCTAD will require additional office space if it is to house 366 staff members in 1974, the UNCTAD administration has given to the Inspector an explanation along the following lines. It questions the view of the Geneva Office that the present space allocation is adequate since "the interior of the new wing is laid out in such a manner as to ... invalidate the use of square meters per head as the basis for determining and allocating space, although square meters remain a necessary guideline when dealing with differences in grade levels". Accordingly, UNCTAD has developed the concept of an "office unit", the size of which is determined by "the space behind the windows". "One office unit equals the space to be provided for each staff member up to level P-5 (two units for D-1/P-5: four units for D-2/A-S-G)." In theory the office unit for GS and P-1/P-3 staff is about 9.4 square meters (this may be in a separate or



a shared office) and for P-4's about 13 square meters. P-5's, who receive two units, are given about 19.5 square meters, and in theory D-1's receive about the same, 20.5 square meters. D-2's receive four units, amounting to 39 square meters, and the Secretary-General has six units, amounting to 58.5 square meters, plus a reception room and a conference room. When UNCTAD adds up all the units it has available on this basis, it finds that it has 42 less than the number it calculates to be required for 366 staff.

58. The phrase "in theory" has been used above since, when one examines the present office layout of UNCTAD, one finds, for example, that many General Service staff and some P-1/P-3 staff share offices of 13 square meters and thus are actually allocated less than the theoretical minimum unit of 9.4 square meters. Further, a number of P-2's and P-3's occupy offices larger than those containing 9.5 square meters and several D-1's have offices of 39 square meters.

59. On the face of it, UNCTAD's office unit approach is a plausible one, although certain elements of it have no particularly logical justification: for example, the assumption, which is not borne out in practice, that all General Service staff require "units" of 9.5 square meters and the assumption that all D-2's require offices of 39 square meters. The principal difficulty with it is that it appears to assume (a) that there is no over-all constraint on the use of space in the Palais and (b) that UNCTAD is free to develop and put into effect its own rationale for the use of space. As has been pointed out, there is no significant amount of additional space available in the Palais today and it would appear wiser for UNCTAD, during 1973 and 1974, to attempt, with the help of the Geneva Office, to make the best possible use of its space in conformity with the occupancy standards suggested by that Office, rather than to insist on a theoretical "office unit" concept which ignores the present limits on available space. Secondly, and more importantly, the Inspector must recommend against acceptance of any suggestion that each organizational unit in the Palais is free to adopt its own rationale on the proper use of space. The Director-General of the Geneva Office must have the final decision concerning the standards of occupancy and use of all space in UN buildings there.

60. The Inspector recognizes that UNCTAD faces a more difficult problem than some other units in the use of space, because of its unusually large number of

senior staff. However, even taking UNCTAD's grading pattern into account, it should be possible to take measures which will enable UNCTAD to live within its allotted space through 1974, although this will not be easy and may be somewhat costly. Such measures should of course be as consistent as possible with those taken with respect to other units in the new office building.

61. A third example is that of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees which is also located in the new building. Early this year the administration of that Office was of the opinion that additional space in the new office building would be required at least in 1974, if not in 1973. As a result of further study of the matter and in view of the fact that only a small expansion is planned in 1974, UNHCR now hopes that even after absorbing within its present space in the new building certain staff members now housed in the Library building, it will find it possible, although with difficulty, to contain itself within its present space in the new building through 1974.

62. It is now clear that, during 1973 and 1974, it would be most difficult, if not impossible, to locate any additional unit such as the Human Rights Division in the Palais, unless present occupancy standards were reduced or one of the present units were moved out. There is no plan to move any unit, except the major portion of the Human Environment secretariat, out of the Palais during those years. Any such move would have to be made into commercially-owned space, since no other space would be available. And indeed, as indicated below, action by the United Nations will be required, if it expects to have any additional space by 1975.

63. Because of the tight space situation in the Palais today, thought has been given to the possibility of recovering space previously allocated which is not required for present needs or for planned expansion within the next year or two.

64. Early this year the Geneva Office allocated twenty-four offices on the second and third floors of building D of the old Palais for language training courses. Four of these offices were transformed into two language training laboratories. It was planned to complete this spring's language training courses by the beginning of May, so that some of these offices could then be used, to the extent necessary, as conference offices for the WHO and ILO conferences. Following discussions with the Inspector, the Geneva Office has decided for the future that, except for the language laboratories, no further offices in building D will be used for language

training. Such training will be carried on as in the past in conference space in the Assembly building which is used for only a few months each year for major conferences. This will free twenty-one offices in building D for use by substantive units. It is now planned to assign eleven of these to UNITAR.

65. A further possibility of recovering space in the old Palais relates to the conference offices used by the WHO and ILO during their annual conferences held in the Palais in the months of May and June respectively. Each of these organizations uses some 125-150 offices in the Palais during these conferences. Of this total, about fifty offices are suitable for use on a permanent basis by substantive staff, but cannot be so used as long as they are earmarked for WHO and ILO conference use (they can, of course, be and are used during much of the year for individuals present in the Palais on a temporary basis). Given the proximity to the Palais of both the WHO and ILO buildings, it might well be that both of these organizations could, with very little adverse effect, significantly reduce their reliance on conference offices in the Palais, so that at least some of the fifty offices mentioned could be assigned to substantive units in the Palais on a permanent basis. An automobile shuttle service between the Palais and the headquarters building of the organization holding the conference might be of use in this regard.

66. Apart from conference offices which may conceivably be recovered from WHO and ILO use, it appears possible to recover additional conference offices for allocation as permanent offices. The estimated requirement of 300 conference offices mentioned in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, annex V) was almost certainly too high and the same may well be true of present plans for 263 conference offices. While it is impossible to assess recovery possibilities until there has been experience with the combined old and new conference facilities during the peak conference period, it may prove possible to recover as many as thirty to thirty-five offices now reserved for conference purposes for permanent use by substantive units. Whether or not this is a real possibility may well depend upon the extent to which use can be made of the sixty-four conference offices which are "inside offices" with no daylight or air conditioning.

67. In the new building there exists one possibility of recovering a small number of offices. When space (thirty-nine units) was assigned to UNDP, this was done on the understanding that it would also be occupied by the UN Volunteers Programme. However, although that Programme has now been allocated space in the Library building, UNDP has retained its space in the new building, and now has more space than it presently needs under occupancy standards suggested by the Conference Division. However, the Geneva Office has not been able to establish how the UNDP office, which is now going through a reorganization, is likely to develop, and accordingly it is uncertain as to the future space needs of UNDP. Similarly, the Inspector, despite enquiries in New York as well as in Geneva, was unable to ascertain with any degree of certainty how UNDP expects to use its Geneva office in the future, although he was told that there were certain plans for expansion.

68. Apart from the foregoing, there is always the possibility of recovering space through austerity measures, e.g. by reducing occupancy standards, as has been done at UN Headquarters in New York and in the WHO building in Geneva. In his report to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, paragraph 10), the Secretary-General stated that at Headquarters "staff have been crowded into offices to an extent that there are some 300 more occupants than the maximum for which the building was designed". Since 1968 the WHO has reduced its occupancy standards by reducing the size of P-4 offices or requiring P-4's to share offices. Similar measures may have to be taken in some areas of the Palais, if expansion needs through 1974 are to be met. However, if the Geneva Office hopes to secure ready acceptance of such a reduction in standards by any unit, it will have to make certain that, to the extent possible, all units participate in the austerity programme. For example, some of the occupants of the new building have the feeling, which it is difficult either to verify or dispel, that they are being asked to occupy minimal office space while their colleagues in the old Palais are not under the same pressure to comply with occupancy standards.

D. The possible acquisition of new space

69. As authorized by the General Assembly at its last session, the Secretariat, by letter of 31 January 1973, exercised the UN's option to rent, for an indefinite period of time, 260 offices in the old ILO building, when it is vacated by that organization. The rental figure is not yet certain. The Geneva Office has stated

that the "rental price quoted at Sw F 110 per square meter in October 1970 may have to be slightly adjusted to include the cost of reconditioning the office space earmarked for the UN. Clarification has been sought as to whether the rental price includes heating, lighting, cleaning, etc., but no answer has yet been received".

70. It is the opinion of the Geneva Office that, when available, the 260 offices in the old ILO building should house 325-350 persons. However, although the Secretary-General's report to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly assumed that the space "will become available in 1975" (A/C.5/1458, paragraph 38), it now appears likely that it will not be available until 1976. The GATT, which will occupy 240 offices in the same building, is not planning on occupancy until 1 January 1976.

71. There are two reasons for the delay in occupancy of the old ILO building. The first is the delay in completing the construction of the new ILO building. Although this new building was scheduled for completion early in 1974, the ILO secretariat now states that "the building is expected to be completed in the second half of 1974, and to be occupied as soon as possible thereafter, once the necessary checks have been made to ensure the satisfactory functioning of electrical and other equipment". It is conceivable that the building will not be occupied by the ILO until some time in 1975.

72. The second reason for the delay in UN occupancy of the old ILO building is the need to renovate the building before occupancy. This renovation will consist primarily of the installation of a new lighting system and repainting of the interior, and it is estimated that this will require a year's time. The Fondation pour les Immeubles des Organisations Internationales (FIPOI) will have the responsibility for carrying out the renovation.

73. The Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, paragraph 37) envisaged the availability of certain space for expansion in 1975 in addition to that in the old ILO building, namely 150 offices in "Le Bocage" (the villa and prefabricated structures now occupied by the GATT), and 130 offices on one floor of the new ILO building. Today however the factual situation is the following.

74. Le Bocage will not become available until 1976 since, as mentioned above, the GATT, which now occupies it, is not planning to move into part of the old ILO building until 1 January 1976 at the earliest. When the GATT does move from Le Bocage and the related prefabricated buildings, it is planned to move into that space the International Trade Centre, which is now housed in commercial space on the rue de Lausanne.

75. As regards the possible occupancy of space in the new ILO building, the ILO now envisages that it will have available in 1975 approximately three half floors which it would be prepared to rent to other international organizations. This space would be made available for a period of two years from the date of occupancy. Beyond this, two-thirds of the space could be made available for a further two years, on the assumption of an expansion of ILO staff of 5-10 per cent on a biennial basis. As of now, the WHO is negotiating for the rental of two half floors in the new ILO building. On 15 March 1973, the Geneva Office advised the ILO that it was not interested in space in the new building and was told that the remaining space was already committed.

76. It thus appears likely that, as matters now stand, the UN will have no new space available before 1976, when it can hope to occupy 260 offices in the old ILO building. In this connexion, it should be recalled that in his report to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, paragraph 38), the Secretary-General estimated that "by 1975 the United Nations will need 150 to 200 ... offices ... to meet anticipated expansion of existing units in Geneva". Assuming that this estimate was reasonably accurate, then additional measures appear to be required.

77. In paragraph 11 of annex V to his report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General mentioned that "other space which could conceivably become available to the United Nations would be the prefabricated structures at Petit Saconnex, accommodating about 500 persons, and at present occupied by the ILO. These structures belong to the ILO, but are built on land belonging to the Republic and Canton of Geneva. The United Nations Office at Geneva has asked the local authorities for an option on the premises, but a firm reply has not yet been received, since the local authorities are still considering the matter in the context of their town development plans".

78. It now appears that the Cantonal authorities have decided that they have no present need for the land in Petit Saconnex. According to the Geneva Office these authorities have advised that they have no objection to the UN taking over these buildings from ILO, and that they would be willing to extend through 31 December 1985, and perhaps even further, the lease for the land which expires at the end of 1975. The conditions of the lease would be the same as now applicable to ILO, except that the rental price fixed at Sw F 0.39 per square meter in 1963 would be raised to Sw F 2 for the years 1976 to 1980, with the possibility of a further adjustment for the period 1981-1985.

79. The Geneva Office states further that "no consultation has yet been held with ILO concerning the conditions for a possible sale of their buildings when they are vacated in 1975", pending a further clarification of UN space needs. Accordingly, no firm estimate has yet been made as to what the sale price might be.

80. As indicated by the ACABQ's 1970 report concerning the ILO (A/8140, annex I, J), the major portion of the Petit Saconnex premises, which now consists of 480 offices, was constructed in 1964. After a fire in 1966, the offices were rebuilt with the help of insurance compensation, and extended by the addition of sixty-three offices in each of the years 1968 and 1969. The cost of the buildings was advanced by the Republic and Canton of Geneva, and was reimbursed in the form of rental payments which continued until August 1970. A part of the buildings was occupied for a time by units of the WHO which participated through rental payments in the reimbursement of construction costs and is accordingly entitled to a share of any amount obtained by the sale of the buildings corresponding approximately to the value of fifty-seven of the offices. The total construction cost of the buildings amounted to Sw F 6,071,335, excluding work on the grounds and the insurance compensation received as a result of the fire. The ACABQ's report mentioned above estimated that the residual value of the buildings, when vacated by ILO, would amount to between 75 per cent and 20 per cent of the construction cost, depending upon whether they were permitted to remain on the present site or would have to be dismantled and rebuilt elsewhere. However, a responsible ILO official estimates that the cost of replacing the buildings today would be about Sw F 11,000,000. In 1971 the maintenance for the Petit Saconnex premises amounted to Sw F 150,500.

81. The premises in Petit Saconnex which will become available in 1975, are said to be well built and in good condition and to have an anticipated further life of fifteen-twenty years if properly maintained. They will house 500 staff, so that, together with the space which will become available to the UN in the old ILO building in 1976, they will provide office space for some 825-850 staff. They represent in all likelihood the last bit of non-commercial space which will become available to the UN in Geneva in the foreseeable future.

82. In estimating the possible need for the 740 offices (260 in the old ILO building and 480 in Petit Saconnex) which will become available in 1975, it is necessary to take account first of all of the Secretary-General's statement to the General Assembly last fall (A/C.5/1458, annex V) that "by the end of 1974 the United Nations will need some 150 to 200 offices to meet what is contemplated to be the expansion of units already located in Geneva, independently from other needs resulting from the transfer to, or establishment in, Geneva of other United Nations services". Thus for the years 1975 and thereafter there will be only an additional 540-590 offices available for expansion or other purposes.

83. In estimating the rate of growth of staff in the Palais after 1974, we start with the fact that in 1969 the Secretary-General estimated (A/C.5/1263) an annual rate of growth for various units in the Palais ranging from 2 to 3 per cent. However, in his report to the General Assembly last year (A/C.5/1458, annex V) the Secretary-General pointed out that in the two-year period December 1969-December 1971, certain units in the Palais had the following growth rates - UNCTAD, 16.8 per cent; ECE, 5.9 per cent; ITC, 59 per cent; UNHCR, 27.5 per cent; and Division of Narcotic Drugs, 32.3 per cent. Accordingly it may well be that an over-all growth rate for units now in the Palais higher than 3 per cent, perhaps 5 per cent, would be more realistic in estimating UN space needs in Geneva during the next five-ten years.

84. Assuming a rate of growth of only 3 per cent after 1974 - and no transfer to, or establishment in, Geneva of other United Nations services - it would probably require some eight years to occupy the 540-590 offices mentioned above. If the growth rate proved to be as high as 5 per cent, then the period would probably be reduced to less than five years.



85. The possibility of acquiring the Petit Saconnex premises gives rise to certain questions. Apart from the matter of the cost of acquisition mentioned above and the method of financing that cost, there is the need to determine the period of time for which the Republic and Canton of Geneva might be willing to lease the land to the UN. It would appear desirable, if possible, to have an option to lease the land for at least the life expectancy of the buildings. While the prefabricated structures could be moved to other land if necessary, the cost of such a move might be prohibitive. However, as the ILO experience has demonstrated, even if the UN could occupy the present site of the Petit Saconnex buildings only until 1985, the purchase of the buildings might well be cheaper than paying commercial rent during that period.

86. There is also the question of what use might be made of the space in the Petit Saconnex buildings over and above the UN's own needs in 1975 and the next few years. One possibility would be to move the International Trade Centre into that space from its present premises on the rue de Lausanne, at least until such time as the Centre can occupy Le Bocage and the related buildings. However, this would involve the cost and disruption of two moves by the ITC instead of one unless it was decided to locate the ITC permanently in Petit Saconnex. Secondly, it is known that a number of national delegations are seeking office space in Geneva in the vicinity of the Palais, and they might well be interested in taking two-four year leases in the Petit Saconnex complex. There are also non-governmental organizations which might well be interested in similar arrangements. Responsible officials in both the UN and the ILO believe there would be no difficulty in renting any excess space which might be available during the five-eight year period after 1975. However, this is clearly a matter which requires further exploration.

87. When considering the possible use to be made of excess space in Petit Saconnex, one must keep in mind the history of the space situation in the Palais during the last three years. When a study was made in 1969 concerning the use to be made of the new UN office building in Geneva, it was calculated that after its completion in 1972, it should be possible to accommodate in the Palais an additional 400 staff. That "excess capacity" had vanished by the end of 1972, largely because of the creation of a number of new secretariat units and their

location in Geneva, although unanticipated rates of staff expansion and the move of the Paris office of UNICEF to Geneva also played a role. This history suggests that at least a portion of any excess space which would exist in the Petit Saconnex premises in 1975 and thereafter would be occupied by newly created secretariat units. It is reinforced by the Secretary-General's suggestion to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, paragraph 5) that "new programmes and their secretariats should be located outside New York, unless the activity is such as to require close integration with New York-based functions". It may be, of course, that, in so far as Geneva is concerned, this suggestion will be affected by the recent sharp increase in the cost to the UN of maintaining staff in Geneva.

88. Acquisition by the UN of the ILO office space in Petit Saconnex might suggest to some the transfer of further Secretariat units from New York to Geneva, despite the financial implications of such a move. If this course were to be followed, it would limit the possibilities of an orderly planned expansion of units now in the Palais and of the location in Geneva of any newly created UN units. Any consideration of such a course would also have to take account of the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his last year's report to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1458, annex V, paragraph 20), namely:

"20. Proposals to transfer sizable numbers of United Nations Headquarters staff to Geneva would require careful consideration of the impact of such action on local conditions and undoubtedly would have to be staggered over a period of several years. In particular, the problems of housing and education would have to be taken into account. Accommodation is available in modern apartment blocks, but prices are high and are likely to increase. There is a long waiting list for the lower-priced housing, which the local inhabitants require, and they naturally take priority for such accommodations. It could be expected that should any large-scale movement of staff to Geneva be planned, the authorities would look to the United Nations for some gesture of support in meeting the financial requirements for new housing and schooling."

89. The Inspector has been advised by the Director-General of the Geneva Office that the situation in Geneva now appears to be even more difficult than that reported by the Secretary-General last year.

90. So far as the Inspector has been able to ascertain, there is no plan, even of a tentative nature, for meeting the Geneva Office space needs beyond the immediate future. At least one responsible Geneva Office official envisages the construction of one or two new UN office buildings in Geneva over the next twenty years, but most responsible officials seem to consider this to be an unrealistic prospect. Many appear to believe that the future growth of the UN Office in Switzerland is likely to be outside of Geneva.

E. The possible use of new space which might be acquired in the immediate future

91. If and when the UN acquires space in the old ILO building, and perhaps the Petit Saconnex annex, the question will arise as to what units should be moved into that space.

92. The ACABQ has given a lead in this area by suggesting that the UNICEF office be moved out of the new UN office building and perhaps be located in the old ILO building. Its suggestion that this possibility be studied was approved by the General Assembly. The reason behind the suggestion is not completely clear, although it presumably relates, at least in part, to the facts that UNICEF staff are not financed from the regular budget, and that the UNICEF office is a self-contained unit which is likely to generate few, if any, meetings in the Palais. The present tentative plans of the Geneva Office call for such a move by UNICEF when new space is available, but no negotiations with UNICEF concerning the matter appear to have taken place.

93. The tentative plans of the Geneva Office also call for the eventual movement out of the Palais into new space as it becomes available of certain units including UNDP, UNITAR, IOB, the FAO regional office and miscellaneous liaison offices and out-posted staff, the remaining Environment secretariat and perhaps the Human Rights Division, should it eventually come to Geneva. The purpose would be to provide additional room for expansion for UNCTAD, ECE, Narcotics and the INCB, UNHCR, Administrative and Financial Services, General Services including the Postal Administration, the Languages Division and the Library. There appears to be little basis for taking issue with this thinking, although it should be noted that UNHCR does not generate as many meetings as does the Human Rights Division, that it is substantially self-contained, and that its material assistance

programme is financed from voluntary contributions and not from the regular budget. There are also certain other units such as the UN Disaster Relief Office, the UN Volunteers Programme and the Centre for Economic and Social Information (CESI) which, on the face of it, might as appropriately be moved out of the Palais as those units now included in the tentative plans mentioned above.

94. It is apparent that there is a need to develop generally accepted criteria for determining which units should be moved out of the Palais when more space is acquired and a need for consistent application of those criteria when developed. If these needs are not met and decisions are taken or appear to be taken arbitrarily, then one can expect not only damage to the morale of staff moved out but also time-consuming debates in governmental bodies and unpleasant pressures on the Secretariat in an attempt to influence decisions concerning units to be moved out.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

95. Office space, which is a valuable commodity everywhere today, is at a premium in Geneva, and accordingly should be used with the maximum effectiveness and economy compatible with reasonable occupancy standards.

96. Office space in the Palais has not been as carefully managed as it should have been. This is primarily because (a) there has not been a carefully worked out plan, even for a medium term, to meet anticipated Geneva space requirements which has been accepted and respected by all concerned, (b) the authority and responsibility of the Director-General of the Geneva Office for space needs there has not been adequately respected by all the units occupying space or by UN Headquarters in New York, (c) there has not been a properly organized and adequately staffed space management unit in the Geneva Office and (d) the structure of the Palais had made space management difficult.

97. Despite the problems mentioned in paragraph 96 above, a serious and intelligent attempt has been made by the Conference Services Division to manage space in the Palais. Fair occupancy standards have been set. However, there has not been an adequate effort to enforce these standards or to insist that policies governing the use of space, e.g. the use of interior space, be applied uniformly to all units in the Palais. As a result, occupancy standards have been disregarded in a number of cases, and differing policies have been applied in certain situations.

98. The space situation in the Palais is tight today. New units of any significant size can be accommodated in the Palais only at the expense of using space designated for the expansion of existing units. Nevertheless, there is today sufficient space to cover the needs of existing units through 1974, provided that occupancy standards are respected and no additional units of any significant size are brought into the Palais. This is true for UNCTAD as well as for other units, although UNCTAD will probably have to make more modifications than other units in its present use of space, if it is to live within the area presently allocated to it.

99. It may be possible to "recover" for use as permanent offices certain space used as "conference offices", including some used by the ILO and WHO during their annual Conferences in May and June. It may also be possible to "recover" certain other small amounts of space in the Palais which have already been allocated to units but are not required by those units for present needs or planned expansion. However, it appears certain that additional space will be needed by 1975 to meet minimal expansion needs.

100. As of now, the only additional space for which the Geneva Office has negotiated, namely a part of the old ILO building, will probably not become available until 1976, and accordingly there is no present provision for the expansion of the Geneva Office in 1975.

101. The only premises potentially available to the UN in 1975 - other than commercial space - consists of the ILO buildings in Petit Saconnex which the ILO is prepared to vacate in 1975 and to sell. Acquisition of that space, plus the renting of a part of the old ILO building should provide the Geneva Office with sufficient space to cover its requirements for a period of five-eight years. However, the terms and conditions upon which the premises could be acquired have not yet been established.

102. As yet there are no generally accepted criteria for determining what units should be moved out of the Palais when new office space is acquired in Geneva.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The planning and management of office space in the Palais and other UN-owned or rented buildings in Geneva should be considered a staff function of the Office of the Director-General of the Geneva Office (or at least of the Office of the Director of Conference and General Services of the Geneva Office), and a small unit reporting to the head of that Office should take over the responsibilities for both substantive and conference office space now assigned to the Chief of the Conference Division. It should be responsible not only for the day-to-day management of office space, but more importantly for planning how to meet future space needs of the UN in Geneva. The planning should be done in consultation with all units in the UN buildings, and should be such as to enable the Secretary-General to report to each General Assembly the status of plans or proposals for meeting Geneva Office space requirements for at least the next five, and preferably the next ten years.

2. Once a plan for the future has been submitted to and approved by the General Assembly, its major elements should be modified only with Assembly approval. For example, the Secretary-General, or the Director-General of the Geneva Office should not decide to locate additional units of any significant size in Geneva without first securing the acquiescence of the Assembly. And the Assembly itself should consider modifying any approved plan only when it has before it a full statement of the possible consequences for the Geneva Office and of the possible impact of such a modification on the expansion possibilities of units presently in Geneva.

3. The Secretary-General should make it clear in an appropriate manner to all UN Secretariat units in Geneva that the Director-General of the Geneva Office has the final decision concerning the standards of occupancy and use of all space in UN buildings there. Further, all such units should be directed to consult the Geneva Office before submitting budget proposals requiring the use of additional office space, and when such proposals are submitted to the General Assembly, they should indicate how the office space needs are expected to be met.

4. When units, other than UN Secretariat units, are provided with office space in the UN buildings in Geneva, they should agree to accept the decisions of the Director-General of the Geneva Office concerning standards of occupancy and use of the space provided.

5. The major existing space problem in the Palais, that of UNCTAD, should be tackled and resolved as quickly as possible. Appropriate Geneva Office officials should sit down with UNCTAD officials and go over the present space layout, and suggest specific modifications which will ensure that UNCTAD is able to house all of its staff in the Palais, at least during 1973 and 1974. An effort should be made to keep the cost of such modifications to a minimum, although the installation or removal of some partitions unfortunately appears inevitable. UNCTAD should accept the basic proposition that it must live within its present space, at least through 1974.

6. The Geneva Office should make clear policy decisions on the use of interior space in the Palais and other UN-occupied buildings in Geneva, and should apply these decisions uniformly.

7. At an early date the Secretary-General should request the Director-General of the Geneva Office to initiate discussions with the Directors-General of ILO and WHO, in an effort to obtain the agreement of these organizations to reduce significantly the number of offices in the Palais which are used for their general conferences. While it is, of course, important that the ILO and WHO continue to use the Palais for their conferences and accordingly it is essential that they be provided with adequate facilities, both of these organizations should rethink their needs carefully, in the light of the over-all needs of today, and in view of the proximity of their own buildings to the Palais.

8. Commencing immediately, the unit responsible for dealing with office accommodations in the Palais should re-examine systematically all office space allocations and uses in an effort to "recover" space which has been allocated but which is not required for present needs or for planned expansion in the immediate future. Although the possibilities of recovering any significant amount of space are not great, the needs of the UN are such today that not a single office should be wasted if this can be avoided.



9. The Geneva Office should undertake as soon as possible the necessary negotiations to establish (a) the cost of rental of its part of the old ILO building on which an option has been exercised, (b) the cost of renovation of that part of the old ILO building, the manner in which the renovation will be paid for, and the best estimate of the date when the renovation will be completed and UN occupancy will be possible, and (c) the terms and conditions under which the UN could obtain the ownership of the ILO prefabricated buildings in Petit Saconnex, the terms and conditions under which the UN could lease the land upon which these buildings stand, and the possibilities of renting any temporarily excess space in those buildings, if required.

10. The Secretary-General should present the information mentioned in the preceding paragraph to the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and should seek a decision concerning the possible acquisition of the ILO premises in Petit Saconnex.

11. Subject to obtaining satisfactory conditions of acquisition, the General Assembly should seriously consider authorizing the purchase of the ILO premises in Petit Saconnex, since these buildings represent the only non-commercial space in Geneva which is potentially available to the UN in 1975 and the only space which would enable the UN to plan the meeting of its office space requirements in Geneva over the next five-ten years.

12. The Secretary-General should propose to the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly criteria for determining what units are to be moved out of the Palais when additional office space becomes available in Geneva in 1975 or 1976; and the General Assembly should decide upon these criteria at its twenty-eighth session in order that plans for moving specific units can be finalized in 1974.