



THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Optimal use of space at headquarters

1. During the 286th Session of the Governing Body (March 2003), the Subcommittee had before it a paper¹ which informed the members that the firm of architects of Schaer and Sjoestedt had initiated a comprehensive study on the utilization of office space at headquarters, and that the Office was carrying out a parallel survey of building occupancy and utilization. Following a discussion of this paper, the Subcommittee recommended to the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee that the Governing Body confirm its wish for a more modern use of the building which would take account of the architects' recommendations, specifically with regard to safety and health aspects.
2. The Governing Body approved the recommendation and also requested that a complete report should be submitted to this Subcommittee at the November 2003 session, including a detailed financial estimate and financial plan for the renovation of offices at headquarters.
3. The firm of architects of Schaer and Sjoestedt has reviewed the renovation work carried out after the first floor fire in January 2002. While it has identified possible improvements (e.g. in applying principles of natural lighting, elevated flooring, individual storage space built into walls) the firm was satisfied that the work undertaken was consistent with objectives of making a more modern use of the building, potentially creating between 20 and 60 additional work spaces per floor, while taking account of current safety and health aspects. The cost of such modernization work, not including furniture, was extrapolated at Swiss francs 4,050,000 per floor, for an estimated 5,000 square metres of office space. This is equivalent to US\$3 million at the 2004-05 budget rate of exchange.
4. The Office recently had the opportunity to renovate part of the second floor of the headquarters building. It successfully replaced the closed-office arrangement with a new open-plan layout, which reduced the cost of modernizing that part of the building, for example, through the elimination of false flooring and the utilization of cheaper partitioning.
5. The Office's mounting experience with such projects has brought to light the fact that the renovation of the headquarters building, even if undertaken piecemeal, must clearly

¹ GB.286/PFA/BS/2.

identify areas where the job need is consistent with open-plan layout. This is being done in collaboration with the ILO medical service.

6. The building is 30 years old and renovation of the workplace must also require improvements to the general infrastructure. The architects have informed the Office that a study cannot be realistic and cost-effective unless it includes an analysis of common areas and service facilities such as the elevators, heating and ventilation systems and possible structural renovation of the building's parking facilities and the roof. The Office has already sought details about health and safety concerns regarding the technical installations at the headquarters premises from both the original equipment manufacturers and the contractors currently dealing with the upkeep of such facilities.
7. Furthermore, in view of the changing international security context, all the international organizations based in Geneva have had to reconsider their beliefs and practices for protecting people and assets, for example, by controlling access to the whole or part of their premises. The Subcommittee may wish to provide its views on the extent of possible security and safety measures that should be taken at the ILO headquarters building.
8. The above considerations have broadened the scope of the exercise considerably, and in view of the complexity and cost implication involved, such a study should be considered in the context of a comprehensive property development plan for the headquarters building. In the discussions at its 286th Session (March 2003), the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee acknowledged that such a plan would take a significant amount of time to complete.²
9. Subject to any further guidance that the Subcommittee may wish to offer, the Office proposes to present to the Subcommittee at its next Governing Body session in March 2004 an outline description of a development plan for the headquarters building and a timetable for its completion.

Geneva, 24 October 2003.

² GB.286/12/1(Corr.), paras. 132-133.