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Item 27 of the agenda

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL,
IN COOPERATION WITH THE HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE,
ON MANAGING THE UNESCO COMPLEX**

ADDENDUM

OBSERVATIONS OF THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

SUMMARY

In accordance with item 2805.7 of the UNESCO Administrative Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its observations on this report of the Director-General.

STU supports all of the proposals aimed at improving working conditions for all colleagues, in particular through the renovation of the buildings and greater compliance with the security standards prevailing in the United Nations system.

The Capital Master Plan

STU takes note of and welcomes the progress of the project.

However, in view of the size of the budgetary provision still to be found, STU emphasizes the importance of proposing priorities for the phasing of renovation, and wishes attention to be paid chiefly to improving working conditions for colleagues in the technical areas of Fontenoy (studios, switchboard, security staff, fire officers, IT services, etc.) and at the Miollis-Bonvin site.

STU is more particularly concerned over the future of the Miollis/Bonvin site. While we applaud the wish to conserve an architectural heritage emblematic of the 1970s and 1980s (the Miollis building), we nonetheless remain worried about the project's implementation. Many questions remain unresolved and will depend on the pace of work and the size of the overall allocation.

STU will remain vigilant as to staff working conditions and security throughout the works. In view of recent developments and of the principle of the unanimously adopted scenario 3, it has reservations regarding the implementation of the project at the Miollis/Bonvin site:

- Since the works are scheduled over 10 years, does that mean that staff will have to endure major inconvenience (noise, dust, repeated office changes, evacuations, etc.) for that entire period? Might thought be given to an agreement with the host State to relocate staff temporarily away from the Miollis/Bonvin site for the duration of the work?
- Has maintenance of security – safety, entry control and fire safety – throughout the works been included in the project and funded? Will reduced mobility staff still be able to access the buildings?
- Have the specifications of the new project been finalized? Do they take account of the services available on the site (maintaining the cafeteria, bar, commissary, day nursery and sports room)? Have temporary replacements for these services been included in the project costs? Will the staff providing these services be redeployed during the work? Does the project include access and enhanced safety for the disabled?
- What options will be considered for replacing the site restaurant service during the works?

Maintenance and conservation of buildings

In recent years, for lack of adequate resources to ensure efficient maintenance and provide a back-up secure system, UNESCO has suffered several breakdowns in IT and electrical systems affecting all staff. In today's wholly computerized and globalized world, where information goes round the world in seconds and where the networked computer has replaced paper and pencil, an up-to-date, capable and secure working tool must be provided for the staff as a whole. For that reason, STU wishes the necessary budget to be allocated to secure these vital tools for UNESCO.

In recent years STU has on several occasions drawn attention to the poor overall condition and rapid dilapidation of the buildings, especially the high-rise building at Bonvin. To this day, colleagues working there observe that the tower is badly waterproofed – water leaks into offices during heavy rainfall – poorly insulated – temperatures are high in summer and icy in winter despite the old and overloaded air-conditioning system – and outworn – cracked surfaces, flooring, paintwork, walls, etc. The presence of large quantities of asbestos in the crumbling partition walls remains a constant source of anxiety for colleagues and calls for specific steps to be taken quickly. This building cannot easily accommodate staff for a further 10 years: working conditions there are degenerating very rapidly. Staff cannot continue to work in extreme conditions which have already occurred when the heating has broken down in winter. There could well be major disruption to services. This will have an impact on UNESCO's work.

Unless the resources needed for the renovation of the Miollis/Bonvin site can be found quickly, the work may last far longer than the scenario adopted in the CMP. According to the latest meetings, building maintenance costs on the site are rising steadily each year. The total expenditure wasted over 10 years will amount to almost half the cost of renovation. It is therefore urgent to assemble the budget needed for renovation, enabling major maintenance savings to be made over the long term.

STU is also very sensitive to the environmental issues raised by the Greening UNESCO Group. Every option must be considered for building the new buildings in compliance with environmental standards, seeking the greatest possible energy economy and the use of specific materials and procedures to that end (renewable energies).

Security and safety at UNESCO Headquarters, Medium-Term Security Plan

STU recalls that working in a secure environment is among the fundamental rights of all staff employed at UNESCO. The constant threat of terrorism is very real and the Organization does not yet have an effective overall system to counter such threats. Since our Organization works in sensitive fields targeted by fundamentalist terrorists, namely, education, science and culture, all

steps must be taken to guarantee the protection of staff both at Headquarters and in the field offices. Our lives have no price tag but require a budget to preserve them. For that reason STU fully supports the security plan put forward and asks that adequate funds be allocated to ensure its effectiveness.

With regard to the organization of the emergency evacuation plan, specific arrangements must be made to locate the disabled rapidly and so enable their priority rescue. The point is not to stigmatize them or confine them to specific zones, but to ensure their security to avoid them being trapped.

The forward security post will facilitate access to UNESCO for these people, and STU welcomes this. UNESCO must remain a place open to all but secure for all.

UNESCO telephone system

STU supports the proposal to invest in a new telephone system. It emphasizes that UNESCO must enjoy a high-quality telephone reception service provided by qualified multilingual staff with a thorough knowledge of the Organization, its functioning and the names of the people employed there so as to respond as quickly as possible to specific requests and questions. These tasks call for an efficient, reliable, latest-generation system which will speed up connections, use the new IP telephony protocol and so permit substantial savings to be made on communications.