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**MANAGING THE UNESCO COMPLEX:
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
AND REPORT OF THE HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE**

PART II

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

This addendum contains the comments of the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) on the report by the Director-General (32 C/40 Part II).

1. Maintenance of the Headquarters buildings remains, unfortunately, a matter of pressing concern. The upkeep of the premises of a major organization like our own requires both **staff and a budget**. Yet we read, in paragraph 38 of document 32 C/40 Part II, that “The workshops that ensure the functioning of electrical equipment, air-conditioning, plumbing, etc. have been reduced in the past to such an extent that they cannot be operational without permanent temporary assistance”. If we need permanent assistance, then we need permanent staff. But this downsizing has been carried out quite deliberately. In our view, a number of the technicians’ posts that were abolished should now be re-established.
2. The **maintenance** budget is derisory. Mr Belmont himself takes the view that the maintenance budget for buildings such as ours should be tripled; in other words, a budget of \$16.8 million per biennium is needed. Our maintenance budget, on paper, is set at \$5.5 million. But in reality, it amounts only to \$1.5 million, because many costs that have nothing to do with maintenance proper are charged to this budget (rental of storage space for publications, rental of land, mail and diplomatic pouch, etc.). The Headquarters Committee itself called for “in document 32 C/5, amounts corresponding ... to the practice-based standards applied in the host country for

similar purposes” – in short, for realistic amounts, as recommended by Mr Belmont. We are therefore very disappointed to note that the draft resolution merely reiterates, rather weakly, “its invitation to the Director-General to increase the budget earmarked for the upkeep and maintenance of Headquarters”. In our view, it should contain more precise and powerful wording, accompanied by budget figures.

3. Upkeep includes **cleaning services**, another subject that affects us personally in our working environment. Cleaning services are outsourced, but the contractual requirements have been reduced to a minimum in order to make savings. The results are plain to see, especially in the Fontenoy building where we regularly run out of the most basic supplies such as toilet paper and towels, where windows remain unwashed for months, even years, and where one returns from mission to find a desk, computer and telephone covered with a thick layer of dust. The external firms make sure of their profit margin, which certainly is costly for the Organization. The UNESCO Staff Union has complained for years about the lack of hygiene in some of the buildings, but has failed to observe any improvements. We are convinced that cleaning services would be performed more conscientiously by permanent staff, paid a decent salary.

4. The **Miollis/Bonvin site** undoubtedly poses a major problem, as recognized by Mr Belmont. However, if the aim is to undertake work involving the safety of individuals and buildings, we are somewhat surprised to see that priority has been given to the comprehensive rehabilitation of the sanitary installations in the Miollis building (reserved for the Permanent Delegations) and to the refurbishment of the bar. It is certainly desirable to modernize those dilapidated sanitary facilities and to make the bar a more pleasant spot. But – priority? Meanwhile, the **lifts** in the Bonvin building, which are more than 20 years old, break down once or twice a week and have numerous other operational problems. In a high-rise building, such inconveniences are by no means negligible, not to mention the danger to individuals.

5. In the case of a breakdown, anyone stranded between floors in a lift will of course call the **Fire Protection Unit**. According to host country regulations, three firefighters, including a chief of unit, must be on site as long as the building is occupied. UNESCO is in breach of this regulation. If the single firefighter on duty – and there was only one on duty at the Miollis/Bonvin site this summer – is busy rescuing someone from a lift, he will obviously not be available for other emergencies (a person who has collapsed or an outbreak of fire). This brings us once again to the dangers to which the users of the buildings are exposed as a result of the policy of systematic staff reductions.

6. The poor condition and inadequacy of our buildings was all too obvious during the recent **heat wave**. The temperature in the offices on the south side of the Fontenoy buildings reached levels between 35°C and 40°C, during an uninterrupted two-week period. An air-conditioned office remains the privilege of certain directors. There are no supplies of electric fans for the staff. Half the water fountains have been abolished. During this period, a vast waterproofing operation was taking place on the piazza, at the worst time of the year, with barely supportable noise and odours of tar and trichlorethylene. While we certainly agree that rainwater leaking into the conference rooms cannot be tolerated, was it necessary to carry out this work at the hottest time of the year, when working conditions in premises without air conditioning are the most difficult? We are aware that air conditioning for all is scheduled only under a future phase of the Belmont Plan. However, we believe it is urgent to include it in Phase II of the Plan and, in the meantime, to purchase a store of fans and to repair broken blinds.

7. Staff opinions are divided with regard to the Headquarters Security Plan. We are living, unfortunately, in an era of terrorist attacks, and the attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad is indeed evidence of this. However, some questions are in order. Have there ever, since

the founding of the Organization, been any genuine attempts at terrorist atrocities in our buildings? Have the demonstrators who have managed to occupy the ground floor or the roof been aggressive or threatening? Have draconian security measures prevented attacks elsewhere in the world? We understand that considerable sums have been allocated for a security operation which mainly involves surveillance by a large number of cameras and the compulsory wearing of a badge which will enable staff movements to be tracked. We are beginning to feel increasingly under surveillance by a mistrustful Administration within the walls of “our” Organization, and we raise the question of whether turning our buildings into a fortress is not going too far. Might not an ultra-defensive attitude be perceived as a challenge by potential terrorists? And how does the Organization propose to monitor the contents of the many vehicles, belonging either to individuals or to outside firms, which enter UNESCO premises every day?

8. To conclude, we welcome the **ban on smoking** that now applies to all Headquarters buildings except for the specially designated smoking areas. This regulation should both reduce the risk of fire and make the working environment more healthy for staff, delegates and visitors alike. We would urge everyone to abide by and to enforce this prohibition, in the interest of all.