

Hundred and seventy-second session

172 EX/38 Add.
PARIS, 23 September 2005
Original: French

Item 40 of the provisional agenda

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

ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

In accordance with Item 2805.7 of the UNESCO Administrative Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its comments on the report by the Director-General.

1. The UNESCO Staff Union wishes to make a few comments on the document submitted by the Director-General. First, even though it is not statutorily mandatory for the staff to give its opinion on alterations to the buildings in which it works, we consider that it is normal that we should be consulted if only because we know the premises, their qualities and their defects better than anyone else. If exclusion of the staff from all decision-making could be quantified, it would soon be realized that it leads to pointless and, alas, considerable expense.

The Miollis-Bonvin site

2. The situation on the Miollis-Bonvin site should be discussed not merely from the financial, but above all from the human, standpoint. Any accident, whether caused by fire or windows on the Bonvin site falling to the ground, for example, could be fatal to the staff members of UNESCO or to members of the Permanent Delegations working there. In addition to the human cost, and given that the budgetary problem seems to take precedence over all other problems, account must be taken of the fact that the ensuing litigation could put a serious strain on a budget that is already too tight. Besides, the insurance companies would probably refuse to cover such accidents caused by negligence and non-compliance with regulations in force in the host State. Furthermore, for the safety of persons working there or simply for financial reasons, work to ensure compliance with the

host State's regulations on fire protection in high-rise buildings, such as Building VI (Bonvin) should be considered absolutely essential and should be undertaken even before the end of the 2004-2005 biennium; consequently, inception of such work should not be put off to the next biennium.

Upkeep of Headquarters buildings

3. STU wishes to express serious doubts as to the proper maintenance of the Fontenoy buildings after their renovation, owing to the outsourcing of the maintenance services. These services are increasingly expensive each year and their costs are difficult to control. Furthermore, once the contract has been won, outside firms always proceed in such a way as to create a form of dependence that prevents the Organization from switching easily to new service providers when costs reach an unacceptable level. STU therefore recommends strongly a return to management as in the past, when all the trades were represented within the Organization's technical workshops in order to limit maintenance costs.

Headquarters security and parking regulations

4. Exorbitant expenditure has been incurred for security, an example being the installation of security cameras that have not even prevented several bicycle thefts. Furthermore, recent administrative circulars establishing conditions for the use of the UNESCO garages make no mention of restrictions on access to the garages for LPG vehicles, despite the known inherent risks. STU holds the view that the Organization, instead of taking a reasonable common-sense approach, sometimes spends freely while overlooking key elements of its security.

UNESCO-Starck Project

5. STU wishes to draw the attention of Member States to the need for the Organization to ask Mr Starck to revise his estimate downwards since all expenditure relating to major building work such as plumbing, air-conditioning and so on has already been costed under the Belmont Plan. This would enable everyone, including the Headquarters Committee, to cost this ambitious project transparently and realistically.

6. The staff is wondering why the Administration has called on an outside consultancy to revise that estimate, at a cost of €90,000, instead of requesting Mr Starck himself to revise his estimate in the light of the comments made above. Such a request would have cost the Organization nothing, as Mr Starck would have to adjust his estimate, free of charge, to the requirements of UNESCO, his potential client.

7. STU also has questions about the restaurant's future maintenance costs once it has been decorated by Mr Starck. Thus, for example, with each plate costing €250 and each chair €1,000, it is to be feared that regular restocking costs will indeed be prohibitive and will be a strain in the future on the maintenance budget which has already shrunk considerably.

8. Lastly, the staff would like to know why the next meeting of the Headquarters Committee has not been scheduled for the end of November 2005, that is to say after the end of the 33rd session of the General Conference when it should have been possible for the Committee to meet before the statutory renewal of its membership. By convening the Headquarters Committee with its new membership, the Administration will be knowingly leaving to persons who have not yet acquired the necessary institutional memory of these issues the responsibility of making important decisions that will have to be taken into account in the budget of the next biennium which will be adopted by the General Conference at its 33rd session.