

Note for Ms. Pollard

Staff Council Resolution of 12 March 2009

Attached for your information please find a response of the CMP Office to Staff Council Resolution 43/03 of 12 March 2009: "Capital Master Plan at Headquarters: Staff safety and health at risk". The reply to the Staff Council's concern about the security of staff in outlying and transitional buildings was provided by DSS.



Michael Adlerstein

1 April 2009

cc: Ms. Angela Kane

Encl.

**Response to Staff Council Resolution 43/03: "Capital Master Plan at
Headquarters: Staff safety and health at risk"**

Noting the failure of the Executive Director of the CMP to meet regularly with the duly appointed Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) staff-management working group to resolve CMP-related issues as they arise over the entire course of the project;

Last year the President of the UN Staff Union informed the Executive Director of the CMP that the UN Staff Union representative for the CMP would no longer be representing the UN Staff Union on such matters. The Executive Director of the CMP immediately requested that the President of the UN Staff Union appoint a new representative. As soon as the UN Staff Union agrees on a representative, regular JNC meetings should convene.

Expressing grave concern that the safety and security of the staff is being compromised for the sake of expediency and cost savings;

Improving the safety and security of the staff is one of the main objectives of the CMP. No aspects of safety and security have been compromised for the sake of expediency and cost savings.

Deeply concerned that the security for staff in outlying and transitional buildings does not or will not meet basic minimum operating security standards for headquarters locations, according to the UN's Security Risk Management Model;

Security for staff in annex and swing space locations complies with minimum operating security standards through standardized features such as access control and blast protection requirements. Threat and risk assessments for buildings intended for occupancy by the UN are conducted by Host City law enforcement. Their recommendations are considered and incorporated into DSS security requirements planning for those buildings where relevant.

Further concerned that staff left behind and present in the buildings during construction will subject them to a hazardous working environment, including asbestos contamination;

Staff remaining in the UNHQ during construction will be safe. Construction areas will be physically isolated from the areas occupied by staff.

The UN is applying all Host Country regulations for asbestos abatement. Please note that the handling and abatement of asbestos is among the mostly strictly regulated areas of any industry in the Host Country. Asbestos will only be abated by a

licensed contractor employing certified workers. Work will be monitored by a separate, certified independent contractor, taking air samples several times a day at prescribed locations inside and outside the work area.

Asbestos abatement work areas will be sealed off from occupied areas in an airtight manner. Specially designed and filtered ventilators create negative air pressure in order to confine asbestos particles within the work area. Wetting the asbestos-containing surfaces before the abatement with specially amended water further prevents asbestos particles from becoming airborne. Only workers wearing protective gear have access to the asbestos abatement area. They have to go through a strict decontamination process when leaving.

After the final cleaning of the work area, the independent contractor inspects the area before applying a thorough process of final air sampling to determine if the goal of the abatement was achieved. Then construction workers will access the area which is now free of asbestos. Staff will not reoccupy the area until the renovation of the respective building of the HQ complex has been completed.

Additionally concerned about the negative impact on efficiency and effectiveness that the CMP will have on central services, such as library services, meeting services, radio and TV, that will affect our clients, in particular staff and delegates;

It is certainly true that, like any large construction project, the first thorough renovation of the UNHQ after almost 60 years will affect every activity at UNHQ. The CMP has aimed to minimizing disruptions for staff and for the way the Organization operates, and has engaged in extensive consultations with the client departments, resulting in many cases in modifications to the plans. With the adoption of the Accelerated Strategy IV, the duration of the renovation was significantly reduced.

Aware that the planned working conditions for staff serving in the transitional and temporary buildings do not provide for a satisfactory working environment or basic facilities and services for staff;

We believe that the swing space offices will provide a fully satisfactory work environment.

Further aware that the numerous concerns of staff over space, parking, cafeteria services, medical facilities, shuttle bus service and for persons with disabilities, among others, have not been sufficiently addressed or answered;

The CMP has been in constant two-way communication with concerned staff about a host of issues, including space. This process has involved town hall meetings where

all staff is invited, meetings with smaller groups of staff specially affected by certain aspects of the CMP, and CMP staff participating in departmental town hall meetings. 36 articles about the CMP have been posted on iSeek since the adoption of the CMP budget in December 2006, and staff has taken these and many other opportunities to give the CMP their feedback and let their concerns be known. This process continued with the town hall meeting on 31 March.

350 parking spaces under the General Assembly Building will be permanently rededicated for other usage due to stricter security standards. While there will always be cafeteria service in the UNHQ during the renovation, staff in swing space locations will have access to pantries. The medical facilities will be centrally located in swing space in the vicinity of the HQ compound. Shuttle bus service has been requested by the Secretariat in the associated cost report that was submitted to the Fifth Committee. It is one of the key objectives of the CMP to make the UNHQ complex fully accessible for persons with disabilities.

Noting that the working space allocated for staff in the temporary buildings is significantly less than the space presently existing or proposed in the future, especially in light that the said temporary spaces may possibly become permanent for many staff.

Space allocation in swing space varies depending on the conditions in each building, and the requirements of the departments. CMP has worked closely with each department to create a good fit. Space allocations in swing space will not be below space allocations in current buildings - some will even be better. Space allocation in the future will be based on the new space planning guidelines.