

WIPO



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WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

WIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Nineteenth Session (7th Extraordinary)
Geneva, September 23 to October 2, 1996

MATTERS CONCERNING PREMISES

Memorandum by the Director General

1. It is recalled that, at their September-October 1995 ordinary sessions, the competent Governing Bodies approved the proposal to construct a temporary extension of the BIRPI Building (document AB/XXVI/19, paragraph 202). At that time, it was predicted that the construction would be completed within one year and it was estimated that the construction cost would not exceed 4.5 million francs (document AB/XXVI/12, paragraphs 14 and 15).
2. At the time of writing this memorandum (July 1996), these forecasts are still valid: the building should be finished in September 1996, and, although the exact cost will be known only once the accounts are closed and audited, the actual costs are expected to remain within the said estimate.
3. It is further recalled that, in the same (September-October 1995) sessions, it was understood that the International Bureau would study WIPO's long-term needs for premises and options to meet those needs in Geneva (document AB/XXVI/19, paragraph 201).
4. This study was carried out and its results were submitted to the May 13 to 15, 1996, joint session of the Budget Committee and the Premises Committee in document WO/BC/XIV/2-WO/PC/V/2. (That document was sent not only to members of those two

Committees but also to all States members of WIPO; further copies are available on request from the International Bureau.)

5. As far as the needs are concerned, the study estimated that the need for working places would increase from 730 in 1996 to 1,275 working places in the year 2006. Even with the acquisition by WIPO of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Building, which will make about 260 working places available for occupancy by WIPO in the year 2001, the study indicated that additional premises will very soon be required by the International Bureau to provide a number of further working places. The study also noted that there is a pressing need for additional conference facilities.

6. As concerns options to meet those needs in Geneva, the possibility of WIPO renting commercial premises was examined, but the study found that adequate premises were not available close to WIPO's headquarters buildings, and commercial premises would be much more expensive than the equivalent cost for financing a building constructed on the "Steiner lot" located directly across the street from the present WIPO Building.

7. The study noted that a building on the Steiner lot would satisfy WIPO's foreseen needs for working places and for conference facilities until the year 2006, and would do so at a relatively low cost, thanks to the generosity of the State of Geneva which would make the land available for WIPO free of charge and of the Swiss Confederation which would cover half (some 48 million francs) of the cost of the building through an interest-free loan, with WIPO covering the other half of the cost of the building (some 48 million francs) from its Special reserve fund for additional premises and computerization (which was constituted from fee payments from users of WIPO's registration systems, thus at no cost to the member States). The building could be ordered and owned by WIPO, or could be ordered and owned by FIPOI ("Fondation des immeubles pour les organisations internationales") which would rent it to WIPO; the costs for WIPO would be essentially the same under either alternative, the former having the advantage that the building would be an asset of WIPO.

8. The report of the joint session of the Budget and Premises Committees is contained in document WO/BC/XIV/3-WO/PC/V/3. (That document was sent not only to members of those two Committees but also to all States members of WIPO; further copies are available on request from the International Bureau.)

9. While a number of delegations at the said joint session agreed with the International Bureau's estimation of its needs for premises and supported the solution of WIPO constructing on the Steiner lot a building which it would own, other delegations considered that it was first necessary to have an independent appraisal of the International Bureau's assessment of its needs for premises.

10. In conclusion, the Budget and Premises Committees therefore recommended "in view of the urgency of the situation" the following two things: (i) that an independent expert give his opinion on the International Bureau's assessment of its needs for premises up to the year 2006, and (ii) that the WIPO General Assembly take a decision on the construction of a building on the Steiner lot at its September-October 1996 session. The two Committees indicated how the independent expert should proceed and what points his opinion should cover (see paragraph 32 of document WO/BC/XIV/3-WO/PC/V/3).

11. With the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the two Committees, the Director General appointed Mr. Alec Sugden (former Assistant Comptroller of The Patent Office of the United Kingdom) as the said independent expert.

12. The opinion and report of the independent expert were sent to the States members of WIPO on July 23, 1996 (document WO/BC/XV/2-WO/PC/VI/2), and will be considered by the Budget and Premises Committees in their joint session of September 9 to 11, 1996. The conclusions of that session of the two Committees, together with the Director General's observations, will be made available to the WIPO General Assembly for its session from September 23 to October 2, 1996. It is to be noted that all States members of WIPO were invited to the May 1996 session, and have been invited to the September 1996 session, of the two Committees, and that they all receive the documents relating to the sessions of the two Committees.

13. The General Assembly is invited to note the contents of the present document.

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