



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-EIGHTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Provisional agenda item 18

A58/33
18 April 2005

Real Estate Fund

Report by the Director-General

1. The Executive Board at its 115th session in January 2005 requested the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee to review on its behalf, at its second meeting in May 2005, the proposal of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean on real estate projects, and thereafter make an appropriate recommendation for consideration by the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2005.¹ The present report will be considered by the Committee at its second meeting, and its views will be submitted to the Health Assembly as part of the Committee's report.

2. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region about 90% of the budget, combining regular and extrabudgetary funds, is spent at country level. The resources spent directly at country level have grown very substantially and can be expected to increase even further in the coming years as country operations expand in response to the policy of decentralization. To support this policy strong country offices are needed, as reflected in the increased budget proposed for country cooperation. These offices will require additional technical staff to assist WHO Representatives in providing policy advice to Member States. Consequently, additional office accommodation will be needed to strengthen the country presence.

3. Many WHO Representatives' offices are currently accommodated in premises that do not facilitate the conduct of their functions. As budgets increase and decentralization is implemented, the current office buildings at many locations are already no longer able to house staff together with, in many cases, a negative impact on coordination and effectiveness. In addition, security of staff and premises remains a priority for the Organization and sizeable additional investment is required to meet those needs adequately.

4. WHO Representatives often have to relocate for various reasons, including security and safety, demands for higher rent or need for additional space, resulting on each occasion in substantial one-time investment in installation costs such as local area networks, cabling, anti-blast film and other security investments.

5. It has proved difficult to find premises at reasonable cost that are secure, safe and allow staff to work together effectively. The Regional Office has identified a number of locations where construction has become necessary for reasons of security and/or space. Various funding sources, including host governments' own contributions are being sought. WHO does not intend to construct in cases where WHO staff is housed in safe premises of the Ministry of Health, where a United Nations house is planned, or where accommodation can be rented at affordable prices and construction would not be cost effective.

¹ See document EB115/2005/REC/2, summary record of the tenth meeting, section 1.

6. The locations set out below have been identified as requiring construction because staff security is problematic, current buildings do not comply with Minimum Operating Security Standards, staff are accommodated at a number of different locations, suitable cost-effective office buildings are not commercially available, and/or available accommodation is insufficient to accommodate the Regional Office's future needs.

7. In **Iraq** the condition for the return of WHO international staff is an office building that complies with Minimum Operating Security Standards. In view of the situation in Baghdad, WHO will need to construct a new building or retrofit an existing facility, ensuring that security measures are integrated in the design. The option of retrofitting an existing building is the fastest, provided that there is enough land to secure the required security stand-off distances. The total cost of construction or retrofitting is estimated at US\$ 1.2 million.

8. With regard to the office of the WHO Representative in **Jordan** and the Centre for Environmental Health Activities, the Government of Jordan has provided WHO with 2000 square metres of land valued at more than US\$ 1 million and has agreed to contribute towards the cost of construction and amount corresponding to the current rent of the office and the Centre over five years. The premises are currently located immediately on the street and have no security stand-off distance as required by Minimum Operating Security Standards. Construction will make it possible to regroup these two offices and to integrate security and functionality in the design. The total estimated cost of construction of suitable accommodation is estimated at US\$ 1.4 million.

9. The WHO Representative's current office in **Tunisia** is not sufficient to accommodate staff. Although part of the building is currently available, the proposed rent is prohibitive. Should WHO not rent this remaining part, a private entity might share the premises, which is not recommended for security reasons. It is also directly on the street with no security stand-off distance. The Government of Tunisia has offered 1700 square metres of land valued at US\$ 900 000 in a secure office area. Construction would integrate security and functionality in the design. The cost of construction of a 1000 square-metre office is estimated at US\$ 400 000. In addition, the Government already rents space for the WHO Mediterranean Centre for Vulnerability Reduction. Construction of a building will make it possible to accommodate at a secure and safe location both the WHO Representative's office and, should funding be raised, the Centre for Vulnerability Reduction. The Government's contribution to the rent of three floors and a basement is currently US\$ 43 200 per year, whereas the rent required for one additional floor is US\$ 26 800.

10. The Regional Office is requesting that the US\$ 1.5 million planned under real estate in the Proposed programme budget 2006-2007, which was earmarked for the reinforcement of the security and safety and refurbishment of the above-mentioned offices, might be used along with other extrabudgetary resources and government contributions for the construction of office buildings.

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

11. The Health Assembly is invited to consider the following draft resolution:

The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Director-General on the use of the Real Estate Fund for the construction of offices of WHO Representatives in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;¹

Noting that it is proving difficult to find suitable accommodation for the offices of the WHO Representatives in the Eastern Mediterranean Region at a reasonable cost that are secure, safe and allow staff to work together effectively;

1. EXPRESSES its appreciation to the governments that have made available land in their countries and to those that have pledged cash to assist in the construction of offices of WHO Representatives,
2. AUTHORIZES the Director-General:
 - (1) to proceed with the retrofitting, or construction, of suitable accommodation for offices of WHO Representatives in Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia;
 - (2) to use the amount of US\$ 1.5 million planned in the Proposed programme budget 2006-2007 under Real Estate for the Eastern Mediterranean Region to contribute towards the retrofitting, or construction, of suitable accommodation for the offices of the WHO Representatives in Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia.

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¹ Document A58/33.