



PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD

Twelfth meeting
Geneva, 29 - 31 May 2002

Provisional agenda item 6.1:

New UNAIDS premises: status and next steps

1. Introduction

The UNAIDS Secretariat in Geneva is currently housed in two separate buildings, which has caused logistical problems and detracts from the Programme's efficiency. Additionally, the current accommodations do not offer appropriate facilities, e.g. large conference rooms and sufficient storage. Following protracted discussions over alternative accommodation, the Swiss Government has proposed construction of a UNAIDS headquarters building, which UNAIDS will share with the World Health Organization (WHO). For this purpose, the Swiss Government is planning to grant UNAIDS and WHO a 50-year interest-free loan of up to CHF55 million to cover construction costs, of which UNAIDS' share would be approximately CHF27.5 million. WHO has already consulted its Executive Board and will ask the World Health Assembly in May 2002 for authorization to proceed with the building's construction and to assume liability for its share (CHF27.5 million) of the loan.

2. Description of the project to construct a UNAIDS headquarters building

The Canton of Geneva plans to develop and optimize the United Nations area of Geneva. The development plans include constructing a road and tunnel from the Geneva/Lausanne motorway to the Place des Nations. The road construction requires demolishing the WHO Annex V building (currently housing part of the UNAIDS Secretariat) and constructing a "replacement" building on a plot of land adjacent to WHO headquarters. While the new building's main objective is to provide headquarters premises for UNAIDS, the new building will also relieve some of the pressure on accommodation for the WHO Secretariat. It is thus proposed that the building be shared by UNAIDS and WHO.

A competition for the selection of architects for the new UNAIDS headquarters building was organized jointly by the responsible Swiss agency (Fondation des immeubles pour les organisations internationales [FIPOI]), WHO and UNAIDS. The winning architects are B & E Baumschlager-Eberle, of Lochau, Austria.

3. Financial arrangements for the construction project

The Swiss Government is planning to grant UNAIDS and WHO a 50-year interest-free loan of up to CHF55 million to cover construction costs. The loan will need to be approved by the Swiss Federal Parliament. It is expected that a formal submission to Parliament will be made in September or December 2002. WHO allocated an amount of CHF400,000 for the development of outline architectural plans and the Swiss Government awarded a sum of CHF4 million in 2001 as an advance against the future loan for preparatory project planning costs.

As UNAIDS does not have its own legal personality under Swiss legislation, separate from that of its Cosponsors, different options are being considered to enable UNAIDS to assume its share of the proposed loan and contracts with architects and builders.

The PCB Chair will be apprised and consulted, as appropriate, on further developments on this subject.

4. Timetable and interim arrangements

It is envisaged that the proposed loan from the Swiss Government will be submitted to the Swiss Federal Parliament in late 2002, that the loan will be formally granted between June and October 2003, and that work will begin on constructing the new UNAIDS headquarters building in the summer/autumn of 2003. The building is scheduled for completion by the end of 2005. Until a solution is found to enable UNAIDS to assume its share of the loan, certain interim measures will need to be taken by, for example, the conclusion of an interim contract with the architect. It is proposed that these measures be taken by WHO in agreement with UNAIDS, or by UNAIDS under authority delegated by WHO.

5. Conclusion

The above information is submitted for the information of the PCB. UNAIDS will keep the PCB and CCO informed of developments.