

Dear Colleague,

29 April 1998

On 30 March 1998, the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) took a number of decisions regarding the implementation of common premises. In particular, the Executive Committee reconfirmed the recommendation put forward by the UNDG Sub-group (formerly JCGP Sub-group) on Common Premises and Services, namely that the following selection criteria be strictly followed for the establishment of common premises, in descending order of priority:

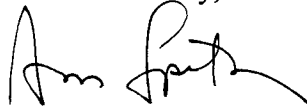
- (1) Common premises in suitable condition provided rent-free or subsidized by the host Government.
- (2) Renovation and/or modification to existing buildings belonging to the host Government. These premises should be provided rent-free or the required renovations and/or rent should be subsidized in part by the Government.
- (3) Rental of office premises, leased from the private commercial market.

The establishment of common premises should present clear aggregate cost savings to the participating United Nations agencies and should be pursued after undertaking a thorough cost benefit analysis. Any such proposal should first be directed to the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services for review and approval prior to entering into any binding obligations.

A fourth alternative, namely the construction of premises by the private sector, on land provided by the host Government, is considered to be the least favoured option, and should be pursued only in exceptional cases and only in full consultation with the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services. Therefore, Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams shall no longer accept plots of land for construction of new common premises, nor plan construction projects that require United Nations funding or supervision. Land gifted or allotted to the United Nations should be released back to the host Government with an expression of appreciation for the Government's generosity and support, but regretting that the United Nations system does not have the financial resources at this time nor in the foreseeable future to construct new office premises.

Please direct any queries that may arise from this communication directly to Mr. Steven Bloom, Chairperson of the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services, sbloom@unicef.org, fax (212) 326 76 28.

Yours sincerely,



James Gustave Speth

TO UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATORS