

EBAP/82/445

December 27, 1982

To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Secretary

Subject: Annual Meetings--Office Arrangements for Constituencies

Attached is a paper recommending changes in the existing arrangements for constituency offices at Annual Meetings. It is understood that the Vice President and Secretary of the World Bank will be discussing this recommendation with Bank Executive Directors.

It is suggested that two related matters--(i) the provision at Annual Meetings of offices for a few Executive Directors, and (ii) local secretarial help for Executive Directors at Annual Meetings abroad--should be referred to the Committee on Executive Board Administrative Matters (CAM) for consideration. A paper on these matters is being prepared and will be submitted to the Chairman of the CAM in due course.

In the course of the coming weeks, the Secretary will be in touch with Executive Directors to determine whether this matter should be considered at a meeting of the Executive Board or on a lapse-of-time basis.

Att: (1)

Other Distribution:
Department Heads

Annual Meetings--Office Arrangements for Constituencies

1. Some questions have arisen about the equity of the practice which has evolved over many years whereby certain regional groupings, namely, the African, Latin American, two Middle Eastern, Nordic, and Southeast Asian, are provided with office and meeting room space at the Annual Meetings free of charge. Notwithstanding this practice, several individual country delegations from among the six regional groupings also rent office space for their private use for the duration of the Annual Meetings.

2. The practice of according free space for some regional groupings came about because of the provision in the original Articles of Agreement of the Fund (now eliminated) which permitted the American Republics to elect two Executive Directors. Beginning with the early Annual Meetings, arrangements were made regularly for Latin American Governors to caucus throughout the period of the Meetings, inter alia, so that they could reach a consensus on their candidates for Executive Directors. By 1961, the Middle Eastern and Nordic regional groups, as well as the Latin American one, were each being given a room large enough to accommodate constituency meetings together with space for use as an office by all delegations in the constituency. In 1964 when the two African constituencies were formed, they were also provided with office and meeting room space. Similar provisions for the Southeast Asian regional grouping were made in 1972. At the Nairobi Annual Meetings in 1973, the constituency comprising Algeria, Ghana, Greece, Iran, Morocco, Tunisia, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, was given three offices free of charge. While the composition of this group has changed in subsequent years, it has continued to receive free space on a regular basis.

3. At Annual Meetings held in Washington, the African and Latin American regional groups have been accommodated in public space made available to the Fund and Bank by the Sheraton Washington Hotel at no rental charge. However, the Fund and Bank have to pay for converting the space into offices and for the telephone charges and, from the point of view of the Fund and Bank, this free public space could be used in lieu of other space for which they presently have to pay rent. The Fund and Bank pay the rental charges, as well as the other costs, for the offices and meeting rooms for the two Middle Eastern, Nordic, and Southeast Asian groups. The total cost for this space at the 1981 Annual Meetings was \$25,206 (see Attachment). At Annual Meetings held outside of Washington, the Fund and Bank pay for the setting up and telephone charges, but not the rental cost for the offices and meeting rooms used by the regional groups because the space is provided free by the host country. For the 1982 Toronto Meetings, the total rental cost of such space is estimated to have been \$Can.58,127.

4. In line with inflation and the rising prices charged by the Sheraton Washington Hotel, the cost of the space used by the six constituency groups will continue to rise for future Annual Meetings. The pressures on the available space, including the demand for rooms for

ancillary meetings, can also be expected to increase because of the growth in the size and complexity of the Meetings. From the point of view of equity and of the needs of the Meetings as a whole, it would be more appropriate if the allocation of space at Annual Meetings were subject to uniform criteria.

5. While it would be possible to develop a system under which certain constituencies that are considered least able to meet the costs of Meeting rooms could receive space free, it would be difficult to agree on guidelines for selecting such constituencies. Even if agreement could be reached on the guidelines, their implementation would pose difficult decisions. However, several other approaches could be considered which would involve less difficult judgments. The first would be to provide all multi-country constituencies, regardless of ability to pay, with free space for offices and meeting rooms. While this alternative would be fair and equitable, its main disadvantage would be the higher costs that the Fund and Bank would have to bear. The second possibility would be to maintain the present arrangements, but not to provide offices and meeting rooms for any future groups. In addition to being less equitable to constituencies and delegations, this alternative would involve increased rental costs for the Fund and Bank, although a lesser amount than the first alternative. The third possibility would be to charge all constituencies for their delegations' offices and meeting rooms. While this would be fair, it would also pose problems for a number of small countries within the constituencies. The criteria for allocating the costs to the various constituent members would raise difficult questions. The fourth and final possibility would be to continue to provide free office and meeting room space to the African and Latin American groups only. This alternative reflects the practical requirements of coordinating the positions of such large numbers of countries (the African group consists of 42 countries and the Latin American group comprises 24 countries) in respect, inter alia, of their common statements and the election of Executive Directors.

6. It would appear that the large size and multi-constituency character of the African and Latin American groups, together with their coordination requirements for electing Executive Directors and preparing common statements, would justify treating them differently. The Joint Secretariat therefore recommends that the present arrangements for the African and Latin American regional groups be maintained, but that the provision of free space to the considerably smaller single-constituency groups, namely, the Middle Eastern, Nordic, and Southeast Asian, be discontinued.

Attachment

Cost of Office Arrangements for Six Regional Groups
1981 Annual Meetings

Regional Group	Electrical Circuits	Telephone Installations	Telephone Calls ^{1/}	Rental Costs	Equipment/ Furniture	Approximate Total Cost
African	\$190	\$1,296.45	\$ 123.12		\$1,186.97	\$2,796.54
Latin American	280	1,458.35	1,824.32	--	693.98	4,256.65
Middle Eastern I	--	830.70	43.41	\$4,650	190.00	5,714.11
Middle Eastern II	--	914.30	217.45	3,720	129.00	4,980.75
Nordic	--	791.85	117.96	2,790	112.00	3,811.81
Southeast Asian	--	618.50	125.71	2,790	112.00	<u>3,646.21</u>
						\$25,206.07

^{1/} Does not include charges for calls made on the normal hotel room telephones.