

SBI 38, item 18 (c) Implementation of the Headquarters Agreement

DRAFT

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Executive Secretary's statement in response to host government's statement

Mr. Chair,
distinguished delegates,

Under this agenda item you have been reviewing three aspects of host country arrangements – first, the overall arrangements for delegations, the secretariat and its staff; second, the office accommodation of the secretariat; and third, the conference facilities in Bonn to hold sessions of UNFCCC bodies.

[Meeting hub - Collaborative/Consultative Process]

The SBI, at its 36th session, called upon the German government to closely cooperate with the secretariat in addressing these three aspects. I can report that we have, in the meantime, instituted a process for regular consultations and systematic collaboration across all management and working levels, various work streams, and involved all relevant stakeholders. I believe that thanks also to this process, we have managed to see some accelerated progress over the past two years. At your request, much of this progress was shared with you via the UNFCCC web site.

[Status of participants and staff]

On the legal status and day-to-day treatment of the secretariat, our host country has been exemplary in fulfilling its obligations and in making staff and families feel welcome.

I trust you will also agree with me that you, the delegates, as well as thousands of other participants in UNFCCC meetings and workshops each year, have enjoyed all necessary travel facilities, privileges and immunities to conduct your work here in Bonn.

In the collaborative process that I mentioned before, the secretariat and the Federal and City authorities are working on improving the level of services and information available to participants. One outcome of this collaboration has been that the relevant offices are providing more longer-period and multiple-entry visas for UNFCCC delegates.

[Altes Hochhaus and New Building]

We all know that the accommodation of the secretariat has been a thorny issue over the past decade. In September last year, we finally moved into our new headquarters building, Altes Abgeordnetenhochhaus, with about half of the secretariat's staff.

While we are now united with our sister Agencies on the UN Campus, we are unfortunately still separated from the other half of the secretariat. Some 250 of my staff had to stay behind in Haus Carstanjen. This means that we remain divided over 3 buildings.

However, we have been told that the new annex building on the UN Campus will be ready to accommodate the rest of us as soon as 2018. I had the honour to serve on the selection

panel for the architectural blueprint, and trust that we were successful in choosing the most modern and sustainable design.

[WCCB]

The host city and host government have also entered into an intensive dialogue with the UN on the new conference centre, and beyond that, on the UN's present and future conference requirements in general. As part of this, the city of Bonn has agreed to redesign the huge new conference hall so it can be divided in order to hold two plenary meetings in parallel. This has cost extra money and time, but I agree with the Lord Mayor of Bonn that it was worth it. Construction work is going on as we speak and the Lord Mayor expects the conference centre to be fully operational in time for the next Bonn sessions of the SBs.

In the meantime, we have already used the existing conference centre facilities in and around the former parliament buildings on a number of occasions. The proximity of part of the secretariat has allowed us to service these events efficiently. I have also heard many positive comments from Party delegations who attended the sessions of the ADP in these facilities last year and this year. Let me thank the German government again for the one million euros it contributed to support the ADP process.

All of this really makes me look forward to the large, brand-new conference facilities.

[Closing]

I would like to thank all our counterparts, especially in the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the City of Bonn, for their cooperation and support. Not only do I acknowledge the considerable financial investments they are making to address current gaps and shortcomings. But most importantly, I have experienced in the past few months a revitalized effort to work together towards lasting solutions for our common issues.