Note by the Executive Secretary to the Heads of Delegations

1. The CONTRACTING PARTIES will recall that, at the thirteenth session, the Executive Secretary informed the Working Party on the Budget that "whilst, in his view, the existing accommodation at Le Bocage would still suffice in 1959, any further increase of the staff would make the provision of additional accommodation essential".

2. The Working Party noted the view expressed by the Executive Secretary that the accommodation problem may become acute before long and that proper arrangements should be made in good time and suggested that the Executive Secretary be invited to submit to the CONTRACTING PARTIES in good time such proposals as he considers necessary together with their financial implications so as to enable governments to give them appropriate consideration (document L/922 of 20 November 1958).

3. Since then, the CONTRACTING PARTIES authorized the Executive Secretary at their fourteenth session to put into effect the original Plan C submitted to the CONTRACTING PARTIES in 1956 and providing for four additional offices in the basement of the Villa Le Bocage. The Executive Secretary was authorized to charge the total cost of this transformation to the Building Fund, at the time showing a balance of approximately $5,000 which has now been exhausted.

4. With this small addition it has been possible during 1960 to house the existing permanent staff (70) and a number of temporary staff. Eight fellows have also been accommodated at Le Bocage.

5. However, some overcrowding already exists and any further increases in the establishment, even the smallest, would make it necessary to find additional accommodation.

6. The budget proposals for 1961 will suggest a significant increase in the personnel establishment, probably of some 20 posts, making a total of approximately 90 posts. This tentative figure is based on the anticipated workload in 1961 and on the number of temporary staff it has been necessary to engage so far during 1960 to cope with the current workload. This figure would have to be revised to take into account any changes in the personnel establishment resulting from decisions the CONTRACTING PARTIES may take concerning the re-organization of the secretariat.

7. It follows from the above that additional accommodation must be available by 1 January 1961 and action to acquire it in one form or another must be taken without delay.

Spec(60)115
8. In this connexion the Executive Secretary has been examining with the United Nations the possibility of further transformations of the Villa Le Bocage and the annex opposite the main entrance. Provisional plans for such transformations have been prepared and costed. They show the following:

(a) Transformation of the attic would provide 19 additional one-unit offices at a total cost of approximately Sw.frs.253,000.
(b) Transformation of the annex (the original Plan A submitted to the CONTRACTING PARTIES in 1956) would provide another 13 offices at a total cost of approximately Sw.frs.154,550.
(c) The creation of additional parking space would amount to approximately Sw.frs.12,000.

9. These transformations together would make it possible to house a total of approximately 115 staff members at Le Bocage (the number would vary a little depending on the use made of the larger rooms).

10. It will be noted that even with the transformations mentioned in paragraph 8 above, only a relatively small margin for further expansion would be provided. If future expansion were to go beyond this, additional accommodation would have to be found elsewhere since no further possibility would then exist at Le Bocage.

11. Therefore, in examining these possibilities, the first question to be considered is that of the total personnel strength in years to come. The investment by the CONTRACTING PARTIES of further funds in transforming the existing premises could be considered justified only if the total establishment is expected to remain within the total figure mentioned (115).

12. Unless this ceiling figure is accepted, covering a period of some ten years, the proposal could not be considered financially sound.

13. In this connexion, contracting parties will also wish to bear in mind the amount of roughly $60,000 which they have already invested in constructing the new wing to Le Bocage.

14. It should be noted that the United Nations' approval for further transformations would be dependent on the secretariat giving a reasonable guarantee that it would continue to occupy Le Bocage for another period of at least ten years and preferably longer, the United Nations being of the opinion that further transformations of Le Bocage would limit rather than increase the possibility of finding another suitable tenant.

15. Other possibilities are:

(a) construction of a new building either independently or as an annex to the Palais des Nations;
(b) renting or buying of other premises elsewhere sufficiently large to accommodate the entire secretariat, including further additions.

These possibilities have not so far been explored nor have their financial implications been examined.