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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

REFERENCE

14 June 2005

Dear Mr. Boakes,

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I should like to respond to your letter of 5 April 2005 transmitting a previous letter concerning challenges facing the United Nations Child Care Centre.

The issues you raised on behalf of the United Nations Child Care Centre - space, financial support, security and UN medical support are extremely important to the Secretary-General. In fact, the Secretary-General had earlier requested Ms. Catherine Bertini to review your concerns and she did so when she visited the Centre in 2004.

During Ms. Bertini's tour and visit with the staff of the Centre, the issue of limited space became very apparent. However, as you may be aware, the final configuration of the Capital Master Plan and the accompanying need for temporary "swing-space" and conference space has yet to be determined. While the issue of space is difficult to resolve, let me assure you, nevertheless, that every effort will be made to see how the Centre's situation can be improved.

Regarding the need for timely financial contributions from the three New York based funds and programmes, I would suggest that you provide my office with a draft letter from the Secretary-General requesting them to ensure that their voluntary contributions are paid in a timely manner.

Mr. Timothy Boakes
President and Chairperson
Board of Directors
United Nations Child Care Centre
New York



25-04465

As to support from the UN Medical Service in the case of emergencies, I have been informed by the Medical Service that it has been agreed that a nurse from the DC-2 Medical Unit will assist within the limits of the Medical Service capabilities in handling pediatric emergencies until the emergency services arrive. I have also been informed that first aid kits are available and that all of the Centre's staff are trained in CPR.

With regard to your request to reopen the playground in the North Garden and arrange for its refurbishment, I will ask Mr. Christopher Burnham, the newly-appointed Under-Secretary-General for Management, to look into this possibility. I will also ask him to look into your other requests concerning the Capital Master Plan, as well as the issue of affordability for all UN staff members of the child care provided by the Centre.

The United Nations Child Care Centre clearly serves a useful and important child care option for many staff members. I would be grateful if you would convey to its Board of Directors my appreciation for their work and my thanks for bringing these concerns to my attention.

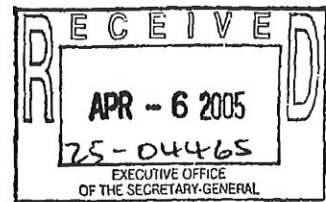
Yours sincerely,



Mark Malloch Brown
Chef de Cabinet

cc Mr. Burnham
Ms. McCreery

PS



UNITED NATIONS CHILD CARE CENTRE
2 United Nations Plaza, 2nd Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel. 212 963 4326

5 April 2005

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

(#23-08033)

I am attaching a copy of my letter to you of 20 May 2003, describing a number of challenges facing the UNCCC, and seeking your assistance in requesting the appropriate Department Heads and Heads of Agencies to increase their support for the work of the Centre.

Since I have not received a response, and these issues have gained rather than lessened in importance in the past two years, I am respectfully bringing these matters to your attention once again.

Respectfully yours,

Timothy Boakes
for Timothy Boakes
President and Chairperson
Board of Directors

2005
#23-08033

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General
of the United Nations

DISG/DM
2005 APR 11 P 3:05
LOG NO. 5-1005-957
ACTION
OO:

UNCCC United Nations Child Care Center
2 UN Plaza
New York NY 10022

copy #23-08083

→ PS →
Bertini

20 May 2003

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

(see
#23-17677)

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the United Nations Child Care Centre, I would like to welcome the fact that Work-Life issues are taking on greater importance in the Organization under your leadership, and that your recent report on "An agenda for further change" recognizes (para. 182) that: "One of the ways to attract and retain quality staff, particularly women, is to pay more attention to the conditions that will lead to a better balance between their professional and private lives." In order to accomplish this goal, I am sure that you will agree that the provision of quality on-site child care is of prime importance. While much is being done lately to implement flexible work arrangements, we have yet to see similar progress in enhancing child care facilities at the United Nations.

I have been requested by the Board of Directors to bring to your attention a number of issues about which we are concerned and to seek your assistance in requesting the appropriate Department Heads and Heads of Agencies to increase their support for the work of the Centre. The issues are as follows:

Accommodation

Since the Centre became operational almost twenty years ago, the demand by staff of the United Nations, UN Agencies and Permanent Missions for enrollment for their children has exceeded the capacity of the space provided by the UN. The Wait List for available spaces in the Centre has over the years ranged from 60 to 100 requests. The size of the space allocated only allows for a maximum of 72 children to be enrolled. The UNCCC is currently occupying cramped conditions on the 2nd floor of the DC2 building and lacks adequate space to meet demand. It also lacks a designated play area for use by the children in inclement weather. Requests have been made to the UN Administration over the years for additional space to be provided but to no avail. However, we have never received a definitive rejection of consideration of expansion space. The Board of Directors is seeking your confirmation that provisions for the UNCCC have been included in the Capital Master Plan for UN New York accommodation. In addition, the need for access to adjacent outdoor playground space should be factored into plans for / . .

Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

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the UNCCC within the Capital Master Plan. We are very concerned that the children of UN staff and their child care needs not be neglected in the process of preparation of the Capital Master Plan and we would like to request your support in ensuring that this important matter is given the attention it deserves. Therefore, an official answer on these two related issues (future space and increased space) is requested. The Board would also like to request that a specific UN official be designated to liaise with the Board on all CMP-related matters.

Financial Support

The Operational Budget for the Centre is supported by the enrollment fees charged to parents. Nearly 70% of the costs are for the salaries and benefits paid to the staff. Staff numbers and make-up are laid down by New York State and City regulations. Shortfalls in the budget caused by unpredictable patterns of enrollment, i.e., open spaces in classes for a given age group for which no child is available for enrollment from the Wait List, are made up by the Centre from its financial resources. Those resources exist primarily to cover major items of capital expenditure which are not covered by the budget, e.g. replacement furniture, security system and a provision to cover legal and other costs that might be incurred in respect of the Board's liabilities as a U.S. non-for-profit entity. The extra-budgetary costs are supported by voluntary annual contributions from the Secretariat and three major UN Agencies in New York (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA). While the Secretariat's contribution takes the form of the space provided to house the Centre, financial contributions from the Agencies are frequently overdue by as much as two years. Your support in ensuring that the Agencies make on-time contributions is requested.

The Impact of Child Care Costs on Lower Income UN Staff

Given the general rise of the Centre's fees of approximately 5% per year, it is not surprising that the ranks of UN staff able to afford to enroll their child(ren) in the Centre are dominated by staff from the Professional category. Thus the fees, though comparable with other similar centers, exclude many General Service staff and particularly single parents. The Board would like the UN to consider a form of subsidy of those categories of staff described above, in line with other progressive public and private sector employers. The Board proposes for consideration that such a subsidy take the form of a staff assessment credit for those staff whose level of net pay and personal circumstances (such as single parent) clearly precludes their enrolling their child(ren) in the Centre.

UN Medical Service Support

The Board would like to clarify the question of whether or not the Centre can rely for support from the UN Medical Service in the case of emergencies, in the interim before the New York City emergency services arrive on the scene. Of course, the UNCCC has no intention of sending children with routine medical problems to the UN Medical Service./...

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The Centre has an established protocol whereby parents take their children to their regular pediatricians and/or use hospitals in the vicinity in the case of emergencies. Nonetheless, the Board would appreciate a clear indication from the Medical Service as to whether in truly critical emergencies and upon notification by the Centre Director only, a nurse from the UN Medical Service would see the child in the Centre while 911 was called and an ambulance was enroute.

Playground Area

More than ten years ago, apparently for reasons of safety, the equipment in the playground in the UN North Garden were removed and have not been replaced, despite attempts by UNCCC parents to raise the necessary funds to refurbish it. Recently, the North Garden has been declared off-limits by the UN Security and Safety, except to UN staff, with limited hours and access points, on weekdays. Since the inception of the UNCCC, outings to the North Garden have figured prominently as one of the highlights of the day for the children. It is one of the few places in the neighbourhood, and by far the most pleasant, where children can be taken for fresh air and the enjoyment of natural surroundings. The Board of Directors would very much appreciate your intervention on these two points: on refurbishing of the North Garden playground, and on allowing access to the UNCCC children during limited hours during the weekday.

The Board wishes to note that Mrs. Annan's continuing interest in the Centre has been a great morale booster to parents and staff of the Centre. The Board of Directors expresses the hope that the Organization will build on its recognition of quality on-site child care as an important Work/Life prerequisite, in line with progressive social policy and with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 18 of which states that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible").

The Board of the UNCCC speaks for many staff members of the United Nations and Permanent Missions in expressing its appreciation of the Secretary-General's attention to Work-Life issues and would be further grateful for your support in our quest for enhanced child care facilities for the United Nations community.

Respectfully yours,



Timothy Boakes

President

Nancy Hurtz-Soyka
Sent by: Patrice Brown

To: Peter Schmitz/NY/UNO@UNHQ
cc:
Subject: UNCCC draft

13/06/2005 09:44 AM

Dear Mr. Schmitz,

Attached is a draft of the UNCCC's letter for your perusal.

Thank you.



Dear M Boakes2.doc



Nancy Hurtz-Soyka
Principal Officer
DM/OUSG
Room S-2700 C
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017

Tel: +1-212-963-5884

Fax: +1-212-963-8424

31 May 2005

Dear Mr. Boakes,

should like

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I ~~wish~~ ^{should like} to respond to your letter of 5 April 2005 transmitting a previous letter concerning challenges facing the United Nations Child Care Centre.

The issues you raised on behalf of the United Nations Child Care Centre - space, financial support, security and UN medical support are extremely important to the Secretary-General. In this connection, I understand that the Secretary-General had requested Ms. Catherine Bertini to review your concerns and she did so when she visited the Centre in 2004.

During Ms. Bertini's tour and visit with the staff of the ~~Centre~~ ^{may be}, the issue of limited space became very apparent. However, as you ~~are~~ aware, the situation of the Capital Master Plan and the accompanying need for temporary "swing-space" and conference space has yet to be resolved. ~~As the building that was first proposed at the corner of 42nd Street and First Avenue does not seem to be viable, other options are being considered.~~ Nevertheless, in the interim, the issue of space is ~~an important one and must say a difficult one.~~ Let me assure you that efforts will be made to see how the situation can be ameliorated.

three New York based

Regarding The need for timely financial contributions from the funds and programmes ~~is a basic and important issue. As the lack of on-time contributions from the three New York based agencies must be difficult for financial planning purposes,~~ I would suggest that you may wish to provide a draft letter ~~which could be submitted to the UN funds and programmes in New York from the Secretary-General requesting them to ensure that their contributions are paid on a timely basis.~~

voluntary in unbounded. On
As for your concern as to whether or not the Centre can rely ~~for~~ support from the UN Medical Service in the case of emergencies, I have been informed by the Medical Service that it has been agreed that, ~~in the case of emergencies,~~ a nurse from the DC-2 Medical Unit will assist ~~and support~~ within the limits of the Medical Service capabilities ~~in~~ of handling pediatric emergencies, until the ambulance arrives. I have also been informed that first aid kits are available and that all of the Centre's staff are trained in CPR.

With regard to your request to reopen the playground in the North Garden and arrange for its refurbishment, I will ask Mr. Christopher Burnham, the newly-appointed Under-Secretary-General for Management, to look into this possibility. I will also ask him to look into your other requests concerning the Capital Master Plan, as well as the issue of costs and affordability for all UN staff members. X

The United Nations Child Care Centre serves a useful and important role in the lives of many staff members. Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention, and I sincerely hope that ~~some~~ resolution to these issues can be achieved in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Malloch Brown
Chef de Cabinet

cc Ms. Burnham