

No. 147

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**UNITED NATIONS  
and  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success, on 26 June 1947, and approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, on 31 October 1947, with an Exchange of Notes, dated 21 November 1947, bringing this Agreement into effect**

*English and French official texts. The registration ex officio by the Secretariat of the United Nations took place on 21 November 1947.*

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**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
et  
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE**

**Accord relatif au siège de l'Organisation des Nations Unies, signé à Lake Success, le 26 juin 1947, et approuvé par l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, le 31 octobre 1947, avec un échange de notes daté du 21 novembre 1947, faisant entrer cet Accord en vigueur**

*Textes officiels anglais et français. L'enregistrement d'office par le Secrétariat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies a eu lieu le 21 novembre 1947.*

No. 147. AGREEMENT<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS  
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA REGARDING  
THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS.  
SIGNED AT LAKE SUCCESS, ON 26 JUNE 1947

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Desiring to conclude an agreement for the purpose of carrying out the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 December 1946<sup>2</sup> to establish the seat of the United Nations in the City of New York and to regulate questions arising as a result thereof;

Have appointed as their representatives for this purpose:

The United Nations: Trygve LIE, Secretary-General, and

The United States of America: George C. MARSHALL, Secretary of State,

Who have agreed as follows:

*Article I*

DEFINITIONS

*Section 1*

In this agreement:

(a) The expression "headquarters district" means: (1) the area defined as such in Annex 1; (2) any other lands or buildings which may from time to time be included therein by supplemental agreement with the appropriate American authorities;

(b) the expression "appropriate American authorities" means such federal, state, or local authorities in the United States as may be appropriate in the context and in accordance with the laws and customs of the United States, including the laws and customs of the state and local government involved;

(c) the expression "General Convention" means the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 13 February 1946, as acceded to by the United States;

<sup>1</sup> Came into force on 21 November 1947 by an Exchange of Notes, in accordance with section 28.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, resolution 99 (I), document A/64/Add.1, page 195.

(*d*) the expression “United Nations” means the international organization established by the Charter of the United Nations, hereinafter referred to as the “Charter”;

(*e*) the expression “Secretary-General” means the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

## *Article II*

### THE HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT

#### *Section 2*

The seat of the United Nations shall be the headquarters district.

#### *Section 3*

The appropriate American authorities shall take whatever action may be necessary to assure that the United Nations shall not be dispossessed of its property in the headquarters district, except as provided in section 22 in the event that the United Nations ceases to use the same, provided that the United Nations shall reimburse the appropriate American authorities for any costs incurred, after consultation with the United Nations, in liquidating by eminent domain proceedings or otherwise any adverse claims.

#### *Section 4*

(*a*) The United Nations may establish and operate in the headquarters district:

(1) its own short-wave sending and receiving radio broadcasting facilities, including emergency link equipment, which may be used on the same frequencies (within the tolerances prescribed for the broadcasting service by applicable United States regulations) for radiotelegraph, radioteletyp, radiotelephone, radiotelephoto, and similar services;

(2) one point-to-point circuit between the headquarters district and the office of the United Nations in Geneva (using single sideband equipment) to be used exclusively for the exchange of broadcasting programs and inter-office communications;

(3) low power, micro-wave, low or medium frequency facilities for communication within headquarters buildings only, or such other buildings as may temporarily be used by the United Nations;

(4) facilities for point-to-point communications to the same extent and subject to the same conditions as permitted under applicable rules and regulations for amateur operators in the United States, except that such rules and regulations shall not be applied in a manner inconsistent with the inviolability of the headquarters district provided by section 9 (a);

(5) such other radio facilities as may be specified by supplemental agreement between the United Nations and the appropriate American authorities.

(b) The United Nations shall make arrangements for the operation of the services referred to in this section with the International Telecommunication Union, the appropriate agencies of the Government of the United States and the appropriate agencies of other affected Governments with regard to all frequencies and similar matters.

(c) The facilities provided for in this section may, to the extent necessary for efficient operation, be established and operated outside the headquarters district. The appropriate American authorities will, on request of the United Nations, make arrangements, on such terms and in such manner as may be agreed upon by supplemental agreement, for the acquisition or use by the United Nations of appropriate premises for such purposes and the inclusion of such premises in the headquarters district.

### *Section 5*

In the event that the United Nations should find it necessary and desirable to establish and operate an aerodrome, the conditions for the location, use and operation of such an aerodrome and the conditions under which there shall be entry into and exit therefrom shall be the subject of a supplemental agreement.

### *Section 6*

In the event that the United Nations should propose to organize its own postal service, the conditions under which such service shall be set up shall be the subject of a supplemental agreement.

*Article III*

## LAW AND AUTHORITY IN THE HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT

*Section 7*

(a) The headquarters district shall be under the control and authority of the United Nations as provided in this agreement.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this agreement or in the General Convention, the federal, state and local law of the United States shall apply within the headquarters district.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in this agreement or in the General Convention, the federal, state and local courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction over acts done and transactions taking place in the headquarters district as provided in applicable federal, state and local laws.

(d) The federal, state and local courts of the United States, when dealing with cases arising out of or relating to acts done or transactions taking place in the headquarters district, shall take into account the regulations enacted by the United Nations under section 8.

*Section 8*

The United Nations shall have the power to make regulations, operative within the headquarters district, for the purpose of establishing therein conditions in all respects necessary for the full execution of its functions. No federal, state or local law or regulation of the United States which is inconsistent with a regulation of the United Nations authorized by this section shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be applicable within the headquarters district. Any dispute, between the United Nations and the United States, as to whether a regulation of the United Nations is authorized by this section or as to whether a federal, state or local law or regulation is inconsistent with any regulation of the United Nations authorized by this section, shall be promptly settled as provided in Section 21. Pending such settlement, the regulation of the United Nations shall apply, and the federal, state or local law or regulation shall be inapplicable in the headquarters district to the extent that the United Nations claims it to be inconsistent with the regulation of the United Nations. This section shall not prevent the reasonable application of fire protection regulations of the appropriate American authorities.

### *Section 9*

(a) The headquarters district shall be inviolable. Federal, state or local officers or officials of the United States, whether administrative, judicial, military or police, shall not enter the headquarters district to perform any official duties therein except with the consent of and under conditions agreed to by the Secretary-General. The service of legal process, including the seizure of private property, may take place within the headquarters district only with the consent of and under conditions approved by the Secretary-General.

(b) Without prejudice to the provisions of the General Convention or Article IV of this agreement, the United Nations shall prevent the headquarters district from becoming a refuge either for persons who are avoiding arrest under the federal, state, or local law of the United States or are required by the Government of the United States for extradition to another country, or for persons who are endeavoring to avoid service of legal process.

### *Section 10*

The United Nations may expel or exclude persons from the headquarters district for violation of its regulations adopted under Section 8 or for other cause. Persons who violate such regulations shall be subject to other penalties or to detention under arrest only in accordance with the provisions of such laws or regulations as may be adopted by the appropriate American authorities.

## *Article IV*

### COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT

### *Section 11*

The federal, state or local authorities of the United States shall not impose any impediments to transit to or from the headquarters district of: (1) representatives of Members or officials of the United Nations, or of specialized agencies as defined in Article 57, paragraph 2, of the Charter, or the families of such representatives or officials, (2) experts performing missions for the United Nations or for such specialized agencies, (3) representatives of the press, or of radio, film or other information agencies, who have been accredited by the United Nations (or by such a specialized agency) in its discretion after consultation with the United States, (4) representatives of non-governmental organizations recognized by the United Nations for the purpose of consultation under Article 71 of the Charter, or (5) other persons invited to the head-

quarters district by the United Nations or by such specialized agency on official business. The appropriate American authorities shall afford any necessary protection to such persons while in transit to or from the headquarters district. This section does not apply to general interruptions of transportation which are to be dealt with as provided in Section 17, and does not impair the effectiveness of generally applicable laws and regulations as to the operation of means of transportation.

### *Section 12*

The provisions of Section 11 shall be applicable irrespective of the relations existing between the Governments of the persons referred to in that section and the Government of the United States.

### *Section 13*

(a) Laws and regulations in force in the United States regarding the entry of aliens shall not be applied in such manner as to interfere with the privileges referred to in Section 11. When visas are required for persons referred to in that section, they shall be granted without charge and as promptly as possible.

(b) Laws and regulations in force in the United States regarding the residence of aliens shall not be applied in such manner as to interfere with the privileges referred to in Section 11 and, specifically, shall not be applied in such manner as to require any such person to leave the United States on account of any activities performed by him in his official capacity. In case of abuse of such privileges of residence by any such person in activities in the United States outside his official capacity, it is understood that the privileges referred to in Section 11 shall not be construed to grant him exemption from the laws and regulations of the United States regarding the continued residence of aliens, provided that:

(1) No proceedings shall be instituted under such laws or regulations to require any such person to leave the United States except with the prior approval of the Secretary of State of the United States. Such approval shall be given only after consultation with the appropriate Member in the case of a representative of a Member (or a member of his family) or with the Secretary-General or the principal executive officer of the appropriate specialized agency in the case of any other person referred to in Section 11;

(2) A representative of the Member concerned, the Secretary-General or the principal executive officer of the appropriate specialized agency, as the case may be, shall have the right to appear in any such proceedings on behalf of the person against whom they are instituted;

(3) Persons who are entitled to diplomatic privileges and immunities under Section 15 or under the General Convention shall not be required to leave the United States otherwise than in accordance with the customary procedure applicable to diplomatic envoys accredited to the United States.

(c) This section does not prevent the requirement of reasonable evidence to establish that persons claiming the rights granted by Section 11 come within the classes described in that section, or the reasonable application of quarantine and public health regulations.

(d) Except as provided above in this section and in the General Convention, the United States retains full control and authority over the entry of persons or property into the territory of the United States and the conditions under which persons may remain or reside there.

(e) The Secretary-General shall, at the request of the appropriate American authorities, enter into discussions with such authorities, with a view to making arrangements for registering the arrival and departure of persons who have been granted visas valid only for transit to and from the headquarters district and sojourn therein and in its immediate vicinity.

(f) The United Nations shall, subject to the foregoing provisions of this section, have the exclusive right to authorize or prohibit entry of persons and property into the headquarters district and to prescribe the conditions under which persons may remain or reside there.

#### *Section 14*

The Secretary-General and the appropriate American authorities shall, at the request of either of them, consult, as to methods of facilitating entrance into the United States, and the use of available means of transportation, by persons coming from abroad who wish to visit the headquarters district and do not enjoy the rights referred to in this Article.



*Article V*

## RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UNITED NATIONS

*Section 15*

(1) Every person designated by a Member as the principal resident representative to the United Nations of such Member or as a resident representative with the rank of ambassador or minister plenipotentiary,

(2) such resident members of their staffs as may be agreed upon between the Secretary-General, the Government of the United States and the Government of the Member concerned;

(3) every person designated by a member of a specialized agency, as defined in Article 57, paragraph 2 of the Charter, as its principal permanent representative, with the rank of ambassador or minister plenipotentiary at the headquarters of such agency in the United States, and

(4) such other principal resident representatives of members of a specialized agency and such resident members of the staffs of representatives to a specialized agency as may be agreed upon between the principal executive officer of the specialized agency, the Government of the United States and the Government of the Member concerned,

shall, whether residing inside or outside the headquarters district, be entitled in the territory of the United States to the same privileges and immunities, subject to corresponding conditions and obligations, as it accords to diplomatic envoys accredited to it. In the case of Members whose governments are not recognized by the United States, such privileges and immunities need be extended to such representatives, or persons on the staffs of such representatives, only within the headquarters district, at their residences and offices outside the district, in transit between the district and such residences and offices, and in transit on official business to or from foreign countries.

*Article VI*

## POLICE PROTECTION OF THE HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT

*Section 16*

(a) The appropriate American authorities shall exercise due diligence to ensure that the tranquility of the headquarters district is not disturbed by the unauthorized entry of groups of persons from outside or by disturbances in its

immediate vicinity and shall cause to be provided on the boundaries of the headquarters district such police protection as is required for these purposes.

(b) If so requested by the Secretary-General, the appropriate American authorities shall provide a sufficient number of police for the preservation of law and order in the headquarters district, and for the removal therefrom of persons as requested under the authority of the United Nations. The United Nations shall, if requested, enter into arrangements with the appropriate American authorities to reimburse them for the reasonable cost of such services.

### Article VII

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROTECTION OF THE HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT

##### Section 17

(a) The appropriate American authorities will exercise, to the extent requested by the Secretary-General, the powers which they possess to ensure that the headquarters district shall be supplied on equitable terms with the necessary public services, including electricity, water, gas, post, telephone, telegraph, transportation, drainage, collection of refuse, fire protection, snow removal, *et cetera*. In case of any interruption or threatened interruption of any such services, the appropriate American authorities will consider the needs of the United Nations as being of equal importance with the similar needs of essential agencies of the Government of the United States, and will take steps accordingly to ensure that the work of the United Nations is not prejudiced.

(b) Special provision with reference to maintenance of utilities and underground construction are contained in Annex 2.

##### Section 18

The appropriate American authorities shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the amenities of the headquarters district are not prejudiced and the purposes for which the district is required are not obstructed by any use made of the land in the vicinity of the district. The United Nations shall on its part take all reasonable steps to ensure that the amenities of the land in the vicinity of the headquarters district are not prejudiced by any use made of the land in the headquarters district by the United Nations.

*Section 19*

It is agreed that no form of racial or religious discrimination shall be permitted within the headquarters district.

*Article VIII*

## MATTERS RELATING TO THE OPERATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

*Section 20*

The Secretary-General and the appropriate American authorities shall settle by agreement the channels through which they will communicate regarding the application of the provisions of this agreement and other questions affecting the headquarters district, and may enter into such supplemental agreements as may be necessary to fulfill the purposes of this agreement. In making supplemental agreements with the Secretary-General, the United States shall consult with the appropriate state and local authorities. If the Secretary-General so requests, the Secretary of State of the United States shall appoint a special representative for the purpose of liaison with the Secretary-General.

*Section 21*

(a) Any dispute between the United Nations and the United States concerning the interpretation or application of this agreement or of any supplemental agreement, which is not settled by negotiation or other agreed mode of settlement, shall be referred for final decision to a tribunal of three arbitrators, one to be named by the Secretary-General, one to be named by the Secretary of State of the United States, and the third to be chosen by the two, or, if they should fail to agree upon a third, then by the President of the International Court of Justice.

(b) The Secretary-General or the United States may ask the General Assembly to request of the International Court of Justice an advisory opinion on any legal question arising in the course of such proceedings. Pending the receipt of the opinion of the Court, an interim decision of the arbitral tribunal shall be observed by both parties. Thereafter, the arbitral tribunal shall render a final decision, having regard to the opinion of the Court.

*Article IX*

## MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

*Section 22*

(a) The United Nations shall not dispose of all or any part of the land owned by it in the headquarters district without the consent of the United States.

If the United States is unwilling to consent it shall buy the land in question from the United Nations at a price to be determined as provided in paragraph (d) of this section.

(b) If the seat of the United Nations is removed from the headquarters district, all right, title and interest of the United Nations in and to real property in the headquarters district or any part of it shall, on request of either the United Nations or the United States, be assigned and conveyed to the United States. In the absence of such request, the same shall be assigned and conveyed to the sub-division of a state in which it is located or, if such sub-division shall not desire it, then to the state in which it is located. If none of the foregoing desire the same, it may be disposed of as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) If the United Nations disposes of all or any part of the headquarters district, the provisions of other sections of this agreement which apply to the headquarters district shall immediately cease to apply to the land and buildings so disposed of.

(d) The price to be paid for any conveyance under this section shall, in default of agreement, be the then fair value of the land, buildings and installations, to be determined under the procedure provided in Section 21.

### *Section 23*

The seat of the United Nations shall not be removed from the headquarters district unless the United Nations should so decide.

### *Section 24*

This agreement shall cease to be in force if the seat of the United Nations is removed from the territory of the United States, except for such provisions as may be applicable in connection with the orderly termination of the operations of the United Nations at its seat in the United States and the disposition of its property therein.

*Section 25*

Wherever this agreement imposes obligations on the appropriate American authorities, the Government of the United States shall have the ultimate responsibility for the fulfillment of such obligations by the appropriate American authorities.

*Section 26*

The provisions of this agreement shall be complementary to the provisions of the General Convention. In so far as any provision of this agreement and any provisions of the General Convention relate to the same subject matter, the two provisions shall, wherever possible, be treated as complementary so that both provisions shall be applicable and neither shall narrow the effect of the other; but in any case of absolute conflict, the provisions of this agreement shall prevail.

*Section 27*

This agreement shall be construed in the light of its primary purpose to enable the United Nations at its headquarters in the United States, fully and efficiently, to discharge its responsibilities and fulfill its purposes.

*Section 28*

This agreement shall be brought into effect by an exchange of notes<sup>1</sup> between the Secretary-General, duly authorized pursuant to a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the appropriate executive officer of the United States, duly authorized pursuant to appropriate action of the Congress.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the respective representatives have signed this agreement and have affixed their seals hereto.

DONE in duplicate, in the English and French languages, both authentic, at Lake Success, this twenty-sixth day of June 1947.

For the United Nations:  
Trygve LIE  
Secretary-General

For the Government of the United States of America:  
G. C. MARSHALL  
Secretary of State

<sup>1</sup> See page 38 of this volume.

## ANNEX 1

The area referred to in Section 1, (a) (1) consists of:

(a) the premises bounded on the East by the westerly side of Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, on the West by the easterly side of First Avenue, on the North by the southerly side of East Forty-Eighth Street, and on the South by the northerly side of East Forty-Second Street, all as proposed to be widened, in the borough of Manhattan, City and State of New York, and (b) an easement over Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, above a lower limiting plane to be fixed for the construction and maintenance of an esplanade, together with the structures thereon and foundations and columns to support the same in locations below such limiting plane, the entire area to be more definitely defined by supplemental agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America.

## ANNEX 2

## MAINTENANCE OF UTILITIES AND UNDERGROUND CONSTRUCTION

*Section 1*

The Secretary-General agrees to provide passes to duly authorized employees of the City of New York, the State of New York, or any of their agencies or subdivisions, for the purpose of enabling them to inspect, repair, maintain, reconstruct and relocate utilities, conduits, mains and sewers within the headquarters district.

*Section 2*

Underground constructions may be undertaken by the City of New York, or the State of New York, or any of their agencies or sub-divisions, within the headquarters district only after consultation with the Secretary-General, and under conditions which shall not disturb the carrying out of the functions of the United Nations.

## EXCHANGE OF NOTES

## I

Lake Success, New York, 21 November 1947

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 31 October 1947<sup>1</sup>, at its one hundred and first meeting, relative to the Agreement between the United States of America and the United Nations regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success on 26 June 1947.

By this resolution the General Assembly, after having studied the report of its Sixth Committee and endorsed the opinions expressed therein, has approved the above-mentioned Agreement, which states and defines the mutual obligations of the United Nations and the United States in connexion with the establishment of the permanent Headquarters of the United Nations in the United States. The resolution, consequently, has authorized me to bring that Agreement into force in the manner provided in section 28 of the Agreement.

Pursuant to the resolution and in conformity with section 28 of the Agreement, I have the honour to propose that the present note and your note of this day be considered as bringing the Headquarters Agreement into effect under date hereof.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) Trygve LIE  
Secretary-General

The Honorable Warren R. Austin  
Permanent Representative  
of the United States of America  
at the Seat of the United Nations

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, resolution 169 (II), document A/519, page 91.

## II

November 21, 1947

Excellency:

I have the honor to refer to section 28 of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, which provides for bringing that Agreement into effect by an exchange of notes. Reference is made also to the provisions of United States Public Law 357, 80th Congress, entitled "Joint Resolution Authorizing the President to bring into effect an agreement between the United States and the United Nations for the purpose of establishing the permanent headquarters of the United Nations in the United States and authorizing the taking of measures necessary to facilitate compliance with the provisions of such agreement, and for other purposes", which was approved by the President of the United States of America on August 4, 1947.

Pursuant to instructions from my Government, I have the honor to inform you that the Government of the United States of America is prepared to apply the above-mentioned Headquarters Agreement subject to the provisions of Public Law 357.

I have been instructed by my Government to propose that the present note and your note of this date be considered as bringing the Headquarters Agreement into effect on the date hereof.

Accept, Excellency the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Warren R. AUSTIN  
United States Representative  
to the United Nations

His Excellency Trygve Lie  
Secretary-General  
of the United Nations