

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

Ombudsman
DH

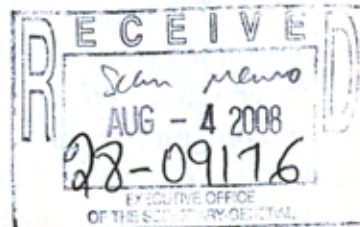
TO: Ms. Angela Kane
A: Under-Secretary-General
Department of Management

DATE: 4 August 2008

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Nora Galer, Officer-in-Charge
DE: Office of the Ombudsman

SUBJECT: Proposal on Office Space for the Office of the Ombudsman



1. The attached note is being submitted in follow-up to recent contacts initiated by the Ombudsman with the Chef de Cabinet and Mr. Adlerstein, respectively. The note outlines our specific office requirements in an effort to assist CMP officials in their efforts to identify a suitable environment that would meet our needs, provide accessibility to, and protect the privacy of, our visitors.
2. We would be grateful for your kind assistance.

cc. Mr. Nambiar
Mr. Adlerstein
Mr. Issa

AUG - 5 2008

Note from the United Nations Ombudsman

Subject matter: Proposal on Office Space for the Office of the Ombudsman

The General Assembly in its resolution 62/228 on the Administration of Justice at the United Nations of 6 February 2008 decided to create a single integrated and decentralized Office of the Ombudsman for the United Nations Secretariat, and the funds and programs as of 1 January 2008. Additionally, the Assembly established a Mediation Office to be set up within the office of the Ombudsman; one also where trained mediators will carry out full mediation sessions within a formal setting connected to the new Administration of Justice system.

Given the nature of the work of the Office, the identification of a suitable office space to accommodate its personnel and its work that will facilitate the function of the Office is of prime importance to the success of the Office's operations in the short and long term. Both the location and the layout should be selected to facilitate the overarching considerations that guide the operations of the Office which are confidentiality, neutrality, accessibility and safety and also bearing in mind that the Office will now incorporate a formal setting where referred mediation between parties will be carried out.

We have set forth below the key requirements to assist your efforts in identifying a suitable environment that will meet the needs of the Office bearing in mind these considerations.

Required Capacity

The total head count for the integrated expanded office will be 28. Therefore, we would need a total of at least 22 closed offices with 6 cubicles (workstations), 1 large conference room (to sit at least 30 people), 1 reception area, 2 consultation rooms (each sitting at least 6 people), 1 formal mediation room, (to sit at least 10 people) and 1 enclosed filing room. As all 18 offices that are assigned to staff of the office could be used for meetings with visitors to the Office, please ensure that these are of a size that can comfortably sit a minimum of three parties at any one time.

Location Requirements

The location of the Office must be isolated as far as possible from mainstream areas of staff movements.

It will be necessary to identify areas that are suitable for confidential meetings with staff and that are not in close proximity to other offices, including HR or senior management. As far as possible, there should no other offices in site.

The Office can not be near rest-rooms or any area of heavy pedestrian movement.

Office Specifications

We need to provide our visitors with an environment that is safe, friendly, and that allows us to conduct often very sensitive and difficult meetings or mediation.

Ideally, the Office should have separate entrance and exit doors (dual access) which are as far apart from each other as possible so that visitors do not come across one another as they leave and arrive as this will compromise the assurance of confidentiality. Alternatively, in the case that there can only be one entrance to the Office, we will require multiple waiting areas where we can keep visitors whilst others are being ushered in or out.

Our zero barrier access requires that the Office should be easily accessible to all clients including to older and retired clients and also to clients who may be physically challenged.

According to common guidelines for Ombuds offices established by the International Ombudsmans Association, we cannot have see-through doors in the offices in order to ensure client privacy. Also, soundproofing of offices or meeting rooms is fundamental in order to ensure confidentiality of the meetings and telephone conversations with clients. If soundproofing is not feasible, other solutions (like white noise devices) could be explored.

We will be grateful if a suitable office location can be identified for the operations of our Office bearing the above considerations in mind.

John Barkat

United Nations Ombudsman

1 August 2008