



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0729-2004, **Version:** *

Res. No. 729

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to reject S.7714A and A.11873A, relating to the United Nations' development district and expansion plans, as well as to the operation, improvement and maintenance of the Robert Moses Playground in connection with such plans.

By Council Members Felder, Katz, Nelson, Oddo, Provenzano, Recchia, Vallone, Jr., Gallagher, Sears, Fidler, Gennaro and McMahon

Whereas, The United Nations officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, when its Charter was ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and a majority of other signatories; and

Whereas, The purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in its Charter, are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, and cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these ends; and

Whereas, Since 1952, the United Nations has had its headquarters at the United Nations Plaza, located on 1st Avenue between 42nd and 48th Streets, in the Borough of Manhattan; and

Whereas, The United Nations recently announced plans to renovate its current building and to construct a new 35-story building on what is now the Robert Moses playground, plans which must be approved for funding by the United States Congress and the New York State Legislature; and

Whereas, A portion of the United Nations expansion project would be funded through \$600 million in bonds issued by the United Nations Development Corporation, a State-created public authority that does not fall under the purview of the New York State Public Authorities Control Board; and

Whereas, Several New York State legislators and locally elected public officials have expressed concerns over the project's potential impact on State and City taxpayers, the fact that there will be no State oversight or review of the project's financing, and the lingering questions that remain about who would ultimately be liable for the public debt should there be a default; and

Whereas, The United Nations expansions plans, especially its plans to construct the 35-story building on the Robert Moses Playground, is opposed by many community residents and the area's local Community Board; and

Whereas, S.7714A and A.11873A, introduced in the New York State Legislature, would allow the United Nations to proceed with its planning process of weighing and considering its needs for possible further development in the area of its headquarters, as well as the needs of the nearby host community for park land replacement and mitigation; and

Whereas, Over the years, the United Nations has shown a lack of consideration for the fiscal state of New York City, by allowing diplomats from about 200 United Nations countries to run up approximately 200,000 unpaid City parking tickets which, according to a December 2, 2004 press release issued by the New York State Senate, amounts to more than \$195 million; and

Whereas, The United Nations is currently embroiled in a controversy over its management of the now defunct \$64 billion Iraqi Oil-for-Food Program, which was initiated in the mid-1990's to alleviate the impact on ordinary Iraqis of sanctions imposed after the country invaded Kuwait in 1990; and

Whereas, The Iraqi Oil-for-Food Program allowed Iraq to sell its oil to buy food, medicine and other goods, but was allegedly used by the country's former dictator, Saddam Hussein, to illegally amass a personal fortune estimated in the billions of dollars; and

Whereas, The United Nations has failed to cooperate with the current investigations of the Oil-for-Food Program being conducted by the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, prompting several Congressman to sponsor H.R. 4284, which calls for the withholding of American funds from the United Nations until it cooperates with such investigations; and

Whereas, In light of the questions and objection regarding the United Nations expansion project, as well as other controversies involving the United Nations, the expansion project should not go forward; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to reject S.7714A and A.11873, relating to the United Nations' development district and expansion plans, as well as to the operation, improvement and maintenance of the Robert Moses Playground in connection with such plans.

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