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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1980-1981

Administrative and financial implications of draft
resolution A/35/L.30

Twenty-third report of the Advisory Committee on
Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/35/86) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/35/L.30 on the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

2. The Secretary-General estimates the financial implications of the draft resolution at \$6,010,000, as follows:

United States dollars

Conference servicing costs at New York rates relating to meetings of the Drafting Committee of the Conference (12 January to 27 February 1981), Informal Consultations (4 to 6 March 1981) and convening of the tenth session of the Conference (9 March to 17 or 24 April 1981)	4,405,100
Maintenance of the secretariat of the Conference for 1981	1,317,200
Other requirements during the tenth session for	
(i) Conference secretariat	121,200
(ii) Department of Public Information	166,500
Total	<u>6,010,000</u>

3. In paragraph 3 of his report, the Secretary-General states that the estimate of \$4,405,100 for conference servicing is on a full-cost basis. No additional appropriations are requested at this time as requirements will be considered in the context of the consolidated statement on conference-servicing requirements to be submitted towards the end of the current session.

4. In this connexion, the Advisory Committee notes that in paragraph 7 the Secretary-General states that if the conference is held in New York

"it would become necessary for the General Assembly to rearrange the calendar of conferences at a later date in view of the limited conference facilities at Headquarters. It is not possible at this time to provide precise administrative and financial implications pending proposals as to what rearrangement should be made."

5. The representatives of the Secretary-General have provided the Advisory Committee, at its request, with written information which indicates that as a consequence of convening the tenth session of the Conference on the Law of the Sea in New York it will be necessary to transfer elsewhere 13 weeks of meetings currently scheduled to meet in New York. The Committee on Conferences has been apprised of the matter. Pending a decision as to which meetings should be transferred, the Secretary-General could not indicate the financial implications of the changes in venue.

6. The representatives of the Secretary-General estimated that if the tenth session of the Conference and the Informal Consultations preceding it were to be held at Geneva the related conference-servicing costs would be \$3,993,700 (as compared to \$4,405,100 for New York). The saving of \$411,400 resulting from lower travel requirements for conference-servicing staff would be offset, however, by increased requirements amounting to \$217,500 in respect of travel and subsistence of the Conference secretariat (see A/C.5/35/86, para. 8) and \$105,000 attributable to higher costs under temporary assistance and general operating expenses.

7. The Secretary-General's request for additional appropriations is confined, at this stage, to \$1,604,900 comprising \$1,438,400 under section 2C to maintain the secretariat of the Conference in 1981 and other related expenses, and \$166,500 under section 27 for the Department of Public Information.

8. The Advisory Committee recalls that the appropriations for the biennium 1980-1981 as approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session in resolution 34/230 A of 20 December 1979 include an amount of \$1,087,100 under section 2C for the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea representing the cost of maintaining the secretariat of the Conference in 1980 only.

9. In paragraph 9 of his statement (A/C.5/35/86) the Secretary-General estimates the cost in 1981 of maintaining the Conference secretariat at \$1,317,200, of which \$1,084,800 relates to salaries and common staff costs for 30 temporary posts (18 Professional and above and 12 General Service). The Advisory Committee notes that the number of temporary posts requested for 1981 is the same as that authorized for 1980. The balance of \$232,400 is being requested for external printing (\$137,000), consultants (\$50,000), travel (\$40,000) and overtime (\$5,400).

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The request under external printing reflects increased requirements attributable to the printing of the official records of the ninth session, a concordance text of the draft Convention and the Convention in six languages (*ibid.*, para. 16). In all other respects the Secretary-General's request for 1981 is similar to that for 1980. In this connexion the Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General intends to carry out four studies called for by the Conference using available resources (A/C.5/35/86, para. 13). The Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General's request for \$1,317,200 for the maintenance of the Conference secretariat in 1981 be approved.

10. The Secretary-General also requests \$121,200 under section 2 C of the programme budget to meet other requirements during the tenth session of the Conference. The request includes \$75,200 for the recruitment of short-term staff, \$26,500 for travel and subsistence of representatives of national liberation movements (General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX)), \$14,500 for general operating expenses and \$5,000 for overtime (A/C.5/35/86, para. 4). The Secretary-General states that the requirements in question have been estimated on the same basis as those for past sessions except that \$3,000 is being requested under general operating expenses for the maintenance of the voting system, bearing in mind that 10 countries which are not Members of the United Nations participate in the Conference. The Advisory Committee recommends that this cost should be absorbed and that the Secretary-General's estimate of \$121,200 under section 2 C to meet other requirements of the Conference secretariat during the tenth session of the Conference should be reduced to \$118,200.

11. The Secretary-General's request for \$166,500 under section 27, Department of Public Information, relates to the following activities:

In United States dollars

(a) Temporary assistance (2 press officers (P-3), 1 typist (GS), 1 video cinema director (P-3), 1 production assistant (GS) and 4 contractual engineers for 7 weeks each) (A/C.5/35/86, para. 4)	36,600
(b) Production of a press kit (<i>ibid.</i> , para. 19)	110,100
(c) 6 work-months of temporary assistance at the P-3 level to prepare and assemble information for the press kit (<i>ibid.</i> , para. 20)	19,800
Total	<u>166,500</u>

12. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the provision of \$36,600 for temporary assistance as described in (a) above which has been estimated on the same basis as that for past sessions. With regard to the estimate of \$129,900

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for the cost of producing the press kit for the Conference (items (b) and (c) above), the Advisory Committee was informed that this was a new requirement and that promotional material was needed now that the Conference was in its final stages. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that since one of the major tasks of the Department of Public Information is providing publicity for major United Nations activities, the Department should be able to absorb some of the promotional costs of the Conference from within approved resources. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General's estimate of \$166,500 under section 27 be reduced by \$76,500 to \$90,000.

13. As for operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution (A/35/L.30) regarding the convening of the final session of the Conference, the Secretary-General states in paragraph 11 that, because of lack of sufficient information regarding the organization of the final session, he

"intends to seek authority from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, under the provision of resolution 34/231 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1980-1981, to enter into commitments in respect of those requirements which would need to be provided under the regular budget of the United Nations and are not covered by the provision of additional costs to be reimbursed by the Government of Venezuela under section I, paragraph 5, of resolution 31/140".

14. The Secretary-General intends to have recourse to the same procedure as regards the costs of a two-day journalists' encounter to be held immediately preceding the final session of the Conference (A/C.5/35/86, paras. 23 and 24).

15. For the reasons stated in paragraphs 9, 10 and 12 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/35/L.30, there would be need for additional appropriation in the amount of \$1,435,400 under section 2 C and \$90,000 under section 27 of the programme budget for the biennium 1980-1981. There would also be need to appropriate \$278,600 under section 31 (staff assessment) to be offset by an increase in the same amount in the estimates under income section 1 (income from staff assessment). Conference-servicing costs under section 29 would be reflected in the consolidated statement of such costs to be submitted towards the close of the current session of the General Assembly.

Honorarium for the President of the Conference

16. The representatives of the Secretary-General informed the Advisory Committee that the payment of an honorarium to the President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea had been authorized by the General Assembly specifically for Mr. H. S. Amerasinghe and that, because of his death, the request in paragraphs 28 to 32 of document A/C.5/35/86 to continue the arrangements into 1981 was being withdrawn.
