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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

Letter dated 29 September 1980 from the President of the Third United
Conference on the Law of the Sea to the President of the General
Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that, at the end of the second part of its ninth session, on 29 August 1980, the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea decided that its tenth session should be held from 9 March to 17 or 24 April 1981 at Headquarters in New York and that the General Assembly should be requested to provide the necessary services and facilities for that purpose. Geneva, where all necessary facilities could be made available in that period, was considered as an alternative site if adequate facilities could not be provided in New York.

The Conference also decided that the Drafting Committee should meet in New York from 12 January to 27 February 1981 and that the Group of 77 should be given facilities to meet prior to the tenth session, from 4 to 6 March 1981, at Headquarters.

As the Conference has reached a very advanced stage and has fixed early dates for the meetings of the Drafting Committee and the next session in order to complete its work, it would be desirable for the General Assembly to take the necessary decisions as early as possible in order to give Governments sufficient time to prepare for what I hope will be the final phase of our work. I trust that Governments will see their way in the Assembly to giving the Conference priority to enable it to hold its tenth session in New York.

I would suggest that the General Assembly should also take account of the need for the Conference to examine the institutional implications of the Convention and of any other decisions that the Conference might adopt. I would accordingly request the Secretary-General, as Secretary-General of the Conference, to prepare a study for this purpose. It would be helpful if such a study would cover the question of what the future functions of the Secretary-General of the United Nations would be as a result of the Convention and of any decisions of the Conference, as

well as the needs of developing countries for information, advice and assistance under the new legal régime.

I wish to conclude by expressing the view that, in recognition of the scope and complexity of the new Convention and of its importance for national development and international relations, a special effort should be made by the public information services of the United Nations, particularly in connexion with the adoption of the Convention, to promote the widest possible public awareness of the achievements of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

(Signed) Hamilton Shirley AMERASINGHE
