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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

Letter dated 7 September 1982 from the President of the
Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea
to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that on 30 April 1982 the Conference adopted a comprehensive Convention on the Law of the Sea after six years of preparatory work and eight years of deliberations. The Convention, together with four related resolutions, was adopted by an overwhelming majority of participating States. The Convention covers all aspects of the uses and resources of ocean space. The preparatory work for the Conference was commenced by the Ad Hoc Committee and continued by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and the Subsoil thereof beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction.

The successful outcome of the Conference is important for the United Nations. It proves that the United Nations can be an effective forum for important multilateral negotiations on issues of vital importance to all States individually and to the international community of nations as a whole.

I wish also to report, by way of information, that in accordance with the authority given by the General Assembly to the Secretary-General, and as approved by the appropriate bodies of the United Nations, the Conference convened meetings of the Drafting Committee from 12 July to 25 August 1982 at the Office of the United Nations at Geneva.

The Conference further decided to resume the eleventh session from 2 to 24 September 1982 in New York, inter alia, for the purpose of processing the recommendations of the Drafting Committee on the Convention and related resolutions adopted by the Conference.

* A/37/150.

I wish to draw your attention to the several responsibilities that the Secretary-General of the United Nations is called on to carry out under the Convention. These responsibilities are in addition to the functions usually performed by the Secretary-General and are distinct from the requirements of resolution 1 on the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which calls on the Secretary-General to provide the necessary secretarial arrangements for the functioning of the Preparatory Commission, and resolution 11 governing Preparatory Investment in Pioneer Activities relating to Polymetallic Nodules, which is related to resolution 1 and requires certain other responsibilities to be performed by the Secretary-General. I have today addressed a communication to the Secretary-General of the United Nations making reference to these additional responsibilities imposed by the Convention. The General Assembly would have to take the appropriate action to approve the entrustment of these responsibilities to the Secretary-General.

I would also recall the decision of the Conference taken during the second part of its ninth session and communicated in a letter dated 29 September 1980 by the then President of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea to the President of the General Assembly (A/35/500) calling for a special effort to be made by the United Nations, particularly in connection 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. After the adoption of the Convention, at the conclusion of the first part of its eleventh session, I drew attention to the need of the delegates participating in the Conference to promote public understanding of the importance of the Convention so that Governments and parliaments will be convinced to sign and ratify it in a timely manner. I expressed the hope that delegations which voted against and abstained in the adoption of the Convention would, after further reflection, find it possible to support the Convention.

I would take this opportunity to express my special gratitude to the members of the Collegium comprising the Chairmen of the three Main Committees, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee and the Rapporteur-General of the Conference for their assistance and advice and I would also thank the other officials of the Conference.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his dedicated staff have provided the Conference with excellent services and advice since the very inception of our work. Thus, they have earned the gratitude of all participants and have contributed in no small part to the success of the Conference.

I should be most grateful if you could ensure that the appropriate action is taken in connection with these decisions.

(Signed) T. T. B. KOH
