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THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1978-1979

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution
contained in document A/33/L.3

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Hamzah Mohammed HAMZAH (Syrian Arab Republic)

1. At its 25th and 26th meetings, on 2 and 3 November 1978, the Fifth Committee, pursuant to rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, considered the statement by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/33/31 and Corr.1) on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/33/L.3.
2. Under the terms of that draft resolution the General Assembly would:
 - (a) Approve the convening of the eighth session of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea at Geneva for the period 19 March to 27 April 1979 and empower the Conference, if the progress of its work warrants, to decide at that stage to hold further meetings under arrangements to be determined in consultation with the Secretary-General;
 - (b) Authorize the Secretary-General to make available appropriate facilities to that end;
 - (c) Reiterate its authorization, originally given in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 31/63, to the Secretary-General to continue to make the necessary arrangements, provided under paragraph 9 of Assembly resolution 3067 (XXVIII), for the efficient and continuous servicing of the Conference in 1979 and of subsequent activities as may be decided upon by the Conference, as well as to take appropriate measures to ensure stability and continuity for the secretariat personnel recruited for the Conference.

3. In his statement the Secretary-General estimated the financial implications of the draft resolution at \$3,669,700, comprising \$2,191,900 for direct conference servicing costs and \$1,477,800 for other costs. Regarding the former amount, it was indicated in paragraph 7 of the Secretary-General's statement that some of the costs might be met within existing appropriations and that final requirements would be considered towards the end of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in the context of a consolidated statement on total conference servicing requirements.

4. The Secretary-General, therefore, requested at this time an additional appropriation of \$1,477,800, comprising \$1,184,400 for the maintenance of the Conference secretariat and \$293,400 for other requirements during the eighth session for the Conference secretariat and the Office of Public Information.

5. In paragraph 10 of his statement, the Secretary-General referred to one other matter pertaining to the Conference, namely the question of an honorarium and travel and subsistence expenses for the President of the Conference. The Secretary-General indicated that, if the General Assembly should decide to maintain the existing arrangements through 1979, which had been authorized for 1978 by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions under the terms of General Assembly resolution 32/214 on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 1978-1979, an additional appropriation of \$55,900 would be required.

6. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee, in introducing the report of the Advisory Committee (A/33/7/Add.7), stated that while the Committee noted that the estimates of conference servicing costs for the eighth session were based on a smaller volume of in-session documentation and fewer meetings requiring summary records than the estimates for the seventh session, the Advisory Committee, none the less, trusted the Secretary-General to scrutinize requirements carefully so as to ensure that recruitment of short-term conference servicing staff would be confined to those actually needed for the eighth session of the Conference.

7. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the Secretary-General's request for additional appropriations of \$1,477,800. The Committee also noted that should the Conference, under the terms of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, decide to hold further meetings, any related additional costs would be dealt with under the provision of General Assembly resolution 32/214.

8. As regards the matter of an honorarium and travel and subsistence expenses for the President of the Conference, it was noted in paragraph 11 of the report of the Advisory Committee that the observations of the Committee were contained in paragraph 15 of its first report to the General Assembly on the programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979 (A/33/7).

9. The delegation of India proposed a draft decision which was subsequently issued in document A/C.5/33/L.11. Under the terms of the draft decision the Fifth Committee would recommend that the General Assembly should continue the existing arrangements for the President of the Third United Nations Conference on

the Law of the Sea for the year 1979, and would further recommend that, in order to enable the President to discharge his functions properly, he should be deemed to have the status of an official of the United Nations for the purposes of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

10. Comments made by delegations in the course of the discussion are reflected in the summary records of the Committee (A/C.5/33/SR.25 and 26).

DECISIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

11. The Fifth Committee decided, by 78 votes to 8, with 2 abstentions, to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/33/L.3, additional appropriations of \$1,477,800 would be required under section 2B. An additional amount of \$283,300 would also be required under section 25 for staff assessment to be offset by an increase of the same amount under income section 1. As regards conference servicing costs, additional requirements not exceeding \$2,191,900 would arise under section 23 and these requirements would be considered in the context of a consolidated paper on conference servicing requirements to be submitted towards the end of the current session of the Assembly.

12. The Fifth Committee then adopted the draft decision contained in document A/C.5/33/L.11 by 69 votes to 4, with 4 abstentions. This draft decision would require an additional appropriation of \$55,900 under section 2B (see para. 13 below).

RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

13. The Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should continue the existing arrangements for the President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea for the year 1979 and that, in order to enable the President to discharge his functions properly, he should be deemed to have the status of an official of the United Nations for the purposes of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.
