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QUESTION OF CONVENING A SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

Financial implications of the draft resolution  
proposed by the Sixth Committee (A/4034)

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Raul QULJANO (Argentina)

1. At its 702nd meeting, the Fifth Committee considered the statement by the Secretary-General (A/C.6/L.441) on the financial implications of the draft resolution proposed by the Sixth Committee (A/4034), in which the Secretary-General is requested to convoke a second United Nations conference on the Law of the Sea in July or August 1959 at Geneva. For this purpose, the Committee also had before it a report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/4047), which the Chairman of the latter Committee presented orally.
2. The Advisory Committee observed (A/4047, paras. 3 and 4):
  - (a) That the choice of Geneva was, in the Committee's opinion, regrettable on two grounds: first, that the principle had been established, in General Assembly resolution 1202 (XII) of 13 December 1957, that, as a general rule, conferences should not be held away from Headquarters; and secondly, that substantial economies could be achieved by holding the conference in New York in July or August; and
  - (b) That as there was, in any event, need to obviate overlapping with the July session of the Economic and Social Council, the holding of the conference in August should be envisaged.

3. The Advisory Committee took note of the respective costs depending on the choice of date and place of meeting:

(a)	(b)	(c)
Headquarters, New York	Geneva	Geneva
July or August	July	August
1959	1959	1959
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\$	\$	\$
18,000	72,000	45,000

The Committee suggested, however, that through the "maximum use" of existing staff resources in Geneva, total expenditure under (c) might be limited to \$40,000.

4. The Secretary-General's representative pointed out that the suggested reduction of more than 10 per cent in the Secretary-General's estimate was severe. In view of its long experience in calculating the cost of Geneva conferences, the Secretariat might, perhaps, claim a margin of accuracy in estimation of approximately 5 per cent. The figure of \$45,000 had necessarily been based on assumptions; the Secretary-General did not intend to contest the estimate submitted by the Advisory Committee; he did, however, wish to reserve the right, if necessary, to resubmit the matter to that Committee.

5. The questions involved in the proposal of the Sixth Committee were the subject of extensive discussion, in which many members drew attention to the considerations expressed by their delegations in the Sixth Committee.

Decisions of the Fifth Committee

6. The Committee decided:

(a) By 36 votes to 14, with 14 abstentions, to inform the General Assembly that, in the event of the adoption of the draft resolution proposed by the Sixth Committee (A/4034), the additional budgetary provision required for 1959 would be:

- (i) If the conference were to be convened at Headquarters - \$18,000;
- (ii) If the conference were to be convened at Geneva in July 1959 - \$72,000;
- (iii) If the conference were to be convened at Geneva in August 1959 - \$40,000.

(b) By 28 votes to 27, with 8 abstentions, to reject a Peruvian amendment to replace the word "several" by the word "many" in the opinion reported in (c) below; and

(c) By 38 votes to 7, with 18 abstentions, to include the following text, as proposed by India, in its report to the General Assembly:

"Several delegations were, however, of the opinion that an expenditure on a conference on the Law of the Sea during 1959 was likely to be infructuous and therefore unsustainable on budgetary and administrative grounds".

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