
BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1973

Administrative and financial implications of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/L.632/Rev.1 and A/C.1/L.634, as amended, and A/C.1/L.642, as revised

Twenty-sixth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session on the budget estimates for 1973

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statements of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/1496, A/C.5/1497 and A/C.5/1499) on the administrative and financial implications of draft resolutions A/C.1/L.634, as amended, A/C.1/L.632/Rev.1 and A/C.1/L.642, as revised, which were approved by the First Committee at its 1914th, 1915th and 1918th meetings, respectively.

A. Administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/L.634, as amended

2. The Secretary-General estimated the financial implications of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.634) at a total of $622,200 in 1973 and a potential amount of $1,148,200 in 1974.
3. The estimates for 1973 are made up as follows:

- Spring session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction ........................................... 8,000
- Summer session of the Committee ........................................... 549,200
- Salaries and common staff costs of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his staff ........................................... 40,000
- Consultant services ........................................... 25,000

4. The requirement for the spring session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction arises out of the decision in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution that the session should begin in early March, and not at the end of February, as specified in the addendum to the report by the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/3790/Add.1, annex, part I). Thus, the spring session would now extend for one week into a period when interpretation facilities at Headquarters will be fully committed to other meetings, with a consequent need for the engagement of free-lance interpreters. The Advisory Committee was informed that the postponement is necessary so that certain preliminary consultations among Member States can be completed. The Committee accepts the need for the additional expenditure.

5. The requirement of well over half a million dollars for the summer session Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction is owing to the provision, in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, that it be held at Geneva. As the Secretary-General indicated in his statement of the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution (A/C.5/1496, para. 3) it will be necessary to recruit more than 100 staff on a temporary basis to service the Committee and to incur heavy expenditure on travel and subsistence of New York-based staff.

6. On several occasions this session, the Advisory Committee has had reason to point to the difficulties arising from the imbalance of conference servicing staff between New York and Geneva. That question, which will become even more acute when the new conference building at Geneva becomes operational, has also been the subject of General Assembly resolutions for several years. Until it is resolved, cases – of which this is an extreme example – will continue to occur.
7. Meantime, the Advisory Committee must have regard to the actual financial consequences of decisions taken in the prevailing circumstances. In this context, the Advisory Committee is deeply concerned at the magnitude of the request. Were the summer session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction to be held in New York, as specified in the addendum to the report by the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/8790/Add.1, annex I, part I), it could be serviced from within the existing establishment at no additional cost to the United Nations.

8. The Advisory Committee noted that the financial implications of the draft resolution were not before the First Committee when it began consideration of the text. When the First Committee decided, at its 1913th meeting, that the draft resolution would be put to the vote at its following meeting, it still did not have the related financial implications, which were presented orally to the Committee at the very meeting at which the draft resolution was adopted. Moreover, the First Committee's attention does not seem to have been drawn to the fact that in the addendum to the report by the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/8790/Add.1, annex I, part I), the summer session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction was scheduled for New York; nor was it explained to the First Committee that no additional appropriations would be required were the summer session to take place in New York, as suggested by the Secretary-General. Had that information been provided to the First Committee, it is difficult to believe that it would have subscribed so unanimously to the decision to hold the summer session Committee at Geneva, particularly bearing in mind the acute financial difficulties of the Organization and the stringent measures applied by the Secretary-General to prevent further deterioration of the Organization's financial position. The Advisory Committee is fortified in this view by the records of the meetings of the First Committee, which indicate that several delegations inquired about the financial implications of the draft resolution and that the view was expressed that the estimates submitted orally by the Secretary-General were extremely provisional and that the Fifth Committee should pay particular attention to them.

9. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee leave the General Assembly in no doubt about the extent of the extra costs flowing from the decision to hold the summer session at Geneva. Indeed, the Advisory Committee believes that the Fifth Committee should recommend that the General Assembly approve the change of venue to Geneva only if it is completely satisfied that the advantages of holding the session at Geneva are fully commensurate with an expenditure in excess of $0.5 million. The Advisory Committee's own inquiries have not revealed any such advantages.
10. Were the Assembly to confirm the First Committee's decision to hold the
meeting at Geneva, attention should be given to ways and means of reducing the
related expenditure. Since established staff at Geneva will not be available
to service the proposed summer session, a considerable saving - of the order of
$100,000 - would be realized if summary records were dispensed with. Accordingly,
the Advisory Committee recommends that summary records be dispensed with should
the Assembly endorse the holding of the session at Geneva. Unless, however, there
are compelling reasons for holding the meeting at Geneva, this recommendation
would be no substitute for adhering to the conference programme and meetings in
New York, where summary records could, if necessary, be provided by the established
staff.

11. In operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General is
requested to convene the first session of the Third United Nations Conference on
the Law of the Sea in New York for a period of approximately two weeks in November/
December 1973. The Secretary-General indicated that no additional financial
requirements would arise (A/C.5/1496, para. 5) on the understanding that meetings
of the conference would be accommodated within the programme of meetings of the
committees of the General Assembly. In other words, the Secretary-General
recommends a procedure similar to that followed for the resumed summer session of
the Economic and Social Council.

12. The Secretary-General requested $40,000 for salaries and common staff costs
during the latter five months of 1973 for his Special Representative to the
Conference and his supporting staff, and $25,000 for consultants whose services
might be required in areas where such assistance cannot be provided from existing
Secretariat resources (A/C.5/1496, para. 12). The Advisory Committee recognizes
the importance of the preparatory work related to a conference of the magnitude of
the proposed Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, and concurs
in the Secretary-General's request.

13. The estimate of costs in 1974 is tentative and subject to refinement. The
Advisory Committee will consider the estimate in detail when it reviews the
programme and budget estimates for the biennium 1974/1975. The Advisory Committee
was, however, surprised to note that the First Committee, at its 1911th meeting,
reached an understanding on how the extra costs related to holding the 1974 session
of the Conference at Santiago, Chile, would be calculated without having first
discussed what the venue of the Conference would be had it not been invited by
a Member State. The Committee draws the Fifth Committee's attention to the above
consideration.

14. For the reasons stated in paragraphs 8, 10 and 12 above, the Advisory
Committee recommends that, should the General Assembly decide that the summer
session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor
beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction be held in New York, an additional
appropriation of $73,000 be made available under section 2 of the budget for 1973.
Should the General Assembly endorse the First Committee's decision that the
session should be held at Geneva, and should it decide that summary records be
dispensed with, an additional appropriation of $522,200 would be required.

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B. Administrative and financial implications of the
draft resolution A/C.1/L.632/Rev.1

15. The Secretary-General estimated (A/C.5/1497, para. 2) that an additional appropriation of $50,000 would be required under section 2 of the budget for 1973 to enable him to engage high-level experts and secure the co-operation of various institutions specializing in marine geology to prepare the study requested in the draft resolution.

16. The Advisory Committee notes that the financial implications of the draft resolution were submitted orally to the First Committee, when they were estimated at between $50,000 and $200,000, depending on the combination of elements decided upon by the General Assembly. The Committee notes further that the question was discussed in detail by the First Committee, which opted for the more economical approach. The Advisory Committee concurs in the Secretary-General's request.

C. Administrative and financial implications of the
draft resolution A/C.1/L.642, as revised

17. The Secretary-General estimated that a further appropriation of $10,000 was required for a comparative study of the potential economic significance for riparian States, in terms of resources, of each of the various proposals on limits of national jurisdiction presented so far by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction (A/C.5/1499).

18. The Secretary-General indicated that this study will require only a complementary computation and analysis of data that will be assembled for the purposes of the study requested in draft resolution A/C.1/L.632/Rev.1. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee believes that it should be possible for the Secretary-General to carry out the additional work from within the credits for consultants, totalling $75,000, requested by him in connexion with draft resolutions A/C.1/L.634, as amended, and A/C.1/L.632/Rev.1, and concurred in by the Advisory Committee (see paras. 12 and 16 above).