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SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

METHOD OF WORK AND PROCEDURES OF THE CONFERENCE

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

1. In accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 1307 (XIII), adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1958, the Secretary-General prepared the present memorandum regarding the method of work and procedures of the Conference. The provisional agenda and the provisional rules of procedure, to which this memorandum refers, are being circulated as separate documents (A/CONF.19/1 and 2).

I. Provisional Agenda of the Conference

2. The provisional agenda of the Conference is largely self-explanatory. Item 1 to 8 concern the organization of the Conference. Item 9, based upon operative paragraph 1 of resolution 1307 (XIII), covers the substantive part of work of the Conference. Item 10 refers to the embodying of the results of the Conference in appropriate instruments.

II. Provisional Rules of Procedure

3. The provisional rules of procedure are the same as the rules adopted by the first United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, except for a few modifications required as a consequence of the more limited scope of the present Conference.^{1/} The first Conference had as the basis for its

^{1/} Modifications are to be found in rules 6, 13, 14, 38, 46, 47, 54, 56 and 59.

discussions a very extensive draft on the law of the sea and found it necessary for the performance of its task to establish five Main Committees. In view of the fact that the present Conference has been convened to deal with the specific questions of the breadth of the territorial sea and fishery limits, it is proposed to set up one Committee of the whole to carry out the substantive work of the Conference. This difference in organization is reflected in the rules of procedure.

4. Attention is drawn, in particular, to the consequential changes in the rules dealing with the composition of the General Committee and the number of Vice-Presidents. At the first Conference the General Committee consisted of nineteen members comprising the President, the thirteen Vice-Presidents and the Chairmen of the five Main Committees. As the attendance at the present Conference is expected to be approximately the same as at the first Conference, it seems desirable to maintain a membership of nineteen on the General Committee, in order to achieve a similar geographical distribution of seats on the Committee as at the first Conference. Since at the present Conference there will be only one committee chairman, namely the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole having a seat on the General Committee, the number of Vice-Presidents was raised to seventeen.

5. No special rule establishing a Drafting Committee is included in the rules of procedure of the present Conference, but under the general rule on the establishment of committees and sub-committees, the Conference is free to set up such a committee if it is considered desirable.

6. The rules regarding the majority required for decisions in the plenary meetings and in the committees, respectively, are the same as at the first Conference.

III. Submission of proposals

7. In order to expedite the work of the Conference and provide the fullest information for the general debate, it would be most desirable if the Delegations submit their basic proposals as soon as possible in the course of the first week of the Conference.

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IV. Working Schedule of the Conference

8. The facilities available to the Conference permit the holding of one morning meeting and one afternoon meeting of either the Plenary or the Committee of the Whole, Monday through Friday. It is suggested that the morning meeting should normally be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the afternoon meeting from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. However, the rule should be regarded as having sufficient flexibility to allow for variation when the work demands it.
