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AD HOC COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE PEACEFUL
USES OF THE SEA-BED AND THE OCEAN
FLOOR BEYOND THE LIMITS OF NATIONAL
JURISDICTION

LETTER DATED 14 AUGUST 1968 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF BELGIUM TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO STUDY
THE PEACEFUL USES OF THE SEA-BED AND THE OCEAN-FLOOR BEYOND
THE LIMITS OF NATIONAL JURISDICTION

I have the honour to submit herewith a working paper prepared by the Belgian delegation concerning the establishment of a standing committee on the peaceful uses of the sea-bed and the ocean-floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

I would be grateful if you would have this text circulated as an official document of the Ad Hoc Committee so that it may be considered at the Committee's third session at Rio de Janeiro.

Accept, Sir, etc.

(Signed) C. SCHUURMANS
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations

Working paper

1. In paragraph 2 (c) of its resolution 2340 (XXII) the General Assembly requested "an indication regarding practical means to promote international co-operation in the exploration, conservation and use of the sea-bed and the ocean-floor, and the subsoil thereof, as contemplated in the title of the item, and of their resources...". It was also requested that the Committee's views on this subject should be put into concrete shape and presented formally (A/AC.135/L.1, para. 15).
2. The Belgian delegation feels that the question of how to continue the task begun by the Ad Hoc Committee comes within the above mandate and should be discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee at its third session. A recommendation might be addressed to the General Assembly that it should decide "to establish a standing committee responsible not only for enumerating the problems, but also for preparing solutions acceptable to the international community in the form of resolutions and declarations of principle, on the one hand, and treaties and international conventions, on the other" (statement by the representative of Belgium at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on 9 July 1968).
3. The terms of reference of this new body might be laid down as follows:
 - (1) To study suitable means of intensifying international co-operation in the field of exploration and research and to stimulate the exchange and the widest possible dissemination of scientific knowledge of the subject.
 - (2) To study the elaboration of a body of rules which would promote international co-operation in the utilization of the sea-bed and ocean floor and, in particular, the legal principles which should govern the rights to explore and develop marine mineral resources and the economic requirements such a system should satisfy in order to meet the interests of the international community.
 - (3) To study the possibilities of the development of marine mineral resources, taking into account the foreseeable development of technology and the economic implications of such development, and also bearing in mind the fact that it should benefit mankind as a whole.
 - (4) To study measures that would prevent the sea-bed and ocean floor from being used for purposes other than peaceful.

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(5) To study the measures of co-operation which the international community might adopt to prevent all forms of marine pollution, particularly that which may result from the development of mineral resources of the sea-bed and ocean floor.

(6) To make recommendations to the General Assembly on all these questions and, more generally, on all programmes of joint international action concerning certain aspects of this matter.

(7) To ensure that there is constructive co-operation between the organs of the United Nations family dealing with the problems in this field and to be responsible for their co-ordination.

4. Once these questions have been discussed during the third session of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Belgian delegation proposes to submit a draft resolution on the basis of the foregoing considerations (see text of draft annexed herewith).

5. As regards the composition of the standing committee, the following considerations might serve as a guide during the consultations which should take place during the twenty-third session of the General Assembly.

- By reason of their active and constructive contribution to the discussions, all delegations which are members of the Ad Hoc Committee are entitled to be considered for membership of the standing committee.
- Several delegations from States which are not members of the Ad Hoc Committee have shown their interest by making useful statements in the First Committee and/or have participated as observers in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, while their Governments have revealed their preoccupation with this problem in their replies to the Secretary-General.
- Nevertheless, the number of thirty-five is very high and every effort should be made to reduce it.
- At the same time, the membership of the standing committee should reflect a number of criteria, such as equitable geographical distribution, the representation of maritime Powers and land-locked States, of developed and developing countries, etc.

Draft

International co-operation concerning the use of the sea-bed and the ocean-floor exclusively for peaceful purposes and the development of the resources of the sea-bed and the ocean-floor and the subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction in the interests of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 2340 (XXII),

Reaffirming the objectives set forth therein,

Taking note of the report prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee,

Recognizing that it is in the interest of mankind as a whole to favour the utilization for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean-floor and the subsoil thereof,

Considering that it is important to promote international co-operation for the development of marine resources beyond the limits of national jurisdiction,

Convinced that such development should benefit mankind as a whole,

Considering that the United Nations should be given responsibility for promotion, co-ordination and supervision in this matter,

Desiring to prevent such development from becoming a subject of rivalry between States,

1. Establishes a Committee on the peaceful utilization of the sea-bed and the ocean-floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, composed of the following States:

2. Instructs the Committee:

(1) To study suitable means of intensifying international co-operation in the field of exploration and research and to stimulate the exchange and the widest possible dissemination of scientific knowledge of the subject.

(2) To study the elaboration of a body of rules which would promote international co-operation in the utilization of the sea-bed and ocean-floor and, in particular, the legal principles which should govern the rights to explore and develop marine mineral resources and the economic requirements such a system should satisfy in order to meet the interests of the international community.

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- (3) To study the possibilities of the development of marine mineral resources, taking into account the foreseeable development of technology and the economic implications of such development, and also bearing in mind the fact that it should benefit mankind as a whole.
- (4) To study measures that would prevent the sea-bed and ocean-floor from being used for purposes other than peaceful.
- (5) To study the measures of co-operation which the international community might adopt to prevent all forms of marine pollution, particularly that which may result from the development of mineral resources of the sea-bed and ocean-floor.
- (6) To make recommendations to the General Assembly on all these questions and, more generally, on all programmes of joint international action concerning certain aspects of this matter.
- (7) To ensure that there is constructive co-operation between the organs of the United Nations family dealing with the problems in this field and to be responsible for their co-ordination.

3. Requests the Committee to submit to the General Assembly reports on its activity at each subsequent session;

4. Invites the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other inter-governmental bodies to co-operate fully with the Committee in the implementation of this resolution.
