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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:
 - (a) To study the elaboration of a body of rules which would promote international co-operation in the exploration and use of the sea-bed and ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and, in particular, the legal principles which should govern the rights to explore and exploit the resources of this area, and the economic requirements which such regime should satisfy in order to meet the interests of the international community;
 - (b) To study the possibilities of exploiting the resources of this area, taking into account the foreseeable development of

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technology and the economic implications of such exploitation and bearing in mind the fact that such exploitation should benefit mankind as a whole;

(c) To study further the reservation of this area exclusively for peaceful purposes, taking into account the studies being undertaken in the field of disarmament;

(d) To review the studies undertaken in the field of exploration and research in this area in order to intensify international co-operation and to stimulate the exchange and the widest possible dissemination of scientific knowledge on the subject;

(e) To consider measures of co-operation to be adopted by the international community in order to prevent the marine pollution which may result from the exploration and exploitation of the resources of this area;

(f) To work in close co-operation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the inter-governmental bodies dealing with the problems referred to in this resolution, so as to avoid any duplication or overlapping of activities between these organizations;

(g) To make recommendations to the General Assembly on all these questions.

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).

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

Reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and the international co-operation for the use of their resources for the benefit of all 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 exploration and the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, for peaceful purposes,

Considering that it is important to promote international co-operation for the exploitation of the resources of this area,

Convinced that such exploitation should be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole,

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

Considering that it is essential to ensure the co-ordination of international activities in this regard and that the United Nations should be given a central responsibility in this matter,

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

2. Instructs the Committee:

(a) To study the elaboration of a body of rules which would promote international co-operation in the exploration and use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits

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of national jurisdiction and, in particular, the legal principles which should govern the rights to explore and exploit the resources of this area, and the economic requirements which such regime should satisfy in order to meet the interests of the international community;

(b) To study the possibilities of exploiting the resources of this area, taking into account the foreseeable development of technology and the economic implications of such exploitation and bearing in mind the fact that such exploitation should benefit mankind as a whole;

(c) To study further the reservation of this area exclusively for peaceful purposes, taking into account the studies being undertaken in the field of disarmament;

(d) To review the studies undertaken in the field of exploration and research in this area in order to intensify international co-operation and to stimulate the exchange and the widest possible dissemination of scientific knowledge on the subject;

(e) To consider measures of co-operation to be adopted by the international community in order to prevent the marine pollution which may result from the exploration and exploitation of the resources of this area;

(f) To work in close co-operation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the inter-governmental bodies dealing with the problems referred to in this resolution, so as to avoid any duplication or overlapping of activities between these organizations;

(g) To make recommendations to the General Assembly on all these questions.

3. Requests the Committee, in co-operation with the Secretary-General, to submit to the General Assembly reports on its activities 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.
