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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

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
AT THE FOURTH MEETING ON 21 MARCH 1968*

The Ad Hoc Committee is now engaged in the consideration of the organization of its work. At this - the Committee's fourth - meeting, it is necessary to draw the Committee's attention to one of the most important aspects of the question of organization so as to ascertain the Committee's wishes.

Operative paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 2340 (XXII) requests the Committee in co-operation with the Secretary-General to prepare for consideration by the General Assembly at its twenty-third session a study on the subject.

There are three elements in this study:

(a) A survey of past and present activities of the United Nations, its specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other inter-governmental bodies with regard to the sea-bed and the ocean floor and of other international agreements concerning these areas;

(b) An account of the scientific, technical, economic, legal and other aspects of this item;

(c) An indication regarding practical means of promoting international co-operation in this area having regard to views and suggestions put forward by Member States at the twenty-second session.

Operative paragraph 3 (c) requests the Secretary-General to render assistance to the Committee, including submission to it of the results of studies undertaken in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 2172 (XXI) and Economic and Social

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Council resolution 1112 (XL) and such relevant documentation pertinent to the item as may be provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other inter-governmental bodies.

The Committee will observe that only two documents are specifically mentioned, namely, the studies being undertaken in pursuance of the General Assembly resolution and the Economic and Social Council resolution which I have cited.

To take operative paragraph 2 first, the Committee might wish to obtain from the Secretary-General a statement of the past and present activities of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, IAEA and inter-governmental bodies.

So far as operative paragraph 2 (b) is concerned, the Committee might also find it useful to have before it a working paper on the scientific, technical, economic and legal aspects of this item. It is, I presume, well within the Secretariat's competence to provide as a basis for examination and discussion a working paper on the two aspects of this item that are easily identifiable with the functions of the two working groups: on the one hand, the scientific and economic aspects which concern the Technical and Economic Working Group and on the other hand the legal aspects which concern the Legal Working Group. Operative paragraph 2 (b) makes mention of other aspects of this item. It would be useful if members of this Committee would give some indication of what they consider those other aspects of the items are on which they would like to have information from the Secretary-General for the purposes of the study which they have been called upon to undertake.

In regard to operative paragraph 2 (c), it is perhaps premature to expect any expression of opinion on the practical means of promoting international co-operation in the exploration, conservation and use of the sea-bed and ocean floor and the subsoil thereof and of their resources until there is a clearer appreciation of the scientific, technical, economic, legal and other aspects of the item.

Operative paragraph 3 (c) contemplates the presentation to the Committee by the Secretary-General of any relevant documentation provided by UNESCO, IOC, IMCO, FAO, WMO, WHO, IAEA and other inter-governmental bodies.

The Chair would welcome from the members of the Ad Hoc Committee some indication of the nature of the information they would like to have from the Secretary-General. The Chair would suggest, however, that the Secretary-General be requested on his own initiative to furnish the Committee with a statement of the past and present activities referred to in operative paragraph 2 (a) and a working paper on (a) the scientific, technical and economic aspects and (b) the legal aspects of this item.

Further, the Chair would suggest that the Secretary-General be requested to present a list of the documentation provided by the organizations referred to in operative paragraph 3 (c) and where such documentation has not already been supplied by those groups to invite them to do so at as early a date as is possible.

Operative paragraphs 2 (a) and 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 2340 (XXII) also refer to other inter-governmental bodies; the Chair would welcome suggestions from members of this Committee regarding the identity of these other inter-governmental bodies which are of sufficient standing and in a position to contribute usefully towards the discharge of this Committee's task.

Another important matter to which I should like to draw the Committee's attention is that there is no provision for meetings of this Committee during the rest of this month. If the discussion on the organization of and the work of the Committee cannot be completed tomorrow it would be necessary for a request to be addressed to the Committee on Conferences for arrangements for meetings next week as well. I should, therefore, be grateful if all members wishing to speak would inform the Secretariat before the conclusion of this morning's meeting of their desire to speak so that an assessment could be made of the requirements of this Committee.
