

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.138/10
17 March 1969

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF THE
SEA-BED AND THE OCEAN FLOOR BEYOND
THE LIMITS OF NATIONAL JURISDICTION

LETTER DATED 27 FEBRUARY 1969 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE IOC ADDRESSED
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL*

General Assembly resolution 2467 D (XXIII) requests the IOC, in collaboration with other interested international organizations and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2414 (XXIII), to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the preparation of a comprehensive outline of the scope of a co-ordinated, long-term programme of oceanographic research, of which the International Decade of Ocean Exploration will be an important element, designed to assist in a better understanding of the marine environment through science and to increase, in the interests of world economic development, the resources available to all the people of the world.

The Bureau and Consultative Council of the IOC welcomes the opportunity to assist in this step to advance international co-operation in oceanic research which for many years has benefited nations throughout the world. For almost ten years the IOC has devoted efforts to promoting international co-operation in scientific investigations of the ocean and its resources. Many other international organizations have also been concerned with these and related international collaborative efforts. The growing international interest in expanding these activities and in strengthening co-ordination among programmes and projects of international interest has been highlighted in a number of resolutions of the General Assembly during the past several years.

However, the development of an outline of a long-term and expanded programme requires considerable effort, internationally and by individual nations, to develop a sound scientific basis for carrying out specific research projects in a very large, complex and variable environment. Also, the diverse interests of

* Circulated at the request of the representative of UNESCO

many nations must be ascertained and taken into account, and careful consideration must be given to the mutual interests and responsibilities of many international organizations.

A number of steps taken in recent years with IOC participation can contribute to the development of a long-term and expanded programme. In 1965 a draft General Scientific Framework for World Ocean Study was prepared for the IOC by SCOR and ACMRR and published.* In 1967 a Joint Working Party of SCOR, ACMRR, and WMO (AC) described some of the most important oceanic research problems, and a number of observations of the Joint Working Party are set forth in United Nations document E/4487 of 24 April 1968. Already, twenty-two nations have submitted proposals to the IOC concerning (a) broadening the base of the IOC, within its terms of reference, (b) developing a long-term and expanded programme. The IOC has strengthened its relationships with other international organizations, and in particular with the FAO and WMO in addition to UNESCO. Consideration is currently being given to establishing an interagency committee, initially including officials of UNESCO, FAO, WMO and IOC, to bring the programmes of these and other interested organizations into closer harmony.

While elaboration of the outline of a long-term and expanded programme is only now receiving intensive attention by scientists, individual nations, and international organizations, some general aspects of such a programme are clear. The purpose of the programme should be to increase knowledge of the ocean, its contents and the contents of its subsoil, and its interfaces with the land, the atmosphere, and the ocean floor and to improve understanding of processes operating in or affecting the marine environment, with the goal of enhanced utilization of the ocean and its resources for the benefit of mankind.

The programme should include:

- scientific investigations, including the scientific aspects of exploration, of the ocean and its resources
- related services in areas such as mapping and charting, observation and prediction of ocean and atmospheric conditions, data and information processing and dissemination, intercalibration of oceanographic instruments and navigation

* A revised and up-to-date edition of this document has now been prepared by UNESCO and will go to press under the new title "Perspectives in Oceanography, 1968".

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- training and education of specialists
- development of ocean engineering and other means to conduct research and to support related services
- provision of adequate laboratories, ships and other research facilities and equipment.

The long-term and expanded programme will include national and regional projects as well as broader international projects. Special attention will be given to the particular interests of the developing nations.

To further advance the development of the long-term and expanded programme the following steps are being taken:

- The IOC is requesting all Member States of the United Nations system to formulate further proposals for national and international programmes and submit them to the IOC by 1 April 1969.

- A Joint Working Party nominated by SCOR, ACMRR and WMO will meet at the end of April 1969 to develop recommendations for the IOC, FAO, UNESCO and WMO, and other interested international organizations on the scientific content of the programme. The IOC has asked the Joint Working Party to identify the oceanic research problems that should receive particular attention in the near future and the types of programmes that can best contribute to solving these problems.

- An IOC Working Group will convene in June 1969 to prepare, in co-operation with FAO, WMO and other interested organizations whose representatives will participate in its work, further recommendations on the scope of the long-term and expanded programme and on the relationship between this programme, IOC programmes, the International Decade of Ocean Exploration, and other proposals.

- The Sixth Session of the IOC in September 1969 will take action on the recommendations of the Working Group.

- The IOC Chairman will transmit progress reports to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Executive Heads of UNESCO, FAO and WMO, for presentation to the appropriate organs of these organizations.

- All interested international organizations are being informed of the foregoing activities and steps are being taken by the IOC to work even more closely with these organizations in developing the long-term and expanded programme.

Lastly, consideration is being given to the financial implications for the IOC of the activities associated with the long-term and expanded programme, and negotiations are in progress between interested organizations of the United Nations system concerning their joining support of the IOC.

(Signed) W. LANGERAAR
Chairman
