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

Draft letter from the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee to
the Chairman of the Committee

The Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Sea-Bed worked from 9 to 23 March on the preparation of a comprehensive and balanced statement of principles, in accordance with the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 2574 B (XXIV).

The Sub-Committee concentrated its efforts on the preparation of the statement and accordingly, without prejudice to due consideration of the other topics assigned to it, adopted the following agenda (document A/AC.138/SC.1/L.1, of 9 March 1970):

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Consideration of principles and recommendations thereon pursuant to paragraph 2 (a) of General Assembly resolution 2467 A (XXIII) and paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 2574 B (XXIV)
4. Closing of the session

The Sub-Committee decided to take as the point of departure for the preparation of the statement of legal principles the synthesis which appears in its report for 1969, which has been published in Supplement No. 22 (A/7622) of the Official Records of the Twenty-fourth Session of the General Assembly.

The Sub-Committee held five formal meetings and seven informal meetings. It considered individually each of the topics dealt with in the synthesis but decided

to consider also other matters which are not touched on in the synthesis and which should be included in the statement of principles.

The great majority of the members of the Sub-Committee participated in the informal consultations, so that the use of a conference room and the assistance of interpreters were necessary. Delegations had an opportunity to state their views directly and concisely, in privacy and without feeling that their opinions might be officially recorded, and they considered the various questions with great freedom and in great depth. As a number of formulations were advanced on each topic, the Informal Group asked the Rapporteur, Mr. Badawi, to try to bring the different proposals closer together and to prepare, if possible, a single text with the advice and co-operation of delegations, especially those which had formulated concrete proposals.

There are considerable differences between the proposals considered, and it has therefore not yet been possible to arrive at generally acceptable formulations.

Governments will probably wish to reconsider their positions and work on the formulations proposed, so that it may be possible at the spring session to obtain a consensus on a statement of principles. Delegations may obtain the informal documents which were used as a basis for the discussions from the Secretariat.

The delegations concerned felt that it had been extremely beneficial to have the opportunity to become acquainted with the different national positions and to begin the actual work on the specific elements of a comprehensive and balanced statement of legal principles.
