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

DRAFT REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL^{1/}
SUB-COMMITTEE

PART II (continued)

Examination of the economic and technical aspects of the Draft Comprehensive
Outline on the Scope of Oceanic Exploration

102. During its meetings of 12, 13, 14 and 21 August 1969, the Economic and Technical Sub-Committee gave consideration to this item. It based its deliberations on the draft Comprehensive Outline of the Scope of the Long-Term and Expanded Programme of Oceanic Exploration and Research, including the International Decade of Ocean Exploration, prepared by the Special Working Group of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) (document A/AC.138/14). It also took into account a report of a joint working party on the scientific aspects of international ocean research "Global Ocean Research" (Ponza report), from which the draft Outline was developed. The delegations had also at their disposal the following documents:

- (i) Preliminary Maps of "World Subsea Mineral Resources" by V.E. McKelvey and Frank F.H. Wang.
- (ii) The International Decade of Ocean Exploration, "An Oceanic Quest" - An Appraisal by Committees of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering.
- (iii) "Subsea Mineral Resources and Problems Related to Their Development" - Geological Survey Circular 619, U.S. Department of Interior.
- (iv) AIAA Student Journal, April 1969. (Publication of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronauts)

^{1/} The part of the report of the Economic and Technical Sub-Committee covering its spring session and adopted at its 14th session on 27 March 1969 has been issued under symbol No. A/AC.138/SC.2/6.

103. In his interim report to the Economic and Social Council at its forty-seventh session in response to General Assembly resolution 2414 (XXIII) (E/4672), the Secretary-General reported that the draft Outline had still to be further considered and that he therefore felt it appropriate to wait for the conclusions to be reached during the sixth session of the IOC before presenting a report outlining the scope of the long-term programme.

104. Document A/AC.138/14 thus contains only a draft which is still subject to modification, but even so it was felt to be of interest to the Economic and Technical Sub-Committee and was forwarded to it for information.

105. It was pointed out in the Sub-Committee that the differences which existed between the Ponza report and the draft Outline were inevitable, since the former was prepared by a panel of scientists who tackled the problem from the standpoint of what it would be desirable to undertake; whereas the latter was prepared by government representatives who had to limit the development of the programme to what their Governments would be able to support.

106. The draft Outline was generally welcomed as a very useful indication of the scope of the expanded programme. Furthermore, it was considered valuable to have a preliminary exchange of views on the draft at this stage since the results of this discussion might prove helpful to the IOC when adopting its final report.

107. It was felt that the draft Outline covered virtually all those aspects of the scientific investigations of the ocean and its floor that seemed on the one hand desirable in the light of present scientific knowledge and on the other hand feasible in terms of current instrumentation and technology. The part of the draft Outline referring to the ocean water itself, its organic populations and its pollution might not at first sight be particularly relevant to the exploitation of the sea-bed and its minerals. However, the ocean, the atmosphere, and the sea-bed were interdependent and interacting, and phenomena and processes in one influence those in the others.

108. In the draft Outline it is pointed out that an understanding of the character and evolution of the earth's crust beneath the ocean can

"provide a basic scientific framework within which prediction, evaluation and exploitation of material benefits from the sea floor can be made, and without which these benefits can result only from haphazard exploration and empirical studies".

It was therefore suggested that section 4 of Part I of the draft Outline setting forth projects relating to "geology, geophysics and mineral resources beneath

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the sea" should be reconsidered by IOC with a view to elaborating these projects more fully and perhaps giving them greater emphasis.

109. In examining the draft Outline it was further felt that the special working group of IOC had perhaps interpreted too narrowly the mandate given to it by the General Assembly since it did not contain enough operational elements which would allow a clear assessment of the task lying ahead. In particular no indication was given in the draft Outline as to the time limits within which the many valuable proposals would have to be implemented. In addition, the draft Outline omitted to establish priorities and did not give estimates regarding the costs involved and the likely availability of funds.

110. As regards the question of financing, it was recalled that the Expanded Programme would be, in essence, a programme of co-ordination, of national research projects, and activities of Member States. Funds would therefore be almost exclusively those allocated to marine research in national budgets. The Outline therefore was not to project the cost of an international operation but to recommend a broad and ambitious pattern of research into which national activities should be fitted.

111. It was explained however that the Special Working Group in drafting the Outline felt that it should list the problems and proposals as far as possible in a logical order, leaving it to the United Nations and related organizations to deal with questions of priority. It was argued in the same context that research projects in all fields must be encouraged, for it was highly difficult to forecast their future interaction. It was noted that the Executive Council of the IOC would convene as often as necessary as a follow-up of the Outline to develop from time to time the details and steps to be taken in the implementation of the expanded programme.

112. National programmes, which as was pointed out will be the main elements of the long-term programme, should be designed in a way that other nations - developed or developing, coastal or landlocked - can become associated with them and be afforded the possibility of actively participating in the common endeavour to increase our knowledge of the ocean, its floor and the subsoil.

113. In considering the draft Outline, special attention was given to the possibilities it offered to developing countries in the field of improving their

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research capabilities and direct participation. It was felt in this context that the Special Working Group might have taken into account to a greater extent elements which would be conducive to arriving at this goal.

114. The ultimate goal of the Expanded Programme is enhanced utilization of the ocean and its resources for the benefit of mankind. The developing countries have a special interest in fully participating in the Expanded Programme and in seeking to apply its results to further their own development. They would need scientific, technical and material assistance, especially in training of specialists, equipment and facilities as well as assistance in the design and organization of scientific programmes. It was hoped that adequate funds would be made available for developing plans to meet the interests and needs of the developing countries arising from the Expanded Programme.

115. The practical value of the suggestions on specific international regional investigations was also stressed, whether they concern specific portions or regions of the world ocean or cover co-operative action undertaken by countries of a specific geographic area, e.g., by nations adjacent to a marginal or internal sea. It was suggested, however, that more attention should be given in these programmes to studies relating to the sea-bed and its mineral resources.

116. There was agreement that the observations and suggestions which had been made during the debate on the item should be brought to the attention of the IOC, for its consideration when the final outline of the scope of the long-term programme of ocean exploration was elaborated. Accordingly, the summary records of the meetings of the Economic and Technical Sub-Committee covering the discussion of this item will be forwarded to the IOC.

117. At the end of the discussion of this item, the following observations were made:

(a) Generally the draft Outline prepared on the Expanded Programme has been well received. Several suggestions for improvement have been made.

(b) The importance of an adequate scientific basis for locating mineral deposits and preventing pollution has been pointed out. All countries are interested in the use of these data.

(c) Even though certain aspects dealing with the superjacent waters are not strictly within the purview of the Committee, the interdependence and interaction

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of all processes and phenomena concerning the ocean have been stressed. Within the framework of the Expanded Programme, research on the sea-bed and the ocean floor should be developed further.

(d) Certain operational elements are lacking in the draft Outline: priorities are not indicated and financial estimates of the programme not made. But such information could be provided at the stage of programming when funds were allocated in the framework of national budgets.

(e) Regrets were also expressed that developing countries had not been sufficiently associated with the Expanded Programme in the draft Outline and that too little account had been taken of their needs and interests. In this respect stress was laid on the importance of international co-operation.

(f) The importance of training of personnel and experts and other forms of technical assistance was emphasized.
