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

Sub-Committee III

Statement by the Chairman of Sub-Committee III  
at the second meeting on 28 July 1971

As Sub-Committee III has so far held only one meeting, in March 1971, there did not seem to be any need to produce a further note by the Chairman. The contents of the note circulated on 22 March under the symbol A/AC.138/SC.III/L.2 still apply.

At the first meeting I suggested that the Sub-Committee should hold a general debate, primarily for the purpose of eliciting the views of delegations on certain questions arising from the terms of reference given to Sub-Committee III on 12 March 1971.

It may be useful to recall that these terms of reference are as follows:  
"To deal with the preservation of the marine environment (including, inter alia, the prevention of pollution) and scientific research and to prepare draft treaty articles thereon".

The first question which arises is: should we think in terms of drafting articles for insertion in the four Geneva Conventions, which are open to revision - articles which would crystallize the substance of more specialized conventions prepared in other bodies; or should we think in terms of drafting a separate convention concerning the marine environment and scientific research?

The second question relates more particularly to pollution. Should we think in terms of drafting texts which apply only to the high seas, or texts which cover the whole surface of the sea, including the territorial sea?

The third question concerns the kind of pollution we have to consider. Is it only pollution due to the exploitation of the sea-bed or marine pollution in general, regardless of its origin?

Lastly, the fourth question relates to scientific research. Should we confine ourselves to research on the sea-bed, or should we also consider research in the superjacent waters of the high seas?

The replies to these four questions will enable us to define more clearly the limits which Sub-Committee III wishes to place on its terms of reference. It seems clear, however, that these limits might subsequently have to be adjusted in the light of the conclusions reached by the other two Sub-Committees, or in the light of the results achieved by other United Nations bodies such as the Conference on the Human Environment or IMCO.