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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 I

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST MEETING\*/

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 12 July 1973, at 11 a.m.

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. ENGO	Cameroon
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. MOTT	Australia

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\*/ This provisional summary record, together with the corrections to be issued in consolidated form after the session, will constitute the final record of the meeting.

## ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, he had announced the beginning of a series of informal consultations. Those consultations would assist the Working Group in making progress with its work. At that juncture, however, the Working Group seemed to be losing its way in lengthy statements, although at the current stage of the work, the need was not merely to express viewpoints but to solve the problems that had been entrusted to the Sub-Committee. To that end, as he had said at the previous meeting, it was necessary to identify firstly areas of agreement, secondly questions on which agreement had been reached as to substance but not as to form, and thirdly areas of disagreement. The main Committee had now been in existence for several years and the positions on basic issues were well-known. What was now required was a document setting out the areas of agreement and disagreement that could serve as a basis for the political discussion.

He then read out a programme of meetings of Sub-Committee I and its Working Group for the current and the following week. It should be noted that the programme, obtainable from the Secretary of the Sub-Committee, was based on the principle, which had been accepted at a meeting of the Chairmen of the Committee and Sub-Committees, that it was not possible to hold a meeting of the Working Group of Sub-Committee I at the same time as a meeting of Sub-Committee II, or a meeting of the Working Group of Sub-Committee II at the same time as a meeting of Sub-Committee I, because of the nature of the work of the two Sub-Committees and because the composition of the smaller delegations was not such as to enable them to attend simultaneous meetings of those organs.

Miss MARTIN SANE (France), having asked for some clarification of the programme of meetings, which the CHAIRMAN supplied, said that she was concerned at the effect of that rule on the progress of the work and hoped that it would not prevent the Working Group of Sub-Committee I from holding informal meetings.

The CHAIRMAN replied that, on the contrary, delegations wishing to take the initiative for informal meetings should be encouraged to do so. In reply to a question from Mr. AL SABAH (Kuwait), he said that the principle to which he had referred related only to Sub-Committees I and II and not to Sub-Committee III.

Mr. DE SOTO (Peru) emphasized the importance of the comments just made by the Chairman on the usefulness of identifying areas of agreement and disagreement, and on the need to elaborate texts which would make it easier to adopt political positions.

It was indeed important that a business-like document should be prepared which would make it possible to identify clearly the main currents of opinion on substantive matters. For the purposes of that document, he requested the Chairman to arrange matters so as to enable the Working Group to work in a flexible way and to dispose of its own time. A useful approach might, perhaps, be to set up a drafting group to prepare the document in question. Another possibility would be for delegations that had expressed comparable ideas to meet in order to draw up agreed texts, the contracts being made in accordance with political rather than geographical criteria.

The CHAIRMAN assured the representative of Peru that the competent bodies would bear in mind the suggestions he had just made.

Mr. ROMANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the Chairman for having announced to the Sub-Committee its programme of work for the days to come. It often happened, unfortunately, that the date and purpose of meetings were not known sufficiently well in advance. The Chairman's initiative was a very felicitous one. Nevertheless, there was a danger that the meetings of Sub-Committee I and its Working Group might obstruct the work of Sub-Committee II and its Working Group. On the other hand, he insisted that the texts intended for discussion should be drafted by the Working Group of Sub-Committee I. His delegation would not recognize decisions taken in informal groups outside the Working Group. Lastly, he asked that the informal discussion groups of the Working Group should meet in small conference rooms suited to their work.

The CHAIRMAN replied to the USSR representative that he personally was unable to exercise any control over the work programme of Sub-Committee II and its Working Group. He had, however, several announcements to make concerning meetings of Sub-Committee II that were to be held during the current and the following week.

The informal contact groups should not be a substitute for the Working Group but should complement it. The Chairman of the Working Group was keeping in touch with their activities. As for the question of rooms raised by the USSR representative, he could assure him that the Secretariat had taken note of the problem and would endeavour to resolve it.

Mr. THOMPSON-FLORES (Brazil) wished to comment on the Chairman's statement concerning the calendar of meetings of the Sub-Committees and Working Groups. In the first place, he was astonished to hear that the proposed calendar had been discussed in the Bureau, which had met once only, in his presence, without taking up the question of the calendar of meetings. It was an important matter that fully merited discussion at the next meeting of the Bureau, to be held the following Monday. His delegation thought that there should be no real difficulties for delegations if several

Sub-Committees and Working Groups were to meet simultaneously in view of the fact that, since the very beginning of the Committee's work, delegations had been aware of its methods of work and knew that they should be manned and prepared to take part in two or three meetings at the same time. In that connexion, it should be noted that, in so far as attendance at meetings was concerned, there was virtually no difference between the meeting of a Sub-Committee and that of a Working Group, since the latter were Working Groups of the whole.

He went on to comment on the method followed by Working Group I, which was responsible for preparing the text of a draft convention, and said that the Peruvian representative had made an important proposal to the effect that the Chairman of Working Group I should be left sufficient room to manoeuvre so that the Group could meet as often as proved necessary. Since the Working Group was not yet ready for overall negotiations, it should for the moment devote itself to putting together a clear and precise text that would highlight both the points that were acceptable to all and the variants (not more than two or three in each case) in respect of which it had not been possible to reach any agreement on a single formulation. In the immediate future, therefore, it was important that the delegations whose positions were relatively close should be able to consult with one another and to produce simple and clear drafts of the variants corresponding to the different opinions. It none the less remained true that informal consultations between delegations could not replace meetings of the Working Group, as the Chairman had pointed out.

The CHAIRMAN said that the programme of work had been discussed at the meeting of Chairmen of Sub-Committees and Working Groups convened for that purpose by the Chairman of the plenary Committee. It was to be hoped, however, that the question of the calendar of meetings would be considered by the Bureau on the following Monday. To conclude, it was his opinion that the exchange of views which had just taken place should contribute usefully to the progress of the work. He hoped that the Sub-Committee would not impose too much restraint on the Working Group, but would leave it free to select its method of work.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.