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Report of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
19-27 October 1967



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The Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) was held at UNESCO, Paris, from 19 to 27 October 1967. I acted as an observer on behalf of ICNAF as well as representing the UK. The session was attended by 46 member countries. Peru, Madagascar, Guatemala and Singapore have now joined the Commission and so brought its total membership up to 58.

The session was opened by an address of welcome by Prof. Matveyev, Assistant Director General of UNESCO. He dealt mainly with UN Resolution No.2172 on the Resources of the Sea and said that he regarded IOC as the central body in the UN system as far as oceanography is concerned, but that UNESCO is prepared to work in cooperation with FAO and WMO. During the course of the session we were addressed by Dr Davies, the Secretary General of WMO. He stressed the need for joint working groups between IOC and WMO on matters of mutual interest and proposed that either UNESCO or WMO should provide the appropriate secretarial support.

The Anton Bruun Memorial Lecture was given by Prof. Charnock (Southampton University). His theme was the history of the Global Atmospheric Research Project and the opportunities it presents for collaboration between meteorologists and oceanographers in the field of air-sea interaction studies.

28 resolutions were passed at the meeting: four are of direct interest to ICNAF and copies of these are appended.

Resolution 3 (Appendix I) stems from UN Resolution No.2172 on the Resources of the Sea. This calls on the UN Secretary General, in cooperation with UNESCO (in particular IOC), FAO (in particular COFI), WMO and Governments of interested Member States

- (a) to carry out a comprehensive survey of the activities in marine science and technology undertaken by the UN agencies, Member States and intergovernmental organizations
- (b) to formulate proposals for (i) ensuring the most effective arrangements for an expanded program of international cooperation to assist in a better understanding of the marine environment through science and in the exploitation and development of marine resources, with due regard to the conservation of fish stocks (ii) initiating and strengthening marine education and training programs.

The Secretary General has to report back to the General Assembly at its 23rd Session beginning in autumn 1968. IOC endorsed the concepts of (a) joint scientific working groups on matters of mutual concern to ACMRR, SCOR and WMO (AC) (b) joint groups on specific subjects of concern to IOC, COFI and WMO. It also invited the Executive Heads of FAO, UNESCO and WMO to explore specific problems in international marine science which might require their joint consideration, and to see if some form of joint action might not help in their solution. Further, it expressed the view that the time is not yet right for a judgment to be made on the effectiveness of present arrangements for international cooperation in marine science.

Resolution 6 (Appendix II) results from a USSR proposal that IOC should form a working group on the legal aspects of (a) scientific research on the high seas (b) the exploitation of the mineral resources of the high seas. It sets up a group to consider legal aspects related to scientific investigations of the nature and resources of the ocean and calls upon this group to indicate the legal principles which should facilitate and guide such research. The group is also to prepare (a) documentation on the effect of the law of the sea on scientific research (b) proposals relating to the contribution of scientific knowledge

to the development of the law of the sea, the intention being for IOC to bring these documents and proposals to the notice of the UN and other appropriate bodies in order to assist them when they are developing further the law of the sea. Both Norway and the UK pointed out that the inclusion of "resources" in the terms of reference of this group could lead to a number of difficulties because many bodies, other than IOC, are concerned with investigations of fisheries resources. The UK asked particularly that the report of the session should state its view that the Bureau of IOC must pay close attention to the views of bodies like ICNAF and ICES when establishing this group.

Resolution 13 (Appendix III) followed from a discussion of a USSR proposal for an international study of the dynamics and hydrology of the North Atlantic Ocean. Research and Statistics Committee considered this proposal at its 1967 meeting and the Executive Secretary forwarded its views to SCOR on 7 July 1967. SCOR incorporated them in its report to IOC and did not recommend that the Soviet proposal should be taken up as an official IOC program. During a lengthy debate by IOC on this subject many speakers expressed the view that there is a lot of very useful physical oceanography being done in the North Atlantic at present and that nothing further is needed beyond its coordination. The resulting resolution therefore invites ICNAF and ICES to establish with IOC an appropriate coordination group.

Resolution 23 (Appendix IV) arose from the debate on Resolution 6 when it became clear that part of Article 1 of the IOC Statutes was different in the Russian text when compared with the English. In the English version the article runs:-

"The purpose of the Commission shall be to promote scientific investigation with a view to learning more about the nature and resources of the oceans."

The Russian version gives:-

"The objective of the Commission is to facilitate the development of scientific investigation of the oceans with the aims of understanding nature and mastering their resources."

There is concern among some members of IOC lest the Russian version be construed as meaning that the IOC can concern itself with the exploitation of marine resources.

The IOC agreed to start a Cooperative Study in the Mediterranean in 1969 and Cooperative Investigations of the Caribbean and adjacent regions in 1970. It also appointed a series of committees to work for the establishment, in collaboration with WMO, of an Integrated Global Ocean Station System using anchored and moored buoys, ships of opportunity, weather ships, etc. These committees will have to consider such things as a radio frequency allocation plan, the legal status of oceanographic buoys, ocean-atmosphere interaction and ocean variability.

In delivering his report to the Commission the Secretary said that he had been advised by his staff that ICNAF did not know what IOC was doing. I protested strongly and said that whenever the Executive Secretary or a member of Research and Statistics Committee had acted as observers at IOC they had submitted a written report to the Commissioners on any matter which concerned ICNAF. The IOC Secretary apologized and said that, in that case, the fault must lie with his office.

A.J.Lee
4 December 1967

RESOLUTION V-3

FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF COOPERATION AS REGARDS THE OCEAN

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Being aware of the important role that the Commission is called to play in connection with the implementation of UN Resolution 2172,

Recognizing that the experience of the Commission places it in a particularly advantageous position allowing it to contribute considerably to the study and proposals which are being formulated under Resolution 2172,

Being convinced that further improvement of the international cooperation in all matters concerning the ocean would be fostered by strengthening of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, further increasing its efficiency, and making closer its links with other interested international organizations,

Recognizing that an understanding of the world ocean and the processes governing its behaviour are global in scale; and that the full cooperation of both developed and developing nations is essential if adequate understanding and utilization of the oceans is to be achieved,

Taking note of the valuable advice and assistance provided to the Commission by the Joint ACMRR/SCOR/WMO(AC) Working Group,

I

Recognizes the benefits to be derived by all concerned from joint working parties of SCOR, ACMRR and WMO(AC) on matters of mutual interest,

Notes that a number of steps have already been taken in this direction,

Calls for further steps along these lines.

II

Notes the specific problems discussed in the report of the ACMRR/SCOR/WMO(AC) Working Group "International Ocean Affairs",

Supports the recommendations contained in the sections on data problems, documentation problems, exchange of information, standardization and intercalibration, sea-floor charting and regional and world-wide networks.

Notes the importance of the section on living resources which, it appreciates, is primarily addressed to the FAO, and stresses the contribution being made by marine biological and environmental studies under the auspices of the IOC to the understanding of the living resources of the ocean.

Also supports the recommendations regarding non-living resources, with the exception of that concerned with the legal aspects, and,

Refers to Resolution V-6 with respect to legal problems on non-living resources and freedom of scientific research.

III

Endorses the view that various forms of direct consultation and cooperation between IOC, COFI and WMO, as well as other intergovernmental bodies on questions of mutual concern, should be facilitated, and

Invites the agencies concerned to establish arrangements for this purpose, bearing in mind the effectiveness of small combined groups on specific subjects.

Notes with appreciation the initiative of the Director-General of UNESCO and the constructive responses by the Executive Heads of FAO and WMO regarding improvement in joint activities.

Recognizes that ad hoc arrangements among Secretariats have worked reasonably well in a number of cases.

Invites the Executive Heads of UNESCO, FAO and WMO and of other appropriate organizations, to explore the specific problems which might require joint consideration, the extent and magnitude of such problems, and whether some form of joint action might usefully contribute to their solution.

Invites these organizations to take such joint action as may be warranted.

Specifically recognizes the increasing need for financial support of IOC activities and considers that one way that such support can be secured is by adequate planning of activities as envisaged in Resolution V-1.

Also invites Member Governments to consider seconding expert personnel on an ad hoc basis for specific tasks in order to strengthen further the Commission's secretariat.

IV

Expresses the view, with regard to possible different organizational arrangements, including permanent joint secretariats that might be required to deal with the problems enumerated above, that it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of present arrangements, and

Decides that the Commission should keep under review the progress made with these and other important problems, with a view to further consideration of organizational arrangements at a later date.

V

Endorses the view that all oceanic activities, national and international, require greatly increased financial support and urges Governments and International Organizations and Funds to give high priority to the allocation of the necessary sums for this purpose.

RESOLUTION V-6

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IOC WORKING GROUP ON LEGAL QUESTIONS
RELATED TO SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS OF THE OCEAN

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

Noting the important work being accomplished by the United Nations in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution 2172 (XXI) on "Resources of the Sea",

Bearing in mind the importance of scientific investigations for an understanding of the nature of the ocean and for the optimum use of its resources in the interests of mankind,

Considering that the law of the sea can affect the conduct of scientific investigations of the ocean and that the knowledge gained from oceanic research can contribute to the orderly further development of the law of the sea,

Recognizing the importance of favourable legal conditions for the scientific investigations of the ocean,

Noting that the IOC has a leading role in the development and coordination of scientific investigations of the ocean,

Decides to establish an IOC Working Group on Legal Questions Related to Scientific Investigations of the Ocean and charges it with:

- (a) Considering legal aspects specifically related to scientific investigations of the nature and scientific investigations of the resources of the ocean, including those related to the use of various means of collecting ocean data, with a view to indicating legal principles which should facilitate and guide such research, carrying out this work in coordination with the activities of the group of experts established at the 6th meeting of the Bureau and the Consultative Council to prepare documentation concerning the legal aspects of the use of ocean data stations;
- (b) Preparing documentation concerning the effect of the law of the sea on scientific research and proposals relating both to the contribution of scientific knowledge to the development of the law of the sea, and to the participation of the IOC in the deliberations of the United Nations and appropriate specialized bodies to assist them in taking proper account of scientific interests and scientific knowledge in the consideration of the further development of the law of the sea;

Invites the other organizations concerned to cooperate in this work.

Informs the United Nations of the establishment of a working group on legal questions related to scientific investigations of the ocean and the work of its group of experts in preparing documentation concerning the legal aspects of the use of ocean data stations.

Advises the United Nations of its readiness

- (a) to assist in the consideration of the possible further development of the law of the sea from the point of view of the scientific interests involved, and
- (b) to assist in the acquisition and distribution of scientific knowledge, including knowledge of the effect of marine activities on the ocean environment, necessary for the optimum use of the seas in the interest of mankind and, where required, for the sound development of the law of the sea.

RESOLUTION V-13

COOPERATIVE SYSTEMATIC STUDIES IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Having examined the proposal for an international project for study of the dynamics and hydrology of the North Atlantic prepared in response to Resolution IV-14, and the comments of SCOR thereon,

Considering the necessity for facilitating a more effective and comprehensive program of investigation in the North Atlantic,

Recognizing that, despite the limitations on oceanographic research resources and the need for further development of theory and instruments, many investigations and observational programs now going on in the region could contribute to the systematic studies envisioned in the proposal,

Noting the relevance of the Commission's programs in the Caribbean and adjacent regions and in the Mediterranean, to the study of the North Atlantic,

Recognizing the importance of oceanographic observations from weather ships and merchant vessels carrying marine observers, of regional oceanographic surveys and repeated oceanographic profiles, and of special studies of variability in selected regions,

Resolves to strengthen coordination of IOC programs with other oceanographic programs in the North Atlantic.

Invites ICES and ICNAF to establish together with IOC an appropriate joint coordination body.

Considers the following tasks to be essential to strengthened coordination through such a coordination body:

1. Compilation and dissemination of detailed information on plans for investigations and observational programs in the North Atlantic;
2. Coordination of the Commission's Caribbean and Mediterranean programs with existing ICES and ICNAF programs in the North Atlantic region, with the program for the study of the dynamics and hydrology of the North Atlantic, and with other new programs which may develop in the region;
3. Development of future joint programs among IOC, ICES and ICNAF, WMO and other interested organizations with a view to ensuring the development of a systematic program of investigations of the North Atlantic.

Instructs the Secretary to consult with the Secretariats of ICES and ICNAF in order to determine the most effective means for accomplishing these tasks and to report to the Bureau and Consultative Council as soon as possible.

RESOLUTION V-23

TEXT OF THE IOC STATUTES

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Noting that the English, French, Spanish and Russian texts of the Statutes of the IOC were found to contain certain appreciable discrepancies in wording due to inaccuracies of translation,

Authorizes the Bureau, together with the Consultative Council and with the help of the Secretariat and Member States, to make a careful comparison of the texts of the Statutes of the Commission in the four languages and to report the results of this comparison to the XVth General Conference of UNESCO, together with proposals for the elimination of any discrepancies between the texts.

