



ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1966

Report on the Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental
Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Working Group on Data Exchange

Copenhagen: 31 March-2 April 1966

I attended the above meeting of the IOC Working Group on Data Exchange as a United Kingdom representative and an ICNAF observer. The meeting was called for by Resolution 6 of the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the group was asked to consider ways of improving oceanographic data exchange. The following are the main points of interest arising in the field as far as the Research and Statistics Committee is concerned:-

1. Revision of the IOC Manual on International Data Exchange: It was decided to include in the Manual an additional section dealing with data and information retrieval and dissemination. If this section is approved by the IOC the following will be available free of charge to any oceanographic institution:-
 - (a) The retrieval from a World Data Centre of an amount of data equivalent to that which has been put in by the institution.
 - (b) All data resulting from any co-operative IOC expedition in which the institution has taken part.
 - (c) Assistance from the IOC Secretariat in meeting any currency exchange difficulties arising from the ordering of data from World Data Centres on a repayment basis.
 - (d) Receipt from the World Data Centres of six-monthly catalogues and/or information sheets (including charts) showing where, when and what sort of data have been collected. A comprehensive catalogue for the International Indian Ocean Expedition cruises will be issued by World Data Centre A shortly.

It was proposed that World Data Centres A and B should provide without charge, data required by intergovernmental bodies other than IOC when such data are required for the planning of co-operative investigations. In view of the possible financial implications of this proposal the matter was referred to the IOC Bureau and Consultative Council.

2. Exchange of Biological Data: It was agreed that values of the so-called bulk measurements (plant pigments, zooplankton biomass, micro-nekton biomass and primary production) should be sent to the World Data Centres A and B, together with details of the methods used to obtain them and with references to associated physical and chemical data. World Data Centres are to be asked to develop cross-referencing systems. Data pertaining to fisheries should go to the FAO Fisheries Data Centre or to the appropriate intergovernmental fisheries commission or council. Other biological data should not go to data centres but the World Data Centres should be told of their existence and whereabouts. It was recommended that the SCOR-ACMRR Working Group on Biological Data Exchange work out the necessary guide-lines for all this activity.
3. Standard formats for the transmission of data: It was generally agreed that the task of data centres would be simplified if data were submitted on standard forms such as those used by ICES or by the International Indian Ocean Expedition. However, the more urgent problem is that of developing a standard punch-card format for use by the various data centres in exchanging data and in handling data by machine. It was proposed that an ad hoc Group consisting of Sauer (Canada),

Smed (ICES), Ryzhkov (USSR) and Stewart (USA) should discuss this matter as far as possible by correspondence and, if necessary, should meet in Copenhagen in October 1966 at the time of the ICES meeting.

A. J. Lee

10 May 1966