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Report on the activities of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

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The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) has not met since the 1968 Annual Meeting of ICNAF and its next session is due to be held in Paris during 2-13 September 1969. However, its Bureau and Consultative Council have met twice: in London in June 1968 and in Woods Hole in February 1969.

In accordance with the proposals made in the report of the Secretary General of the United Nations (ECOSOC Document E/4487) called for by UN Resolution 2172 (XXI) on the Resources of the Sea, the Bureau has taken steps to broaden the basis of the Commission and discussions are now taking place to establish an arrangement whereby FAO, WHO and other UN agencies, as well as UNESCO, can (i) assist and support the Commission, for example by providing part of its Secretariat (ii) harmonize their own programmes with that of the Commission.

UN Resolution 2414 (XXIII) inter alia endorsed the concept of a long-term programme of oceanographic research designed to assist in a better understanding of the marine environment through science and to increase, in the interests of world economic development, the resources available to the people of the world. It also asked the UN Secretary General to present a comprehensive outline of the scope of this programme to the 47th Session of ECOSOC and to take into account the scientific recommendations of IOC. The IOC Bureau has therefore set up a working group to make such recommendations as are appropriate and this will meet in Paris from 16 to 21 June.

UN Resolution 2467 (XXIII) welcomed the concept of an International Decade of Ocean Exploration starting in 1970 and asked member states to formulate national and international scientific programmes accordingly and to transmit them to the IOC. The Bureau has therefore requested members of IOC to submit these as soon as possible.

Various working groups of IOC have met over the past year. Progress has been made:

- (i) in formulating plans for the Cooperative Investigations of the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (CICAR) which are to start in 1970;
- (ii) towards the establishment of an Integrated Global Ocean Station System (IGOSS);
- (iii) towards a Plenipotentiary Conference on the Legal Status of Ocean Data Acquisition Systems to be convened in 1971 or 1972;
- (iv) in the analysis of legal questions related to the scientific investigation of the ocean.