



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Monday, 17 November 1969,
at 3.30 p.m.

Resumed Forty-seventh Session
OFFICIAL RECORDS

NEW YORK

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President: Mr. Raymond SCHEYVEN (Belgium).

In the absence of the President, Mr. Maramis (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 16

The sea: comprehensive outline of a long-term and expanded programme of oceanographic research (concluded) (E/4759)

1. Mr. SULEIMAN (Libya) said that the report before the Council,¹ (E/4759) marked an important step forward in the Council's activities relating to the exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea for the benefit of all mankind. Libya attached great importance to those activities and had co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 2467 D (XXIII), which requested the co-operation of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO in preparing the comprehensive outline of the scope of the long-term programme of oceanographic research and in co-ordinating its scientific aspects. At the forty-fifth session of the Council, his delegation had stressed (1546th meeting) the urgent need to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination among all countries, the specialized agencies and other institutions, and he therefore welcomed the spirit of co-operation shown by IOC in formulating the outline contained in the annex to the report. In particular, he welcomed IOC's decision to establish a group of experts on long-term scientific policy and planning, in order to keep the expanded programme up to date and to ensure its speedy implementation.

2. The need for measures to combat marine pollution was well known. His Government was particularly concerned with pollution of the sea by oil discharged from vessels or entering the water through natural seepage or resulting from oil and gas leaks caused by the exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed. His delegation had therefore co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 2467 B (XXIII) and welcomed the inclusion in the outline of a separate chapter dealing with marine pollution. It also considered the proposed comprehensive reports on the state of the ocean environment to be extremely important and welcomed the establishment of an Inter-Secretariat Com-

mittee to assist IOC in its duties and to examine matters of co-ordination.

3. Mr. DENORME (Belgium) said that, at the forty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Council, his delegation had and in general supported the proposals in the Secretary-General's report on marine science and technology (E/4487 and Corr.1-6). However, it had stressed that additional information on the scope of the long-term programme would be needed. The experts who had prepared that report had stressed the need for reforms to strengthen IOC and to give it greater financial resources and autonomy and, in connexion with the long-term programme itself, had held the view that it should integrate national programmes, but had not gone into detail as to its precise scope. His delegation had therefore taken the initiative in submitting to the General Assembly the draft which was adopted as resolution 2414 (XXIII) dealing with international co-operation in questions related to the oceans, since it believed that the scope of the programme should be more clearly defined in collaboration with IOC. With the appearance of the comprehensive outline of the programme that goal had been achieved and his delegation was grateful to those responsible for its preparation. It was regrettable, however, that the report of the Joint Working Party of the Advisory Committee on Marine Resources Research, the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research and the World Meteorological Organization was not annexed to it.

4. In general terms, the outline established no time-table or set of priorities, but merely laid down a framework for the progressive development of the programme based on the five criteria listed in paragraph 9 of the introduction. His delegation supported those criteria and, in connexion with the implementation of the programme, welcomed the establishment of an Inter-Secretariat Committee to ensure effective co-operation among the United Nations organs actively involved in programmes of oceanography, with a view to avoiding duplication and overlapping. His delegation also agreed that the United Nations should continue to draw on IOC's technical competence, where the scientific aspects of oceanography were concerned, and request the Commission to co-ordinate and implement the programme. It would also welcome information on the actual implementation of the programme in the light of the budgetary resources available.

5. In connexion with the economic implications of the programme, IOC had asked how the results of exploration and research programmes could best contribute to various peaceful uses of the ocean, its floor and its resources. The Joint Working Party had replied that, for the most part, the contribution would be indirect, and great economic benefits should not be expected immediately. The philosophy

¹ A/7750.

underlying the various projects was that, in the long term, rational use of the ocean and its resources must be based on the improved description and understanding resulting from scientific research. The programmes would provide the scientific bases for assessment of potential resources, the discovery of new resources, and the rational management and conservation of them and of the marine environment. That view appeared to be in line with the fourth criterion in paragraph 9 of the introduction.

6. It was in that spirit that his delegation supported the comprehensive outline of the programme and hoped that it would be transmitted, with the expression of the Council's appreciation, to the General Assembly.

7. Mr. KASSUM (Secretary of the Council) said that the report of the Joint Working Party would be made available to members of the Council within the next few days in booklet form in all the working languages.

8. Mr. VIAUD (France) said that his Government attached great importance to the long-term and expanded programme of oceanographic research and had submitted its views on the subject to the IOC secretariat. Among the aspects to which it attached particular importance were ocean-atmosphere interaction and ocean phenomena in general, including circulation. Increased knowledge of such subjects was essential to knowledge of the marine environment in general, and he therefore welcomed the prominent position given to them in the report. A further subject for study would be the effect of human activity on oceanographic and meteorological phenomena.

9. Another important matter was that of living resources and their relation to the marine environment. A systematic effort should be made to assess the potential value of the living resources of the ocean and to study ways of improving their quantity and quality. Pollution, which was becoming a familiar subject in various United Nations organs, was also extremely important; high priority should be given to its examination in close co-operation with WMO. Chapter 4 of part I of the outline dealing with geology, geophysics and mineral resources beneath the sea, was clearly within the competence of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction. The field was a new one, and an ambitious scientific programme must in the future be formulated in order to benefit from hitherto untapped resources of such valuable materials as fossil fuels.

10. In its national oceanographic research programmes, France sought to contribute to man's knowledge of his world by studying such aspects of the sea and its effects as erosion. Particular attention was also given to the continental shelves, and a French vessel had recently returned from a voyage concerned with that purpose covering both sides of the North Atlantic. France also concerned itself with the problems of man's penetration beneath the sea, and the subject should perhaps have been given more space in the programme submitted to the Council. If any extensive benefit was to be derived from the resources of the sea, a careful study must be made of man's ability to acclimatize himself to the new and different environment in which he would have to work. In general, in the context of the International Decade of Ocean Exploration, the long-

term and expanded programme should aim at adding to the fund of knowledge of the marine environment as a whole and not merely of the resources of the sea-bed, so that its potential could be realized for the benefit of mankind. Better understanding of the whole environment would inevitably promote the exploitation of its resources on a vaster scale.

11. With regard to the practical problems of implementation of the programme, he pointed out that, at the request of his delegation, the first section in part II of the outline dealt with training, education and manpower requirements. Another important section was that dealing with assistance to developing countries, which should have been expanded to include specific proposals. In general, assistance to the developing countries, in order to enable them to benefit from the fruits of scientific knowledge and research, was extremely desirable, and France was particularly concerned to encourage the dissemination of such knowledge in oceanography by setting up oceanographic centres in developing countries to meet their special needs and interests.

12. In view of the short time available for its preparation, the outline was generally satisfactory. With the minor proviso, which should be borne in mind in the context of the future development and implementation of the programme, that it was necessary not only to discuss the areas in which international co-operation would be most effective, but also to establish a set of priorities, his delegation supported it and hoped that the co-operation between the United Nations Secretariat and IOC would continue. The outline contained almost no information concerning the financial implications of the long-term programme. It was admittedly difficult to make realistic estimates for a programme whose scope was not yet fully known, but some estimate should be made as soon as possible. In addition, the experience of individual countries in oceanography should be taken into account, in order to avoid duplication of studies which had already been made.

13. Mr. GALLARDO MORENO (Mexico) said that, in view of its importance, the outline required careful study. He therefore believed that the Council should take note of it and transmit it to the General Assembly for discussion. To approve it at the present stage would be premature, since the financial implications of certain proposed activities were unknown.

14. Mr. GOWLAND (Argentina) said that, in view of the far-reaching implications of the outline for future international co-operation in oceanography, Governments must be given an opportunity to consider it in detail. He therefore agreed with the representative of Mexico.

15. Mr. LOBANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that various competent organs in the Soviet Union had considered with interest the draft expanded programme. At the sixth session of IOC, his delegation had voted for it as a constructive contribution to the activities which were necessary to ensure that the resources of the ocean were used for the benefit of all mankind. His delegation's detailed views on the subject appeared in the summary record of the meeting on 14 August 1969 of the Economic

and Technical Sub-Committee² of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction. It was important that, in the interests of international co-operation, the United Nations should do everything possible to ensure within the existing resources the success of the long-term and expanded programme, while recognizing the essential role of IOC as the main substantive and co-ordinating body in the field. It was to be hoped that the establishment of an Inter-Secretariat Committee would be of assistance to the Commission, and not to the detriment of its authority. Since the report on the programme would be discussed in greater detail in the Second Committee, his delegation believed that at the present stage the Council should simply take note of the report with appreciation and transmit it to the General Assembly.

16. Mr. BLAU (United States of America) said that the discussions at the sixth session of IOC, which culminated in approval of the comprehensive outline of the long-term and expanded programme, were a cause for satisfaction. He also welcomed IOC's response to the General Assembly's request in resolution 2467 D (XXIII) that it should intensify its activities in the scientific field, in particular with regard to co-ordinating the scientific aspects of the long-term programme, of which the International Decade of Ocean Exploration would be an important element, including international agency programmes, an expanded international exchange of data from national programmes, and international efforts to strengthen the research capabilities with all interested nations, with particular regard to the needs of the developing countries. In that context the revised statutes of IOC, adopted at its sixth session, were important, since they would lead to the development of a

² A/AC.138/SC.2/SR.17 (mimeographed).

closer working relationship with other interested agencies such as FAO, WMO and IMCO.

17. The Secretary-General should continue to report to the Council at regular intervals on programmes in marine science, in consultation with the agencies concerned, particularly UNESCO and its IOC. At the present stage, it would be appropriate for the Council to note the report submitted to it and transmit it to the General Assembly. A suitable text would be:

"The Economic and Social Council

"1. *Notes with appreciation* the comprehensive outline of a long-term and expanded programme of oceanographic research;

"2. *Transmits* that outline to the General Assembly for its consideration;

"3. *Draws the attention* of the General Assembly to the comments and observations on this subject made by members of the Council."

He assumed that the Secretariat would include, in paragraph 3, a reference to the relevant summary record.

18. The PRESIDENT said that, in the absence of any objection, he would assume that the draft resolution was adopted.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.