

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of Unesco)

Fourth Session of the IOC Regional Committee
for the Western Pacific
Bangkok, Thailand, 22-26 June 1987

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

19 FEB. 1988

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

The attention of the Executive Council is drawn to Recommendation WESTPAC-IV.1 (Creation of the Regional Sub-Commission and Associated Arrangements) and in particular, the last operative paragraph of Section C on Intersessional Secretariat Arrangements in which the Regional Committee

"Instructed the Secretary IOC, in consultation with the Chairman of the Regional Committee, to negotiate with the Government of Australia details of the above offer with a view to establishing a WESTPAC Trust Fund which could receive extra-budgetary contributions from IOC Member States, IOC (Paris) and other sources, from which salary and travel costs of a secretariat officer could be met beginning immediately and which could also meet the expenses of implementation of those programmes endorsed by the Regional Committee".

1. In this context, attention is drawn to the following provisions of the Rules of Procedure (IOC Manual, Section 2):

"The Assembly or the Executive Council may accept or reject any offer of a voluntary contribution for a Trust Fund, the expenditure of which has been restricted or designated for specific purposes by the contributor".

"Allocations to programmes of the Commission from voluntary contributions to a Trust Fund shall be made by the decisions of the Assembly or by the Executive Council in accordance with all relevant decisions of the Assembly".

"Funds so allocated shall be expended by the Secretary".

2. The relevant parts of the "Guidelines for the Structure and Responsibilities of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission" (Ref. IOC Manual, Section 5), where were also incorporated into Document IOC/WESTPAC-IV/Inf.2 which was made available to all participants at the Regional Committee's fourth Session, state:

"Regional Sub-Commissions shall operate within the framework of the general policy of the Commission and the budgetary guidelines and allocations established by the Assembly".

"Secretariat support for a regional sub-commission shall be provided by IOC Secretariat (Headquarters staff and staff outposted in the region) and by Member States. The outposted IOC staff providing secretariat services to a regional sub-commission shall be located in an appropriate office of Unesco or of any organization of the United Nations system in the region of the regional sub-commission, or elsewhere in a Member State of the region, provided that such a State offers facilities considered adequate by the regional sub-commission and approved by a governing body of the Commission."

"The programme and activities of a regional sub-commission shall be carried out within the budgetary allocations established by the Commission, or from such additional resources and support in kind as may be made available by Unesco or by other organizations members of ICSPRO, or by any other United Nations organizations co-operating with the Commission, or by Member States of the Commission, or as may be received from other sources in accordance with the financial rules of the Commission".

"Voluntary contributions earmarked specifically for the programme and activities of a regional sub-commission may be accepted and established under the IOC Trust Fund in accordance with the financial regulations of Unesco and IOC and administered by the Secretary of the Commission".

3. In the light of the foregoing, the Executive Council is requested: (i) to review Recommendation WESTPAC-IV.1, and to consider its acceptability as presently worded; and (ii) to provide guidance to Member States, the Officers of the Regional Committee for WESTPAC and the Secretary IOC, on the best course of action so that, on one hand, the Commission may benefit from the Member States' willingness to offer assistance, and, on the other, that such assistance is implemented in accordance with the applicable Rules of Procedure and "Guidelines for the Structure and Responsibilities of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission".

1. INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Session of the Regional Committee for WESTPAC focussed attention on: (i) scientific project proposals for regional components of IOC global ocean science programmes; (ii) strengthening of the regional components of the IOC global ocean services; (iii) identification of TEMA needs; (iv) creation of an IOC Sub-Commission for WESTPAC and the related secretariat arrangements; (v) review of programme and budget.

2. OCEAN SCIENCE

The Regional Committee considered carefully marine science projects developed as regional components of the following global programmes of the Commission: OSLR, OSNLR, GIPME/MARPOLMON, Ocean Dynamics and Climate. It endorsed the following proposals and invited the Member States and their marine scientific institutions to participate effectively in each of them.

2.1 REGIONAL COMPONENTS OF OSLR

2.1.1 Proposal for a Project on Recruitment of Penaeid Prawns in the Indo-Western Pacific Region

The Regional Committee strongly recommended that a Workshop on Penaeid Recruitment Project Planning, proposed to be held in Australia, in July 1988, formulate a detailed operational plan of action for the Project. It also requested the Secretary of IOC, in consultation with FAO, to explore all possible sources of national and international funding for the implementation of the Project.

2.1.2 Proposal for a Project on Toxic and Anoxic Phenomena Associated with Algal Blooms in the WESTPAC Region

The Regional Committee: (i) called on the organizers of the International Symposium on Red Tides (Takamatsu, Japan, November 1987) and of the following IOC Workshop on International Co-operation in the Study of Ocean Blooms and Red Tides to develop a plan of operation for the Project, to identify institutions and scientists interested in the project and TEMA needs, and to assist the participation of scientists/institutions from developing countries in the region; (ii) asked its Chairman to arrange for publication of a WESTPAC Newsletter on Red Tides; and (iii) requested the IOC-FAO Guiding Group of Experts to assist in the implementation of the Penaeid Recruitment and Red Tide Projects.

The Regional Committee also identified additional projects related to IREP(SARP), IREP(TRODERP) and biological productivity and requested the IOC-FAO Guiding Group of Experts on OSLR to advise on the desirability and feasibility of such studies to be undertaken in the future.

2.2 REGIONAL COMPONENTS OF OSNLR

2.2.1 Proposal for a Project on a WESTPAC Palaeogeographic Map

The Regional Committee recognized that the western Pacific presented a certain number of practical difficulties owing to a wide range of national interests in such maps, and it called on the Group of Experts on Marine Geology and Geophysics in the Western Pacific, in consultation with the Vice-Chairman of the IOC-UN Guiding Group of Experts on OSNLR, to review this proposal and to advise on how to proceed with it.

2.2.2 Proposal for a Project on Margins of Active Plates (MAP)

The Regional Committee received an offer from the USSR to organize an international expedition, using a Soviet research ship and submersible, in support of WESTPAC at the end of 1988 to study hydrothermal activity, massive sulphide ores and other marine mineral resources; and from the U.K. for the participation of scientists from the region in the R.R.S. Charles Darwin cruise in the region during 1988, which would deploy the GLORIA Survey System for geophysical studies.

2.3. REGIONAL COMPONENT OF OCEAN DYNAMICS AND CLIMATE (ODC)

The Regional Committee recommended that IOC co-sponsor a WOCE Regional Workshop in 1988. It invited Member States to support and participate in the Workshop, and the Secretary IOC to seek financial support to facilitate the participation of scientists therein. The Regional Committee adopted the following project proposals:

2.3.1 Proposal for a Project on a Co-operative Research Study of the Banding of Porites Corals as a Component of Ocean Climate Studies

The Regional Committee received an offer of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) to play a key role in initiating the Project, and endorsed the holding of a Workshop in Townsville, in 1988, prior to the International Coral Reef Symposium, to discuss a detailed operational plan for the project, as well as to identify TEMA needs. It also requested the Secretary of IOC to seek financial support to facilitate the participation of scientists in the proposed Workshop, and invited the Unesco Division of Marine Sciences to support this WESTPAC Project.

2.3.2 Proposal for a Project on a Co-operative Research Study of the Continental Shelf Circulation in the Western Pacific

The Regional Committee stressed the need to develop an operational plan including identification of the potential participating institutions/scientists and TEMA needs.

2.3.3 Project on a Co-operative Research Study of Ocean Dynamics in the North-western Pacific

The Regional Committee agreed with the basic concept of the proposal, but decided that it should be improved, particularly through consultation with interested Member States in the north-western Pacific.

The Regional Committee decided to abolish the Task Teams for Ocean Dynamics and Climate in the North-west Pacific and in the Tropical Pacific.

2.4 REGIONAL COMPONENT OF MARINE POLLUTION RESEARCH AND MONITORING

2.4.1 Proposal for a Project on the Assessment of River Inputs to the Sea in the WESTPAC Region

The Regional Committee anticipated the close collaboration with COBSEA and SPREP in the implementation of WESTPAC Marine Pollution Research and Monitoring activities. As part of TEMA requirements for the project, the Regional Committee specifically identified intercalibration of methods among laboratories and related additional training of scientists.

2.4.2 Proposal for a Project on Monitoring Heavy Metals and Organochlorine Pesticides Using the Musselwatch Approach

The Regional Committee recognized the importance of close liaison with the GIPME Group of Experts in Methods, Standards and Intercalibration (GEMSI) in project implementation. It requested the Secretary of IOC to seek extrabudgetary financial support for TEMA activities, particularly to enable scientists from developing countries to participate in intercalibration exercises, in the use of marine sediments in MARPOLMON and in the study of biological effects in tropical marine environment. The Regional Committee invited Member States to provide support for the participation of scientists in the proposed intercalibration Workshop on Sediment Monitoring, to be held in China.

3. OCEAN SERVICES

3.1 OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

Regarding the IGOSS Ship-of-Opportunity Programme, the Regional Committee: (i) urged Member States to increase their efforts to identify sources of real-time data and to encourage the collectors of those data to insert them and TESAC data into the IGOSS System; (ii) considered that a plan of action for the Regional Component of GLOSS needs to be developed to justify the creation of a WESTPAC Task Team on GLOSS and suggested that the Chairman of the Task Team on the Implementation of IGOSS in the Western Pacific assist with the implementation of a regional component of GLOSS until an adequate mechanism is developed.

The Regional Committee requested the experts attending the Second Session of the IOC Task Team of Experts on the Global Sea-level Observing System (GLOSS) (Honolulu, October 1987) to consider developing a tide-gauge network as a WESTPAC component of GLOSS.

The Regional Committee noted that there was not enough interest shown by the Member States in other observing systems in the Region, but encouraged regional activities under this programme whenever the conditions for this are ripe.

3.2 OCEANOGRAPHIC DATA EXCHANGE IN THE REGION

The Regional Committee endorsed the strengthening of Member State participation in the IODE System and viewed favourably the idea of an IOC Mission on IODE to the region.

The Regional Committee urged Member States of the region to: (i) establish NODCs or DNAs and appoint National IODE Co-ordinators; (ii) report results of cruises on ROSCOP as well as make NOP announcements in time; and (iii) request NODCs to promote exchange and archiving of oceanographic data through RNODCs and WDCs.

The Regional Committee recommended that Member States give special attention to the use of micro- and mini-computers to handle oceanographic data, but noted that any such system should be interfaced with the existing IODE System.

The Regional Committee also: (i) recognized the need for increasing different types of training activities, including assistance to help Member States to develop required capability; (ii) called on the JODC to further strengthen the training activities in oceanographic data management activities; and (iii) requested the Secretary of IOC to explore possible sources of funding in support of training activities, and invited Unesco, through ROSTSEA, to participate in their planning.

3.3 MARINE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Regional Committee recommended that national inventories of marine scientific institutions and marine scientists made by some Member States be made available to all WESTPAC Member States and, if possible, be incorporated later into the relevant ASFIS registers.

It supported the recommendation of the Technical Committee on IODE to include the establishment, in the framework of ASFIS, of regional marine scientific information networks in the proposed MIM Plan and to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts through the establishment of other regional information systems. It also recommended co-operation between IOC, FAO and SEAFDEC in this field.

4. FUNCTIONING OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

The Regional Committee agreed that projects that had been adopted by the Regional Committee be termed WESTPAC projects, and, those serving the objectives of WESTPAC should continue to be observed, and charged its Chairman, in consultation with the Secretary of IOC, with the responsibility of deciding whether a Project or Programme may be designated as "serving the objectives of WESTPAC".

The Regional Committee urged those Member States that have not yet made relevant national liaison arrangements with IOC to keep development thereof under review with a view to adapting them to be efficient and effective in their relations with IOC Secretariat and, if appropriate, with other international organizations.

5. POSSIBLE CREATION OF AN IOC SUB-COMMISSION FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

The Regional Committee recognized that the shift in its activities from the planning stage to an operational phase warrant a change in its status. It adopted Recommendation WESTPAC-IV.1 (see Annex hereto).

6. TEMA REQUIREMENTS OF THE APPROVED PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES

The Regional Committee, while appreciating offers of assistance made by the Delegates in support of TEMA activities, requested the Secretary IOC, in consultation with the Member States concerned, to announce these offers of assistance, and make them available to the requesting countries.

The Regional Committee also decided that adjustment of TEMA activities to the requirements of the research proposals adopted by the Committee should take into account its relevant views and recommendations.

The Regional Committee, recognizing that several project proposals presented to the Committee may possibly be considered as suitable candidates for international funding, reaffirmed its strong support for the preparation of a regional project under the Unesco-IOC Comprehensive Plan for a Major Assistance Programme to Enhance the Marine Science Capabilities of Developing Countries, and requested the Secretary of IOC to formulate such a proposal.

7. PROGRAMME OF WORK 1988-1989 AND EXPECTED TRENDS DURING THE MEDIUM TERM PLAN 1990-1995

The Regional Committee considered that staff should be made available to support the WESTPAC programme and be located in the region to assist with the follow-up of the Committee's decisions.

The Regional Committee adopted Recommendation WESTPAC-IV.2 (see Annex hereto).

The Regional Committee considered that each co-operative project should be implemented through networks of participating institutions/experts and developed and co-ordinated by a small Expert Steering Group composed of active scientists from the participating institutions and led by a Project Co-ordinator appointed by the Chairman of WESTPAC in consultation with the Secretary of IOC.

8. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Professor T. Nemoto (Japan), as Chairman, and Dr. Choopol Swasidiyakorn (Thailand), as Vice-Chairman, of WESTPAC, were elected by acclamation.

9. DATES AND PLACE OF FIFTH SESSION

The Regional Committee stressed the importance of holding WESTPAC-V within six months following the Fifteenth Session of the IOC Assembly, scheduled in March 1989, China offered to host WESTPAC-V at that time.

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation WESTPAC-IV.1

CREATION OF A REGIONAL SUB-COMMISSION AND ASSOCIATED ARRANGEMENTS

The IOC Regional Committee for the Western Pacific,

A

Creation of a Sub-Commission and Timing

Recalling the decision of the IOC Assembly, at its Twelfth Session, to create a new category of IOC Subsidiary Body known as Sub-Commission,

Noting that the creation of a Sub-Commission can further the interest of, and stimulate support from, its Member States for Sub-Commission activities in marine science, ocean services and the related training, education and mutual assistance,

Having considered the need for a stronger regional mechanism in the western Pacific for planning, promotion, implementation and co-ordination of marine scientific programmes and ocean services in the region, .

Recommends that the IOC Assembly establish an IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific with the same acronym, WESTPAC, to replace the present Regional Committee for the Western Pacific;

Recommends to the IOC Assembly that the First Session of the Sub-Commission take place immediately following a brief Fifth and final Session of the Regional Committee;

Acknowledges with thanks the generous offer of the Government of the People's Republic of China to host the Fifth Session of the Regional Committee within six months following the Fifteenth Session of the IOC Assembly.

B

Regional Secretariat for the Sub-Commission

Recognizing the necessity for the establishment of a full-time IOC Secretariat to be located in the region to serve the Sub-Commission and to co-ordinate and promote activities of regional interest,

Noting with appreciation the generous offer by the Government of Thailand to provide office space for an IOC Secretariat to service such a Sub-Commission,

Calls on the Secretary to make the necessary arrangements with the Government of Thailand for the use of the offered space with a view to facilitating the establishment of an IOC Secretariat for the Sub-Commission for WESTPAC if the latter is approved by the Assembly.

C

Intersessional Secretariat Arrangements

Recognizing the importance of ensuring continued effective Secretariat support for the Regional Committee and its Chairman and Vice-Chairman in generally advancing the objectives of WESTPAC, and particularly in implementing projects endorsed by the Regional Committee,

Welcomes the generous offer by the Government of Australia to provide secretariat accommodation, communications and word-processing facilities for the intersessional period between the Fourth and Fifth Session of the Regional Committee;

Instructs the Secretary of IOC, in consultation with the Chairman of the Regional Committee, to negotiate with the Government of Australia details of the above offer with a view to establishing a WESTPAC Trust Fund which could receive extra-budgetary contributions from IOC Member States, IOC (Paris) and other sources, from which salary and travel costs of a secretariat officer could be met beginning immediately and which could also meet the expenses of implementation of those programmes endorsed by the Regional Committee.

Recommendation WESTPAC-IV.2

STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

The Regional Committee for the Western Pacific,

A

Structure of Work

Recognizing the need for: (i) Co-ordination of scientific programmes endorsed by the Regional Committee; (ii) Co-ordination of regional inputs to IOC global programmes; (iii) Integration of the Regional Committee's programmes with those programmes of other Agencies active in the WESTPAC region; (iv) Flexibility in the formulation of other programmes that might complement those programmes endorsed by the Regional Committee; and (v) Identification of a network of interested scientists in the WESTPAC region,

Requests the Chairman of the Regional Committee, after consultation with Member States, to appoint, without delay, a Programme Co-ordinator in each of the following areas: Ocean Science in Relation to Living Resources (OSLR); Ocean Science in Relation to Non-Living Resources (OSNLR); Marine Pollution Research and Monitoring (MPRM); Ocean Dynamics and Climate (ODC); and to advise the Member States of the details immediately thereafter;

Further requests the Chairman of the Regional Committee, taking note of the decisions on its programme of work (below), to appoint for each project a Project Leader to be immediately responsible to the Programme Co-ordinator for the respective subject area for progressive implementation of the project;

B

Programme of Work

Recognizing the essentialness of a well defined and clearly focussed programme of work for the intersessional period that:(i) addresses regional scientific problems; (ii) reflects high levels of Member State interest; (iii) has clearly identified sources of financial support; and (iv) has identified leadership (Project Leaders);

Also recognizing the need for close co-operation between organizations active in the region,

Adopts the following as WESTPAC projects (details of which are contained in the body of the report) to commence immediately : (i) Toxic and Anoxic Phenomena Associated with Algal Blooms in the WESTPAC region; (ii) Recruitment of Penaeid Prawns in the Indo-Western Pacific Region; (iii) Monitoring Heavy Metals and Organochlorine Pesticides Using the Musselwatch Approach; and (iv) Banding of Porites Corals as a Component of Ocean Climate Studies,

Requests the Secretary IOC to provide from the regular budget of IOC for the next biennium such funds as are available in support of those projects and to follow up on those extra-budgetary sources identified in the project documents.

Requests the Chairman to explore actively all avenues to enable two other research projects considered by the Regional Committee: Assessment of River Inputs to the Sea in the WESTPAC Region, and WESTPAC Palaeogeographic Map to proceed during the intersessional period, since their inclusion in the work programme would be of benefit in furthering collaboration between the Regional Committee and other bodies,

Further requests the Chairman and the Secretary IOC to seek such funds as would enable all other projects and workshops considered by the Regional Committee to be further developed during the intersessional period, especially those projects described as: Margins of Active Plates; Continental Shelf Circulation in the Western Pacific; Ocean Dynamics in the Northwest Pacific.