

1106 Bio Program

REPORT ON MEETING OF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN BIOLOGICAL CENTER IN COCHIN AND NEW DELHI, INDIA
February 24 to March 1, 1963

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Background

In 1959 during the meeting of the Special Committee on Oceanographic Research (SCOR) in New York, it was decided that a Center should be established in India to receive and process standard plankton collections. It was anticipated that perhaps 3,000 standard samples would be taken during the International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE). Since only approximately two samples could be processed per man per week, it was desirable to establish a Center to relieve scientists from the inordinately long processing delay between collection and publication of data. The Indian government seemed receptive to the idea and a proposal by working paper of November 22, 1961 was accepted by the Indian government and incorporated as Appendix 2 in the document entitled Indian Scientific Programs - 1962-1965 which was issued by the Indian National Committee on Oceanic Research (INCOR) in September 1962.

A form letter (NS/45A CL/19/) was prepared and circulated by Dr. Warren W. Wooster, Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, to inform participating personnel in the IIOE of the appointment of a Consultative Committee consisting of Professor Martin W. Johnson (USA), Professor Sigeru Motoda (Japan), and Dr. Michael Vinogradov (USSR). This Committee was scheduled to meet in Cochin and New Delhi, India early in 1963. Subsequent information was provided that Mr. Vagn Hansen of Denmark had been appointed by UNESCO as Curator of the Indian Ocean Biological Center (IOBC) at Cochin. Since the IOBC was similar to the U. S. National Sorting Center which has recently been established by the Smithsonian Institution, and at the request of Dr. Warren Wooster, I was asked to represent the United States at the meeting of the IOBC Consultative Committee.

Agenda

A copy of the tentative agenda is attached as Appendix 1.

Participants

Only two of the members of the Consultative Committee were present. Approximately four days before the beginning of the meeting, Professor Kort sent a telegram to the UNESCO office that Dr. Vinogradov would not attend. Attached is a list of those present and their affiliation. (Appendix 2). Those persons on the third part of the list remained only during the first morning of the conference.

Work of the Conference

As Appendix 3 a document is reproduced, describing the operational plans of the IOBC to handle standard zooplankton samples. This is a draft report of the proceedings which will be somewhat rewritten by UNESCO and distributed. The basic document was taken from Appendix 2. of the INCOR report (The UNESCO form letter mentioned earlier).

Dr. Panikkar opened the conference by calling attention to the fact that IOBC was developed from visits of Robert Snyder of SCOR, Mr. David Keck of the NSF, and Dr. John Ryther of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The IOBC space was provided by the University of Kerala as approximately one-third of their oceanography building in Cochin. The space was not permanently available and it apparently could be recalled by the University of Kerala. However, Dr. Panikkar felt there would be no problem in its use for perhaps five years.

The problem of space was a particularly difficult one. Although not expressed very strongly in the report the Consultative Committee and Dr. Parsons of UNESCO agreed with me that the amount of space presently available is not adequate for the purpose. Dr. Panikkar believed that additional space could be made available within two months of a request, however, the need for such space seemed immediate.

Mr. Vagn Hansen will be placed on the UNESCO payroll beginning April 1. Since no sorting supplies and equipment were immediately available and orders had just been placed for equipment, Hansen was hopeful that he could persuade UNESCO to send him to Cochin by way of Washington where he would visit the Smithsonian Institution's Sorting Center and perhaps by way of Scripps Institution of Oceanography where he would visit the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries sorting facility.

Although the Indian staff to be appointed by March 31, 1963 is expected to total at least 14 persons, there was no plumbing in the sorting room, no shelving, and no optical equipment. None of the paper, apparatus, supplies and facilities that should be present to initiate operations had been delivered. UNESCO indicated that they had ordered 23 major items of equipment, principally optical and electronic, for the Center and that delivery could not be expected for about six months. It appeared that the staff of the Center would be unable to perform useful work until at least the end of April. It is hoped that Mr. Hansen will be able to carry a few minor items to the Center in order to begin operations upon his arrival.

Another item of concern during the discussion was the research mission of the Center. Although the primary mission of the Center was clearly described and agreed by all those present to be the sorting of the IIOE standard plankton samples, the Indian government would like to

make the IOBC a permanent activity of their governmental Council of scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The CSIR has appointed 16 fellows in oceanography. Since there are relatively few places in India where these persons could be effectively stationed, it was proposed by Dr. Panikkar that about half of them be stationed at IOBC. In view of the small amount of space available, the appointment of these fellows was particularly of concern.

It was of concern that about 29 persons might be assigned to the Center with a classification of "scientist" and only 12 in the category of laboratory assistants. Those persons who are scientists would be expected to work on the data, that is specimens following their sorting. The mechanical problems of sorting of specimens is not going to be solved by the crowding of so many research persons in with the working staff.

The Center proposed to do "service" sorting on a contract basis with expenses paid by the persons desiring the sorting. Although the Indian government is anxious to implement this and an approach had been made by Humphrey of Australia, I saw no space to carry out such a contract within the existing area. They propose to employ temporary staff and could well do so if space were available. However, such persons would require supervision and the net result is not likely to be completely satisfactory.

It was recognized by those present, after substantial discussion, that a proposal to establish a laboratory to study the physiology of phytoplankton was unreasonable due to lack of space. Also, it was noted that similar facilities are already available on the Anton Bruun.

Another problem may arise with the relationships between the Curator and the Assistant Director in charge of the Center. The Assistant Director will be responsible for all non-standard biological samples, mainly from Indian sources, and the Curator has responsibility for the Indian Ocean standard samples. Although priority is to be given to the Curator's standard samples, it is difficult to imagine this continuing in practice with the person in charge having responsibility for Indian samples. The Director of IOBC is Dr. N. K. Panikkar, with his office in New Delhi and the local person in charge, is the Assistant Director who may not be on the job for three months. The Assistant Director, an Indian National, will be responsible for all the internal operations (customs, supply, labor, buildings, etc.) of the IOBC. The Curator has no funds for even minor equipment and must always buy with approval of the Assistant Director.

In accordance with the recommendations of the UNESCO planning document, an advisory board is to be organized by INCOR, composed of UNESCO, SCOR and participating Indian Agencies. This advisory committee is to be responsible for policy of IOBC. It was suggested that Hansen be the UNESCO representative and Panikkar the representative of SCOR. If

this should be the case, the advisory committee would have little purpose. Since Panikkar can insure the vote of the Indian membership on such a committee, any suggestions by Hansen could be overwhelmed on the basis that after all he was advising himself.

Hansen suggested that the UNESCO representative be taken from the UNESCO New Delhi office. I believe that SCOR should name a representative other than Panikkar in order that there be a more disinterested advisory committee.

In connection with customs and import-export problems, Panikkar assured the committee that arrangement have been made for shipping of specimens with the minimum of difficulty. According to him, earlier problems with customs have been tracked to their source and eliminated.

UNESCO asked about the long-range plan for IOBC, particularly with reference to the desire for UNESCO support. Since it appeared that the Indian government was not in favor of a commitment to a non-Indian Curator of IOBC beyond the present two year commitment, the scientific committee agreed to postpone any request for UNESCO support at this time.

The problem of continuation of a Consultative Committee of three members with only two attendees was considered at some length. It was decided that if a member could not attend a meeting he should suggest an alternate to UNESCO. I am convinced that more consideration should be given in the future to the selection of members of such a Consultative Committee. Three seems to be too few members on a committee that will have responsibility for such an international program, particularly without provision for a strong chairman and full attendance at meetings. Dr. Warren Wooster of the IOC has written to Dr. Vinogradov suggesting that, since he couldn't attend the meeting, an alternative member of the Consultative Committee be appointed. A possibility is that Dr. Johannes Krey (Germany) be made a member of the Committee since Krey has recently been made coordinator for plankton information from IIOE. No reply had been received from Vinogradov to this suggestion.

Dr. Panikkar said that the University of Kerala would build a small hostel adjacent to the laboratory in Cochin for scientific visitors. Space would be provided for 12-14 scientists desiring to work in the laboratory.

A proposal had been received by UNESCO from the Israeli government offering to provide sorting and taxonomic experts for use to supplement the Center's activities. The proposal would require financial assistance for procurement of equipment, space and materials. It was agreed that the Committee would note the availability of personnel and suggest the Israeli group to persons desiring service beyond that which could be provided through the Center.

Future Meetings

It was decided that the Consultative Committee would be continued through 1966 and that it would meet annually for about a two week period in Cochin for scientific work and informal discussions to be followed, perhaps, by a two day conference and preparation of a report. It was agreed that the INCOR advisory committee would meet with the Consultative Committee at the next meeting.

In order to maintain the international context of the IOBC, it is desirable that meeting be held in the future on an annual basis. If funds can be made available, I am confident that the contribution of a U. S. delegate in the future would be worthwhile.

MEETING OF THE IOBC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Provisional list of items for discussion:

A. Organization of Centre

1. Present position with regard to staffing.
2. Adequacy and arrangement of working space and storage space.
3. Present position with regard to equipment, equipment ordered, equipment desired, funds available, possible loan of equipment on a temporary basis from local sources.
4. Review of Curator's duties, including treatment of standard zooplankton samples.
5. Review of duties of the Indian staff.
6. Input of biological material to the Centre.
7. Library facilities--funds and action necessary for improvement.
8. Long range plans--UNESCO, Consultative Committee, INCOR, IOBC.

B. Principal functions of the Centre

1. List of specialists required to assist in sorting--Israeli proposal--cooperation with Smithsonian Institution.
2. Other activities --President SCOR suggestion, M. B. Allen proposal.
3. Training--availability of fellowships.
4. Next meeting.

MEETINGSMonday, February 25

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| 10 A.M. | General statements by participants |
| 11:30 A.M. | Coffee break |
| 11:45-12:30 | Detailed discussion of items on provisional list |
| 15:00-16:30 | Continue discussions of items on provisional list |
| 16:30 | Tea |

Tuesday, February 26

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| 9:00-11:30 | Continue discussions of items on provisional list |
| 15:00-18:00 | Informal drafting of recommendations |

Wednesday, February 27

Travel to New Delhi

Thursday, February 28

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| 14:30-17:30 | Discussion of draft recommendations and preparation of final recommendations |
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Friday, March 1

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| 9:30-12:00 | Meeting with Indian National Committee for Oceanic Research |
| 15:00-17:30 | Meeting of INCOR concerned with regional program. |

NAMEINSTITUTIONConsultative Committee Members

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| 1. Prof. S. Motoda | Hokkaido University, Japan |
| 2. Prof. M. W. Johnson | Scripps Institute of Oceanography |

Delegates

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| 3. Dr. I. E. Wallen | Smithsonian Institution |
| 4. Dr. T. R. Parsons | UNESCO |
| 5. Dr. A. Evstafiev | UNESCO, New Delhi |
| 6. Dr. R. Serene | UNESCO, SEASIO Djakarta |
| 7. Dr. N. K. Panikkar | Indian National Committee for Oceanic Research |
| 8. Dr. Vagn Hansen, Curator | Denmark (UNESCO) |

Observers

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| 9. Dr. C. V. Kurian | University of Kerala |
| 10. Dr. N. Balakrishnan Nair | University of Kerala |
| 11. Dr. R. R. Prasad | Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam Camp |
| 12. Mr. Myrland | NORWAY, Indo-Norwegian Project |
| 13. Shri T. Tholasilingam | Central Marine Fisheries Research Sub-station, Ernakulam - 6 |
| 14. Dr. A. N. Bose | Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Ernakulam - 6 |
| 15. Shri M. Krishna Menon | Indian Ocean Biological Centre Ernakulam |