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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(OF UNESCO)

Scientific Workshop on the Results of the
RV MOUNT MITCHELL Cruise

Kuwait, 24 - 28 January 1993

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its Twenty-fifth Session in March 1992, the IOC Executive Council took note of the on-going implementation of the Integrated Project Plan (IPP) for the Coastal and Marine Environment of the ROPME Sea Area which was formulated in 1991 in response to Resolution XVI-14 of the Sixteenth IOC Assembly which addressed actions necessary for the assessment and subsequent amelioration of war-related pollution in the ROPME Sea Area.

A specific activity which was reported upon was the Joint ROPME-NOAA-IOC 100-day Oceanographic Cruise in the ROPME Sea Area which had commenced on 28 February 1992 and was then still in progress. The cruise, as originally planned, ended on 29 May 1992. It was undertaken within the context of the short term phase of the Integrated Project Plan.

From 16 to 18 June 1992, a ROPME-IOC Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Integrated Project Plan was organised in Geneva, Switzerland, to review the accomplishments of the cruise and highlight suggested follow-up programmes. The meeting recommended, among other things, that a Scientific Workshop be organized under the aegis of the IPP Steering Committee on the results of the cruise.

The Scientific Workshop on the Results of the RV MOUNT MITCHELL cruise was held in the premises of the Arab Planning Institute, Kuwait, 24 - 28 January 1993. Over 140 regional and international scientists participated. 48 scientific presentations were made in four sessions over four days as follows:

(i) Session One : Large Scale Dynamics:	12 papers
(ii) Nearshore Processes including Pollution:	16 papers
(iii) Coral Reef Ecology:	7 papers
(iv) Fisheries Plankton Ecology:	13 papers

The scientific sessions were preceded on the first day by a general session during which ROPME, IOC and UNEP gave up to date accounts of their involvements and activities aimed at combatting environmental degradation in the ROPME Sea Area resulting from the "Gulf War".

Another general session at the end of the scientific presentations dealt with the conclusions from the Workshop and formulated recommendations for future actions by ROPME, in concert with IOC, UNEP and other interested parties for the complete assessment of war-related impacts in the ROPME Sea Area and its restoration and rehabilitation to at least a pre-"Gulf War" state of health.

The Workshop agreed that knowledge of the oceanography and marine ecology of the ROPME Sea Area had improved tremendously as a result of the ROPME-NOAA-IOC Oceanographic Cruise and expressed profound gratitude to NOAA and IOC for working with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) to make the cruise a reality.

The Workshop recognized, however, that certain worrying gaps in knowledge of the ROPME Sea Area still exist in the post cruise period and urged ROPME to continue its collaboration with IOC in particular and UNEP in addition to other relevant parties, towards the organization of further cruises in the immediate future.

The Workshop took note of the achievements of the ROPME/University of Fisheries, Tokyo/IOC Cruise which ended on the 26 January 1993 while the Workshop was still in session and which had been planned with a more limited scope and objectives (compared with the RV MOUNT MITCHELL Cruise) as a follow up to the 100-day Mount Mitchell Cruise. Since this cruise had been undertaken also within the winter season, the Workshop stressed the need to organise, preferably in summer 1993, a cruise aimed at obtaining summer oceanographic conditions of the ROPME Sea.

The absence of data and information on summer conditions of the ROPME Sea was deemed to constitute a yawning gap in the knowledge of this sea.

It is for this reason that the IOC has initiated discussion with the Inter-Islamic Science and Technology Network on Oceanography based in Izmir, Turkey, and ROPME for the organization of an oceanographic cruise during the summer of 1993, using a ship belonging to one of the Institutes of Marine Sciences in Turkey. An IOC Staff Member visited Turkey at the end of January/beginning of February 1993 to inspect the ships that could be deployed for the cruise and for further discussions in this regard.

There was a commitment, in principle, from the IOC contacts in Turkey to the organization of a summer 1993 cruise using a Turkish vessel. However, this commitment is predicated on the identification of additional resources (financial and material) for the cruise. Details of the revised cruise plan and the resources needed to implement it will be presented to the Seventeenth Session of the IOC Assembly in February/March 1993. Member States will be requested to provide advice on the most cost effective implementation of the cruise proposal and to identify the additional resources needed for this purpose.

The Workshop in Kuwait also took note of the proposed Intergovernmental Scientific Conference to be convened in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the third quarter of 1993 by IOC in close co-operation with ROPME, UNEP and governments in the region. This conference will allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the progress in the implementation of the Integrated Project Plan in the light of data and information emanating from the first 18 months of the execution of activities embodied in the Integrated Project Plan and permit the focussing on longer-terms impact assessment and rehabilitation aspects of the Consolidated Rehabilitation Programme from the ROPME Region.