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PROGRESS REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF SCOR WORKING GROUP 66:
OCEANOGRAPHIC BUOYS TO EC-XIV

(SC-81/CONF.207/COL.15)

Letters inviting the proposed members to join the Working Group have been sent, but only a few replies have been received so far. One change in the membership list suggested by the SCOR Executive was recommended by the Working Group Chairman who felt that it would substantially broaden the coverage of the group. This was the substitution of Dr. J.C. McWilliams of the National Centre for Atmospheric Research at Boulder, Colorado, USA, for Dr. A.D. Kirwan.

The preliminary proposal for the plan of work involves the following three main objectives:

- 1) Compilation of annotated bibliographies and historical reviews listing published and unpublished reports and containing brief summaries of unreported work. One would cover technical developments, including performance and reliability of buoys, sensors, drogues and systems of position determination and data recovery, while another would cover the scientific applications of drifting buoys during the last 10 years, including techniques for display and interpretation of Lagrangian data.
- 2) Preparation of topical reviews consisting of collections of short articles presenting the ideas of different experts on important problems. Topics proposed so far include the question of what can be deduced about ocean currents from drifting buoy tracks obtained in the presence of waves and wind, and methods of displaying, analyzing and interpreting Lagrangian drifter data.
- 3) Review of potential oceanographic and meteorological applications of drifting buoys for the purpose of assessing technological and organizational needs. This would include both projects already planned and more forward-looking ideas.

At the invitation of the Secretary of IOC, a meeting was held in conjunction with the ECOR Technical Conference in London in early April, to consider the extent to which WG-66 would meet the needs of IOC and similar agencies and whether it would be appropriate to consider it as a joint exercise. Dr. Garrett and Prof. Siedler attended. The proposed plan of work for the WG was outlined, and the composition and objectives of the group were discussed. The conclusion of this meeting was that while WG-66 could satisfy requirements for technical advice, the international community had other needs which would require different responses. The need for exchange of information concerning buoy deployments and recoveries might best be satisfied by the establishment of a quasi-operational centre, perhaps within the Secretariat of one of the intergovernmental agencies. The preparation of general descriptive documentation might be an appropriate task for a consultant. The co-ordination of large-scale programmes could best be done by groups established specifically for that purpose. The potential contribution of ECOR both in presenting the needs of the engineering community with respect to drifting buoy applications and in making the engineering community aware of the technical problems to be solved, was recognized. It was felt that the connections between SCOR and COSPAR (the ICSU Committee on Space Research) could be beneficial to exchanges of information relating to new developments in satellite tracking systems.