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FUTURE TASKS OF THE MARICULTURE COMMITTEE

by  
the General Secretary

1. The following is an extract from the report of the Mariculture Committee at its meeting in 1978 (see Procès-Verbal 1978, p.53):

"Ms J Mitchell introduced the U.S. proposal to address broad scientific and policy issues related to Mariculture. This proposal was considered timely in light of the regulations that are being generated in member countries that have direct impact on Mariculture. It was recommended that Ms Mitchell should be invited to compile a report which provides the advisability and terms of reference for a working group to address these critical issues related to Mariculture".

The Consultative Committee commented as follows on this proposal (Procès-Verbal 1978, p.102):

"There was also a considerable discussion about a proposal by the Mariculture Committee that it should address itself to non-scientific (administrative, socio-economic etc.) subjects in addition to the scientific ones. The Consultative Committee felt that this would be outside the terms of reference of ICES, as set out in its Convention, and the recommendation was therefore not endorsed".

Also at the Delegates meeting there was considerable discussion on this item (Proces-Verbal 1978, pp.13-14):

"There was considerable discussion about a recommendation from the Mariculture Committee, aiming at a study of scientific as well as non-scientific (socio-economic, administrative, legal) restraints to mariculture. The Consultative Committee had felt that the non-scientific matters were outside the Council's own terms of reference as stated in Article 1 of its Convention. Several Delegates said, that in their view it would be very difficult and probably impossible, to draw a sharp border-line between scientific matters on one side and non-scientific matters related to science on the other. They said that in the field of advice in fishery management, this seemed to have been realised, and they felt that there was a need for the Council to discuss this important matter in depth at its next session.

The Council agreed, and asked the Bureau to take this matter up at its mid-year meeting, with a view to presenting to the Council a document that could form the basis for such a discussion".

2. The Bureau, when discussing this matter at its meeting on 19-20 June 1979, felt that it could be of assistance to consider what may and what may not be included under the Council's aims as they are set out in Article 1 of its Convention:

"It shall be the duty of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, hereinafter referred to as the "Council",

- (a) to promote and encourage research and investigations for the study of the sea particularly those related to the living resources thereof;
  - (b) to draw up programmes required for this purpose and to organise, in agreement with the Contracting Parties, such research and investigations as may appear necessary;
  - (c) to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of research and investigations carried out under its auspices or to encourage the publication thereof".
3. It seems clear from the wording that it has been the intention that the Council shall be concerned with "research and investigations" and also that it shall be concerned with the international aspects of this. When the Convention was drafted in the mid-1960s, the Council's advisory role was considerably more modest than it is at present, but it did exist and one must assume that the drafters intended this role to be included in the wording of paragraph (c).
  4. The discussions in the Mariculture Committee referred to above were presumably based on two documents (C.M.1978/F:26 and C.M.1978/F:27) presented to that Committee. In these documents several problems were mentioned, some of which were clearly within the concept of "research and investigations", where at least an exchange of information could be promoted by activities within the Council.  
Other items mentioned were, however, apparently outside the terms of reference as set out in Article 1. Some of these were: "Extent of national policy and funding commitments to mariculture research"; "Assessment of consequences on the balance of payment of increased mariculture endeavours in respective member countries"; "Consequences of private and public regulations on ocean ranching"; "Sociological competition" (e.g., for use of land and shores for mariculture or other activities); "Economics of mariculture".  
It would seem, that these subjects are mainly concerned with administrative, legal and economic problems, and also that they are mainly national ones. To the extent where they involve research aspects or international interests, it seems to be within fields where the scientists at present working in connection with the Council, would not have special competence.
  5. Concluding its preliminary discussions, the Bureau agreed to ask the Mariculture Committee to reconsider its proposal at the 1979 meeting, keeping in mind what has been mentioned above.