



Regional Seminar on the Handling and Dissemination of Oceanographic Information and Data

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A regional seminar on the handling and dissemination of oceanographic information and data was held at the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Dona Paula, Goa, India on 17-21 March 1986.

The seminar was organized jointly by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of Unesco (IOC), the General Information Programme of Unesco (PGI) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India, the parent body of NIO, and was part of an ongoing project supported by PGI to develop the oceanographic data and information services of NIO.

The objectives were:

- (a) To improve knowledge of and understanding about the International Oceanographic Data Exchange (IODE) system, the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Information System (ASFIS), and related efforts of IOC and other organizations in marine information and data management;
- (b) To provide experts from the area with an up-to-date overview of developments in information and data management methods in oceanography and to promote an awareness of the need for management of information and data as a resource in the development and application of marine science in the region; and

Seminar participants (*seated left to right*): K.L.R.D. Bandaranayake (NARA); Linda M. Temprosa (ICLARM) and S.H. Oka (NIO). (*Standing left to right*): G.V. Reddy (NIO); R.M.S. Bhargava (NIO); H.M. Hassan (Qatar Univ.); M.G. Seshagiri Rao (Cochin Univ.); G.H. Sainekar (NIO); V.K. Raghavendra (Office of A.D.G.M., Pune); S.R. Bhat (NIO); P. Geerders (NODC); A.V.S. Murthy (CMFRI); T. Sankey (IOC/Unesco); R.S. Biradar (CIFE); S.J.D.V. Prasad (NIO); K. Raghavan (NIO); A. Duncan (IMA, Trinidad and Tobago); A. Varley (MBA); M.P. Tapaswi (NIO); A. Menezes (NIO); J.S. Sarupria (NIO) and C.K.B. Kurup (NPOL).

- (c) To promote an exchange of information on achievements and needs of countries of the region, and to foster cooperation on the handling and dissemination of oceanographic information and data.

The seminar was attended by participants from Qatar, Sri Lanka and from seven Indian marine and related scientific institutions, including the NIO. An observer was present from Trinidad and Tobago. The program consisted of a series of lectures, demonstrations and group discussions. The Director of NIO, Dr. H.N. Siddiquie, gave the inaugural address, and later in the proceedings the group was addressed by the CSIR Director, Professor A.P. Mitra. Three experts from the Netherlands (Nederlands Centrum voor Oceanografische Gegevens), the Philippines (ICLARM) and the United Kingdom (MBA), together with an IOC staff member, presented lectures and led discussions. Data, information and library staff of the NIO gave overviews of current activities and proposed developments in NIO and in India, and the participants and the observer each presented a short description of data and information activities in their institutions.

Subjects included the role of the IOC and Unesco in marine science, and an introduction to the IODE system; the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Informa-

tion System (ASFIS) with a detailed description of the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) bibliographic database and new developments which have made it available on compact disc; building up a marine science library and running a specialized information system; the marine science documentation center and bibliographic techniques; data and information dissemination, and how to run a National Oceanographic Data Centre; data formatting, data referral systems and remote sensed data. Group discussion examined current problems, possible solutions and hopes for the future. A panel discussion reviewed possible future developments, and the group identified possible actions which would lead to improvements and developments in national and regional cooperation in marine information and data management, exchange and dissemination. The participants established links which it is hoped will develop into working relationships and networks on a national and regional basis.

The group felt that marine library, information and data facilities and services in India and in the region could be identified as a preliminary step in establishing informal working relationships. The exchange of literature, information and data should be encouraged, leading to the development of national and regional networks. It was hoped that the IOC and Unesco PGI could continue to encourage and support information and data management and development at NIO, nationally and regionally. It was important to recognize the value and exploit the full potential of libraries, information services and data services. Continuing education and training, both for the providers and the users of services should be promoted. Any services, systems or databases developed should be compatible with international standards to facilitate information and data exchange.