

Man Repes
7328595

INDEPENDENT WORLD COMMISSION ON THE OCEANS (IWCO)

Paper 4: Increasing Global Consciousness on the Unique Role of the Oceans

There is already in different countries and in the possession of many organizations, a great deal of material on the oceans.

Particularly relevant for the task of IWCO are:

- video and film material; poetry
- novels; short stories; children's books; music of all sorts.

The use of a selection of these could supplement any material actually produced by or for the Commission. Some of the material could be used on a country-specific basis, others would have universal appeal.

But it is likely that there will have to be an effort to commission special material to deal directly with the issue.

The Role of the NGOs

NGOs have increased considerably in numbers and have been playing a major role in matters related to development and the environment, at the local, national, regional and international levels. Consideration should be given to what the IWCO might usefully do toward drawing on the interest and capabilities of such organizations. There is a growing number of NGOs involving themselves directly in matters related to the seas, coastal areas, and related issues. Jamaica is one example of this and a list of some such organizations in this country is attached.

Added to these, of course, are the agencies of the state and the private sector directly involved in marine matters.

The Tourism interests - in Government and the private sector, including resorts and hotels, also have a very special interest.

One question is the degree to which generalized approaches would be made as opposed to the targetting of particular interests.

It would seem necessary to have prepared for the task some very special material, carrying the specific information the Commission wishes to convey about the oceans, their functions, their great value, and the various ways in which they are being abused. This material would have to be pitched at different levels to meet, for example, the requirements of young persons.

The preparation for the International Year of the Oceans and the proposed EXPO 98 would provide a good opportunity for developing consciousness and interest at the level of governments, NGOs and other Civil Society organizations, and communities and people in general. It is assumed that planning for these events and the national and community involvement will begin shortly.

Countries could be encouraged to hold national exhibitions, among other activities and, of course, there is the question of national displays, as well as major NGO and Civil Society involvement in the EXPO 98.

Presumably, there will need to be a special focus on the abuses of the sea, coastal areas, beaches, coral reefs etc. This would include, along with industrial waste, agricultural chemicals and the like, the citizens waste (garbage, sewage etc.) and abuse.

Governments and Tourist promotion interests, shipping companies and associations, fishermen and their organizations, are among those who could be called upon to undertake programmes of public education and consciousness raising.

Don Mills
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