

DRAFT

October 26, 1994

H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General
The United Nations
New York, N.Y.
Personal Fax: 1-212 963 3511

Considering the basic importance of the world ocean in the development of human society, the maintenance of peace, and the health of the biosphere, we have been discussing, with a group of like-minded friends, the possibility of establishing an INDEPENDENT WORLD COMMISSION FOR THE SEAS AND OCEANS.

The idea is indeed timely. Concepts and programmes flowing from the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, on the one hand, and from the entering into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the other, are converging and can be used to reinforce each other, generating synergisms. UNCLOS provides the legal framework, the dispute settlement system, and the enforcement mechanisms for Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, which is the link-pin between the two processes. Agenda 21 -- together with the other documents and decisions that emanated from UNCED -- provide the means, including financial means, for the effective implementation of UNCLOS, especially in the field of human resource development, the enhancement of the marine sciences, international cooperation in technology development, and coastal management. Together, UNCLOS and UNCED could make major contributions to the Agenda for Peace as well as the Agenda for Development. They have already started to make a significant impact on the process of restructuring the United Nations system.

This process deserves attention from an independent, interdisciplinary World Commission which should monitor and analyze these development and come forward, if possible, with innovative proposals and approaches, with particular consideration for the problems and needs of poor countries.

I have been asked to assume the Presidency of this Commission, and have been giving favourable consideration to this request. We have consulted with leaders both of the UNCLOS and the UNCED processes. The proposal is being received with a great deal of enthusiasm everywhere.

Before proceeding any further, I would be most grateful to have your personal reaction to the proposal.



Dalhousie University

International Ocean
Institute



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SUMMARY INFORMATION ABOUT IOI OPERATIONAL CENTRES

1. During the last 18 months, four operational centres have been established, in accordance with the UNDP project document spelling out the modus operandi for the GEF grant of \$2.6 million. This document, and the establishment, have been fully discussed at recent board meetings and meetings of the Executive Committee.

OPERATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

This Centre has been established at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). Its Director is Professor V.S. Raju. He has the support of the entire faculty. There also is an Advisory Council. The Centre has been extremely active, organising training programmes, both those established by the IOI with due adaptations, and new programmes, both at the IIT in Madras and in other places within India and outside (Malaysia). There appears to be a tremendous demand for these programmes. The Centre has also organised leadership seminars, for government officials as well as for the private sector.

OPERATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC

This Centre has been established at the University of the South Pacific. The Director is Professor Robin South. This Centre, too, draws on the resources of the University as a whole. It also has been extremely active. There has been a leadership seminar, assisting the Government of Fiji in the establishment of an ocean department, and there have been a number of training programmes -- as in the case of India, both established IOI courses and new courses. The UNDP funding for this Centre has been supplemented by grants from the Sasakawa Foundation.

OPERATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

This Centre has been established at the National University of Costa Rica, in close cooperation with the President of the University, Rose Marie Ruiz, and the Dean, Lorena San Roman. The Director is Dr. Alejandro Gutierrez. The Plan of Work of this Centre, which started later than the others, after an abortive attempt in Colombia, has just been approved by UNDP. There will be a few short workshops this year. The regular programme starts in 1995. The University, and the people involved, are excellent. We are working in close cooperation with the Earth Council and the University for Peace. Programmes are being developed in Spanish. A Spanish edition of Ocean Yearbook is being published by the National Oceanographic Commission of Colombia.

OPERATIONAL CENTRE FOR AFRICA

This Centre has been established, during the last couple of months at the Institute for Oceanographic Research (this may not be its exactly correct name) in Dakar. Saigal has paid two visits to the Institute. He is quite pleased with the quality of the personnel involved. A work plan has been submitted just recently to UNDP and will undoubtedly be approved. The Centre will develop programmes in French. An important leadership seminar was held in cooperation with the UNECA, and you attended it, and are fully informed.

These four Centres have initial financing from the UNDP project, and their programmes are approved by UNDP. But now there is a new trend: Some countries have taken the initiative of asking for cooperation for the establishment of IOI operational centres. The first two cases are Japan and China.

In China we had conducted 3 very successful training programmes -- two on EEZ management and one, in cooperation with IIT, on ocean mining. All three were funded by the Sasakawa Foundation. The course on ocean mining is organised within the UNCLOS training scheme, with the full cooperation of DOALOS and two of the Pioneer Investors, India and China. This year, this course was held in India; next year it will be in China again. Financing for next year has already been secured from the Sasakawa Foundation. The Director of these programmes is Warioba.

The China operational centre has just now been inaugurated. It was established on the basis of an MOU between the IOI and SOA. It is located at the National Data Centre in Tienjin; it has a Director, Professor Hou, a Coordinator, and staff, all paid for by SOA. There also is an Advisory Council including the directors of COMRA, the oceanographic institutes, and the Res.Rep of UNDP. The 1995 work plan includes the ocean mining training programme and the regional hearings for our World Commission.

The Japan operational centre also has just been inaugurated. It has been established at the University of Yokohama. The Director is Professor Tsutomu Fuse. There is a large Advisory Council consisting of quite prominent Japanese figures. The first activity of this Centre will be the hearings, on the Pacific as well as the Sea of Japan side. These hearings, organised in close cooperation with the Japanese Vice President, will be funded by the city governments of Yokohama and Takaoka.

All the centres, UNDP and non-UNDP, are autonomous and responsible for their own administration and funding, although we are glad to help them

wherever we can. The Japanese centre will raise funds not only for itself but also for the other Asian centres (Fiji, Tienjin, Madras).

There are two annual meetings of all the Directors (including Malta and Halifax) to discuss curriculum development and other matters of common interest and arrange for exchange of participants and staff. Cooperation among the Centres started very well and is expanding.

It appears that three more centres may come up next year: One at the University of Capetown, on the initiative of a Professor of Marine Biology (can't think of his name right now) who felt inspired by IOI-South Pacific. A second one is coming up at the Black-Sea University in Romania; a third one has been in the making for some time already, in Qatar.

I think that brings it up to date.



Dalhousie University

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4 January, 1995

copy

H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary General
The United Nations
New York, N.Y.
USA

Mr. Secretary-General:

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has entered into force on November 16, 1994. The year 1998 has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the Year of the Oceans. The intervening years are fraught with important events bearing on the interaction between the new order for the seas and oceans, world order in the 21st century, and the restructuring of the United Nations system.

It is in this broad context that we are proposing the establishment of an Independent World Commission on the Oceans, as described in the attached document.

To emphasize the importance of cooperation between the Commission and the United Nations and its agencies and programmes, to increase the authority of the Commission, and to enhance the chances of effective implementation of its recommendations, we would like to request you, together with the Director-General of UNESCO, to select the President of the Commission who will then proceed to implement the project.

The infrastructure for the project is in place, and there are no financial implications for the United Nations.

We find the task we have set for the Commission challenging and exciting. An Independent, high-level Commission, working closely with the United Nations, could make a contribution in this dynamic and innovative area of national/regional/global, governmental/nongovernmental cooperation that could be highly beneficial to the United Nations in particular and to the international community in general.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Elisabeth Mann Borgese
Founder, Chair,
International Ocean Institute



Dalhousie University

International Ocean
Institute



FAXED

4 January, 1995

H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary General
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With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Elisabeth Mann Borgese
Founder, Chair,
International Ocean Institute



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

RECEIVED FEB 06 1995

25 January 1995

Dear Ms. Borgese,

Thank you for your invitation to select, jointly with the Director-General of UNESCO, the President of the Independent World Commission on the Oceans which the International Ocean Institute is proposing to establish as a result of the entry into force of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

I am honoured by your Institute's invitation to be associated with the Commission and the worthy initiatives proposed to be undertaken by it. I note that these initiatives share some common features with the Organization's mandated role with respect to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It would appear, therefore, to be in the best interests of promoting a constructive debate on the issues on which the United Nations has, and the Commission will have, a vital interest, and of ensuring that the proposed "independent" Commission is seen as truly independent, to maintain an appropriate distinction between the Organization and the Commission in our respective and separate endeavours.

Based on these considerations I have come to the conclusion that it would not be appropriate for me to accept the invitation. I am obliged, therefore, with regret, to decline your kind invitation.

Ms. Elisabeth Mann Borgese
Chair
International Ocean Institute
Halifax

May I take this opportunity, however, to wish your Institute and the new Commission much success in the initiatives being undertaken in pursuit of the common goals we share in promoting greater awareness and appreciation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Boutros Boutros-Ghali". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali

22 February 1995

H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General
The United Nations
New York, N.Y., USA

Fax N°.: 212-963-2155

Personal

Mr. Secretary-General,

World Commission for the Oceans

On behalf of the International Ocean Institute, I would like to thank you for your letter dated January 25, which reached me on February 9. Of course, we fully understand your position and are grateful for your kind words of approval and support for our initiative.

I have just returned from Lisbon, where I had a talk with President Soares. As you already know, he has been asked by the IOI to chair the World Commission for the Oceans and he is willing to assume the presidency. He now would be most grateful if you could send him a personal word of approval and moral support for the initiative.

We have drafted a very brief message in this sense, taking the wording almost completely from your letter to me, but addressing it to him as he desires. He intends to call the first meeting of the Vice Presidents during the first part of April 1995. There will be a press conference in Lisbon on this occasion, to announce the establishment of the independent Commission.

We would be deeply grateful if you could send this, or a similar, message to President Soares as soon as possible.

I am quite confident that the cooperation between the Commission and the United Nations system will be fruitful. We intend to deal not only with the convergence between the UNCLOS and UNCED processes and their joint impact, but also with the potential contribution of the new law of the Sea to your Agenda for Peace as well as to your Agenda for Development.

Thanking you for your cooperation, with all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Elisabeth Mann Borgese

Elisabeth Mann Borgese
Professor
Founder and Chairman
International Ocean Institute