

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC UNIONS

From the President,
Dr. H. W. THOMPSON, C.B.E., F.R.S.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,
OXFORD, ENGLAND

HWT/SJT

9th January, 1964

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Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research

Dear Dr. Humphrey,

The Officers of ICSU are considering the publication as soon as possible of a booklet describing the aims and activities of the Council. This would enable us to bring the full array of work being done by ICSU, its Unions, Committees and other agencies, more noticeably before a wider public. It would also be useful when approaches are made to those who may be able to augment our funds. It is important that this pamphlet should be written in a style suitable for the general reader, and that it should bring out clearly the value of ICSU's work not only for international science but also for the welfare of the world community.

The booklet would presumably contain information about the Council's aims, constitution and general functions, together with brief accounts of the main work of the Unions, Committees and other agencies. It may run to 10,000 - 15,000 words in all. At present it is impossible to guess the number of words which can be allotted to each particular activity, but it is hoped to achieve a fair balance, and to blend the notes together.

It would be possible for us to derive the necessary material from published accounts of special projects, or from the reports of the individual Unions or Committees. However, we really need a brief and up-to-date summary such as can best be written by those immediately concerned. In the first instance, the booklet will be in English, but arrangements may be made for its translation into other languages if funds are available.

p.t.o.

I am sorry to burden you with this task, but it would be greatly appreciated if you could write say *about 500 words* words for us on *SCA*, and forward it to me here as soon as possible, and not later than February 28th next. It would be helpful to us if you could send two copies of your note. I should be grateful if you could confirm that you will be able to do this for us.

Yours sincerely,

H.W. Thompson
H.W. Thompson

Ref. ZA26/15/2

February 20, 1964


Dr H. W. Thompson,
President of ICSU,
St John's College,
OXFORD ENGLAND

Dear Dr Thompson,

I enclose 2 copies of the statement on SCOR requested
in your letter of January 9.

I found this statement much more difficult to write than
I had imagined. At least, it will probably serve as a basis for
the final statement in the booklet.

Yours sincerely,


(G.P. HUMPHREY)
President of SCOR

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SCOR STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED ICSU BOOKLET

SCOR began as a group of marine scientists meeting to arrange for co-operative work in oceanography. These scientists were encouraged by the general example of IGY but were disappointed that so little seemed to be possible in the field of oceanography. They knew that such oceanic research could be done only by international co-operation. The oceans were so vast that no laboratory or small group of laboratories could successfully investigate the tremendously complicated interactions of living organisms with their physical and chemical environment or map the diverse contours of the ocean floor. In looking for a project which would bring marine scientists together in a major attack on our ignorance of the seas around us, SCOR came to the puzzle of the Indian Ocean -- this enormous mass of water on which many isolated studies had been made but whose general circulation, productivity and 3 - dimensional boundaries were still unknown.

The project soon took shape and the International Indian Ocean Expedition, 1959-1965, came into being. No oceanographic study of this magnitude had been attempted before and the problems and ramifications of such international collaboration became known only as the work progressed. From the beginning it was clear that the project could act as a focus for training young scientists in the countries of the region and therefore the co-operation and interest of UNESCO were quickly forthcoming.

This contact with an intergovernmental agency gave SCOR a chance to work on a wider scale and brought SCOR into prominence as an important adviser to governments in addition to academics, science councils etc., bodies with which it was already in contact through ICSU and through the chain of 30-odd national committees for oceanic research which SCOR had established in order to work with a wide variety of laboratories throughout the world.

SCOR's main contacts with scientists are through its activities in arranging international oceanographic congresses, inter-disciplinary symposia, and small discussion meetings. In addition, SCOR has pioneered the holding of joint practical operations to compare and standardize methods, both for use in co-operative projects and to reveal deficiencies which can then be remedied by laboratory examination and field tests.

Thus, because of its well-established contacts with working scientists, because of its advisory functions to UNESCO and to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and because of its relations with academics, SCOR finds itself in an important central position in that heterogeneous collection of sciences known as oceanography.

(G. F. HUMPHREY)