

IOC ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION XX-6

THE ARGO PROJECT

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Considering that:

- i. the Global Ocean Data Assimilation Experiment (GODAE) is being planned as a pilot project in the context of the UN-sponsored programmes of GOOS, GCOS and CLIVAR, to contribute to short-term ocean forecasting, to provide boundary conditions for forecasting in coastal seas, and to contribute to seasonal to inter-annual atmospheric forecasts,
- ii. GODAE will meet the pressing need for: (a) a vastly improved co-operation and integration of remote and in situ data streams, and (b) improved ocean models and data assimilation techniques to exploit this information, to meet various kinds of user's requirements, such as the stated requirements of the Conference of Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change for observational data to support its needs for monitoring and assessing climate change and its impacts,
- iii. a major focus of the International GODAE Steering Team has been the development of a proposal for a global array of about 3,000 profiling floats, now known as the Argo project, which will be deployed in open ocean waters to cover the global ocean, and will measure temperature and salinity profiles in the upper 2,000 metres of the water column,
- iv. the data and data products derived from those floats will be freely available in real-time and delayed mode through IOC and WMO data exchange systems, as well as other appropriate international mechanisms, and will support operational oceanography and marine meteorology, those profiling floats are measuring instruments using modern technology; they drift freely at depths as great as 2,000 metres, rising to the surface every week or two to transmit data to shore via satellite,

Considering further that the Argo project shall be fully consistent with UNCLOS,

Noting the absence of a specific international legal instrument regulating profiling floats, drifting buoys, and other similar objects deployed in the oceans,

Recognizing that:

- i. just as with existing surface drifting buoys, some of these new instruments may drift into waters under national jurisdiction,
- ii. the Argo project is operational, is now being implemented, but is not yet global,

Strongly supporting the objectives and activities of GODAE which, as part of GOOS and GCOS, enjoys co-sponsorship by IOC, WMO, UNEP and ICSU,

Noting that the Argo project presents an excellent opportunity to improve ocean and climate forecasting, with consequent benefits for the protection of life and property and effective planning for the effects of seasonal to

inter-annual climate variability,

Acknowledging paragraph 3.4.4.26 of the general summary of the Thirteenth World Meteorological Congress, which specifically addresses and endorses the Argo project,

Recognizing the need to ensure that Member States gain maximum benefit from the data of the Argo project in real-time and at longer time scales, and that they have the possibility to participate in and contribute to the project,

Accepts the Argo project as an important contribution to the operational ocean observing system of GOOS and GCOS, as well as a major contribution to CLIVAR and other scientific research programmes;

Concludes that **concerned coastal states must be informed in advance, through appropriate channels, of all deployments of profiling floats which might drift into waters under their jurisdiction, indicating the exact locations of such deployments,**

Instructs the Executive Secretary IOC, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of WMO and in consultation with the Executive Director of UNEP:

- i. to inform all Member States, the IHO, and appropriate UN agencies, including IMO and FAO, of the acceptance of the Argo project by IOC and WMO;
- ii. to inform all Member States how to determine float locations and access float data;
- iii. to consider how all Member States might participate in and benefit from the Argo project, as well as propose options to that end; and
- iv. to appeal for international co-operation in making the Argo project a success;

Further instructs the Executive Secretary IOC to consult with the ABE-LOS and J-COMM on the legal and technical implications respectively of the deployment of profiling floats, drifting buoys, and other similar objects in the ocean, including the feasibility of drafting a legal instrument.