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Report of the Chairman of negotiating group 6 submitted to the Second Committee at its 58th meeting

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1. During the present session at Geneva, negotiating group 6 continued its work on the definition of the outer limits of the continental shelf and the question of payments and contributions with respect to the exploitation of the continental shelf beyond 200 miles.

2. The group held six informal meetings. At the request of many delegations, the meetings originally scheduled for this group were cancelled, and the group met for the first time on 5 April 1979. The group was convened only during the third week of this session in order to permit greater concentration on the work of the First Committee, as was envisaged and to facilitate bilateral consultations and consultations of interest groups on the issues assigned to negotiating group 6.

3. In the course of the group's work at the present session, a number of new informal suggestions were put forward. Denmark introduced a suggestion to amend the Irish formula (NG6/4). Sri Lanka also put forward a suggestion to amend the Irish formula (NG6/5). The delegation of Sri Lanka introduced a further suggestion relating to article 82 of the informal composite negotiating text⁵¹ concerning payments and contributions with respect to the exploitation of the continental shelf beyond 200 miles (NG6/6). The delegation of the Netherlands, too, presented an informal suggestion concerning article 82 (NG6/7). Finally, the delegation of the Soviet Union put forward an informal proposal covering articles 76, 80, 82, 247 to 250 and 254 to 256 and also proposed a new article 258 *bis* (NG6/8).

4. Discussion focused on analysis of the new proposals, as well as those put forward previously, which are contained in documents NG6/1 (A/CONF.62/C.2/L.99, annex II)—the Irish formula—and NG6/2 (*ibid.*, annex I)—a formula suggested by the group of Arab States—and also the proposal of the Seychelles, which combines the Irish formula with a new rate of contribution in article 82 of the revised text.

5. I consider that the discussion shed new light on the degree of support for the various proposals and that a further effort might perhaps enable a solution to this question to be reached. In this connexion, and in accordance with the statements made by various delegations, I attempted to form a smaller group comprising the participating States most directly concerned, but because of differences of opinion regarding its composition, I decided to defer the establishment of such a group for the time being.

6. At the informal meeting of the group held on 11 April 1979, the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission introduced the study requested from that Commission concerning the implications of preparing large-scale maps for the Conference (A/CONF.62/C.2/L.99).

7. Before concluding, I wish to reiterate what I stated in my previous reports concerning the elements for a solution of the questions assigned to negotiating group 6 and their importance for the achievement of a general agreement on the issues dealt with by the Second Committee.

8. Although the time still available to us at this session is short, I shall remain at the disposal of delegations for the conduct of consultations, whether individual or involving groups most directly concerned, in order to try to reach a solution which might be included in any revision of the negotiating text. For that purpose, that text will have to meet the conditions referred to in recommendation 10 of document A/CONF.62/62,⁵² concerning the organization of the work of the Conference. I hope to find among delegations a firm determination to attain the goal to which we all aspire.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. X (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.V.4).