

In this connection, the immediate task of FAO is the establishment of services that will bring together information and statistics covering the world production and distribution of fish. Another urgent task is to explore the resources of hitherto unexplored fishing grounds. During the war years, fishing on a commercial basis has been developed in many new areas, particularly off the coast of South America. The pressure of war was necessary to force an appreciation of these resources. A determined international aim to eliminate inadequate diets should lead to the development of additional new resources as well as to a more efficient and economical utilization of those resources that have been exploited over the past several centuries. Experience has proven that supplies of many types of fish are not inexhaustible and FAO can assist individual nations or groups of nations to proceed with conservation methods where the need is indicated. The fact that many of the important fishing areas of the world are located in international waters makes it particularly important that there be international co-operation in respect to the exploitation and conservation of world fishery resources. The report of the Fisheries Committee sets forth in detail, the lines along which FAO may proceed in so far as fisheries are concerned. Some of the more important considerations of that Committee are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Fisheries statistics have proven to be a difficult problem for individual nations and will undoubtedly be even more troublesome when an attempt is made to bring together the statistics of many countries on a comparable basis. The fishery does not lend itself to the statistical methods employed in agriculture where sample surveys give a reasonably accurate picture of the whole. Local conditions vary greatly in the fishery and it is necessary to make almost complete enumerations to secure satisfactory estimates of total landings. The seasonal nature of the fishery and the unpredictable movements of many types of fish make it extremely difficult to forecast what may occur in the future. Some countries have undertaken research into the life history and habits of fish but current knowledge of this nature is scanty for most countries and for most types of fish. FAO will be making a substantial contribution to the fishery if it can organize over a period of years such statistical information as is now available and encourage the extension of statistical work so that a more comprehensive picture of the world situation will be available.

In the field of biological and hydrographical research, FAO can play a part in the encouragement of the resumption of work suspended or curtailed during the War. Also it can encourage the initiation of such work by countries that have not heretofore carried on such research. The organization will provide a clearing house for the exchange of knowledge on current activities and provide a means for co-operative research by nations that share the same resources. Further, it can encourage the exchange of students and research workers among nations, in order to promote better opportunities for scientific training, as well as to ensure the co-ordination of activities and the improvement of research techniques.

From a nutritional standpoint, research done heretofore appears to be fairly adequate with respect to protein, fat, mineral content, certain of the essential vitamins and digestibility. A large volume of this information is available and FAO will provide a service by bringing together this information and encouraging investigations along lines where current knowledge is inadequate. FAO should also encourage studies designed to bring about increased consumption of fish, particularly in nations where the present diet is lacking in protein. Further research is desirable on the development of pharmacological products in order to diversify the uses for fishery products.