Activities of the Interoceanmetal Joint Organization, problems of the application of the United Nations International Framework Classification for Reserves/Resources

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ABSTRACT

International Joint Organization (IOM) is an international consortium, set up in April 1987, to survey and explore polymetallic nodule deposits in the area allotted by the International Seabed Authority. In 2001 IOM signed a contract with the International Seabed Authority for exploration of polymetallic nodules in the 75,000 km² area situated in the eastern part of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the eastern equatorial Pacific to prepare commercial development of the nodules. An actual question seems the application of the United Nations International Framework Classification for Reserves/Resources for the polymetallic nodules resources evaluation. This paper brings some topics for a discussion concerned to this problem.

KEY WORDS: Interoceanmetal Joint Organization; International Seabed Authority; polymetallic nodules; United Nations Framework Classification.

INTRODUCTION

There are two purposes of this paper. First – to give a fundamental information about Interoceanmetal Joint Organization and its activities in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the eastern equatorial Pacific, be aimed to prepare commercial development of the polymetallic nodules. Second aim is an attempt, to appeal a discussion about an application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Reserves/Resources in the circumstances of the polymetallic nodule deposits.

INTEROCEANMETAL JOINT ORGANIZATION, ITS HISTORY, AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Interoceanmetal Joint Organization (further IOM) was formed on 27 April 1987, based on the Intergovernmental Agreement signed by Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Poland, USSR and Vietnam, and started operation in December that year. In 1989, Vietnam withdrew from the Organization, while in 1991, Germany followed suit in the wake of the unification. In January 1992, Russian Federation took over the responsibilities of the former USSR. On 31 December 1992, Czech Republic and Slovakia as two sovereign states divided the responsibilities of the former Czechoslovakia between themselves. Thus the IOM member states at present are: Bulgaria, Cuba, Czech Republic, Poland, Russian Federation and Slovakia.

On 30 July 1992, the General Secretary of the United Nations awarded IOM and its member states the Certificate of Registration, whereby the IOM’s status has become that of a pioneer investor. The registered pioneer area of IOM covered 150,000 km². One of the major responsibilities of IOM was a relinquishment of a half of the pioneer area to the International Seabed Authority (further ISA) to be set aside as the common heritage of mankind. This relinquishment was done successful in the years 1994 – 2001, therefore actual area of the IOM covers 75,000 km². The geographical location of the IOM’s area and the location of the other contracting areas are possible to see on the International Seabed Authority page (See References).