

Resources of the Area and Deep Seabed: Types, Distribution and the Role of Marine Scientific Research in Their Discovery

JIN Jiancai, Secretary General, COMRA
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Introduction

This presentation gives a rough picture of the type and distribution of different resources in the Area and deep seabed. While it focuses on the mineral resources in the Area, some ideas on the biodiversity and genetic resources of deep seabed are briefly discussed. The role of marine scientific research (MSR) in the discovery and assessment of resources and the environment around is discussed based on some experience and practice of the China Ocean Mineral Research & Development Association (COMRA). Through the comparison of processes of search for resources with those of MSR, there are some interactive elements in MSR and resources-oriented activities both at sea and in lab. As surveying at sea is very costly, for more effective and efficient way, it is encouraging that through close cooperation with a number of research institutes and universities in China, COMRA has carried out a number of comprehensive and interactive cruises to satisfy the different purposes both for search for the resources and for scientific objectives. While the scientists from the various institutes benefit for their research works through the cruise surveying at sea, they help COMRA for prospecting activities and search for deposits as well as for assessment of the environment around in the Area. The presentation observes that MSR is a pioneer activity leading to the discovery and interests in resources in the Area with economic potential. Basic information and methods for search for resources of the Area come from relevant disciplines of oceanography and the results from MSR can be used for various purposes, including for deepening and broadening the scientific achievements and for discovering and identifying the resources, giving the hydrothermal sulfide in the ocean ridge as an example. To reflect the principle of “Common heritage of mankind”, the presentation recognizes that one of the International Seabed Authority mandates is to encourage the MSR in the Area and

cooperation. Equal importance is the national practice in the Area, especially the effective participation in MSR of the developing countries.
