

PREFACE

The International Geophysical Year is undoubtedly one of the most significant scientific undertakings in the history of man. For a period of a year and a half, beginning July 1, 1957, thousands of scientists from many nations will be making simultaneous observations of the earth's interior, its crust and oceans, of the complex atmosphere reaching from the surface to heights of several hundred miles, and of the sun, which virtually controls life and events on our planet. At the present time 46 nations are participating in the International Geophysical Year and still more are expected to take part. From these scientific observations, using the world as the laboratory, will come knowledge of inestimable value to mankind.

The International Geophysical Year was conceived by the scientists of many nations through their principal international organization, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), the planning and international coordination of the scientific effort being carried out by a special committee established by ICSU in 1952, called the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI).

The participation of the individual nations has been through their adhering body to ICSU—in the United States the National Academy of Sciences. The National Academy of Sciences in turn established a National Committee for the International Geophysical Year to develop and coordinate plans for the United States program. The Academy also requested the National Science Foundation, as the Federal agency with major responsibility for supporting such general scientific research, to assume responsibility for securing and administering the necessary Federal funds to carry on the United States program.

This special report on the programs and objectives of the United States program for the International Geophysical Year stems from a request from Senator Warren G. Magnuson, chairman, Subcommittee on Independent Office Appropriations and General Government Matters. The report was prepared under the able direction of Dr. Joseph Kaplan, Chairman of the National Committee for the International Geophysical Year, and Mr. Hugh Odishaw, Executive Secretary of the Committee.

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