ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT MEERESKUNDLICHER
BIBLIOTHEKEN
WORKING GROUP OF MARINE SCIENCES LIBRARIES

Inka Renckhoff
Biologische Anstalt Helgoland
Hamburg, Germany

The aim of this session is to contribute to your understanding of the history of German oceanography and related to that: the marine libraries of Germany. Before the libraries introduce themselves individually, I would like to make some remarks about the AMB - the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Meereskundlicher Bibliotheken - a German working group for marine libraries.

There has always been close cooperation between colleagues, but with the years, the wish to strengthen the links and to improve interlibrary-communication has grown. In 1989, representatives of the libraries came together to discuss the establishment of an informal working group. AMB was born - in some way the German nucleus of EURASLIC.

AMB meets twice a year. The aims are quite similar to those of EURASLIC - only on a national basis. That means to discuss possibilities on information handling, to exchange experience in workday routine and practical technical matters, also to improve interlibrary loan. The exchange of information on the introduction of or advances in data processing is at the moment a question of prime interest for many of the members. Therefore, attention is focused on finding similar systems, or even identical systems, for improving cooperation among the group members. At present, the libraries are also collaborating to prepare a union list of their holdings.

I would like to finish with an exceptional feature of the German working group, which is, as far as we know, without parallel. The AMB is a "German/German joint-venture". Its establishment, which coincided with the dramatic political changes in the former German Democratic Republic, enabled us to approach our East German colleagues and to ask them to join the group. A very close cooperation has developed, of which we are proud. At a time when East German librarians had to struggle hard with many changes in their institutions, the AMB gave and still gives them the opportunity for professional solidarity and friendship. We do hope that our national efforts will be also benefit the international marine library work.