

REVIEW OF PRINCIPAL HYDROCARBON - BEARING BASINS AROUND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

ERNEST P. DU BOIS

Senior Petroleum Geologist, CCOP Project Office, c/o ESCAP, UN Building, Bangkok 2, Thailand

As a consequence of exploration for hydrocarbons, and of research programmes conducted by academic and international institutions, substantial progress has been made in recent years in definition of hydrocarbon-bearing basins, and those potentially so, in the vicinity of the South China Sea. Basin and depositional provinces now recognized include: the Thai Basin, Malay Basin, West Natuna and Penyu Basins, Saigon (Ho Chi Minh) and Mekong (Vung Tau) Basins, East Natuna area, the Greater Sarawak Basin including Central Luconia and Balingian depositional provinces, the Baram Delta/Brunei-Sabah Basin and the Northwest Palawan shelf.

With the exception of the basins and provinces offshore Sarawak-Brunei-Sabah, most sedimentary basin-fill was deposited within continental to coastal environments and tends to be gas-prone. Principal producing provinces offshore North Borneo are the Central Luconia Carbonate Platform, which is gas-prone, and the Baram Delta, which is oil-prone.

Most hydrocarbons are associated with rocks of mid-Miocene age, although Oligocene and Pliocene occurrence are locally significant.
