Claims

1. An apparatus for separating nodular material from non-nodular material, the apparatus comprising:-

at least one container for receiving liquid containing nodular material and non-nodular material;

at least one respective inlet for enabling liquid containing nodular material and non-nodular material to enter at least one said container;

at least one respective first outlet for enabling liquid to exit at least one said container; and

at least one respective second outlet for enabling liquid to exit at least one said container,

wherein the at least one respective second outlet is provided on the same level with at least one respective inlet, while the at least one respective first outlet is provided at lower level than the at least one respective inlet, thereby the at least one said second outlet is arranged at a greater height than at least one said first outlet provided on the corresponding said container, wherein the apparatus further comprising barrier means for obstructing a straight path from at least one said inlet to at least one said second outlet so as to cause liquid to travel downward toward the at least one respective first outlet, wherein the barrier means comprises at least one plate, and wherein the barrier means causes liquid to travel from at least one said inlet to downward toward the at least one respective first outlet once and then toward to at least one said second outlet by passing under said barrier means, thereby entry of liquid via at least one said inlet into the container causes reduction in velocity of the liquid.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising flow redirecting means for redirecting flow of liquid towards at least one said first outlet.

3. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the flow redirecting means comprises a curved surface.

4. An apparatus according to any one of the claims 1 to 3,

wherein at least one said container comprises a respective body tapering towards at least one said first outlet.

5. An apparatus according to any one of the claims 1 to 4,

wherein at least one said container comprises a lower surface inclined towards at least one said first outlet.

6. An apparatus according to claim 4 or 5,

wherein at least one said inlet is directed towards a substantially central portion of a said container in a direction that is different from an oblique direction extending from at least one said inlet to at least one said first outlet.

7. An apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 6,

wherein at least one said inlet defines a nozzle.

8. An apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 7,

further comprising pump means for directing liquid to at least one said inlet and/or directing liquid out of at least one said first outlet and/or directing liquid out of at least one said second outlet.

9. An apparatus for removing nodular material from a floor of a body of water, the apparatus comprising:-

moving means for moving the apparatus relative to a floor of a body of water;

material removing means for removing nodular material from the floor of the body of water;

connector means adapted to be connected to a conduit to enable said removed nodular material to be transported to a vessel on the surface of the body of water; and

an apparatus for separating nodular material from non-nodular material according to any one of claims 1 to 8.