



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
COMMISSION OCÉANOGRAPHIQUE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE
COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات

政府间海洋学委员会

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IOC/PB/BA/pbo

Paris, 25 July 2007

- To** : Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC
Permanent Delegations/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
- cc.** : IOC Chair and Vice-Chairs
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States

Subject : Designation of Representatives to Working Group on the Future of IOC

At the 24th Assembly, 19 to 27 June 2007, Paris, France, Member States decided to establish an intersessional Working Group on the Future of the IOC, " *with the specific mandate of identifying emerging challenges and opportunities for the reinforcement of the roles, capabilities and status of the IOC and proposing options in accordance with the terms of reference contained in Annex 1 to [Resolution XXIV-1 attached]*". Through the same Resolution Member States decided that the meetings of the Group shall be composed by the IOC Officers and " *a maximum of two (2) representatives of each Electoral Group of IOC Member States selected in accordance with the Rules of Procedures (Appendix II)*". Furthermore, the Working Group will be open to participation of all other Member States, not already selected, at their own expense.

The process for nomination was not decided *in fine* by the Assembly; therefore, after consulting with the already nominated Co-Chairperson of this Working Group, IOC Vice-Chair Dr Savi Narayanan (Canada), it is my pleasure to inform you that the nomination of representatives to the IOC Working Group on the Future of IOC will proceed as follows:

Step One: Expression of interest

Member States wishing to be elected as representatives of its Electoral Group to the Working Group on the Future of IOC shall indicate this in writing to the IOC Executive Secretary **not later than 15th September 2007**. An updated list of Member States in each Electoral Group is available in Annex 3 to this letter.

.../...

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Step Two: Voting

The Executive Secretary shall prepare ballot papers containing the list of Member States having expressed interest —by 15th September 2007— in joining the Working Group on the Future of IOC, sorted by Electoral Groups. The voting will take place by mail. Following well established practices in IOC each voting Member State will be allowed to vote for two Member States from each Electoral Group. The first two most voted Member States within each electoral group will be retained as the elected representatives of the Electoral Group. The Secretariat will act as certifying body.

Voting, by mail, will take place during **October 2007**.

Only those nominations and votes coming through Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC or Permanent Delegations/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States will be accepted.

Looking forward to your earliest reply, not later than **15th September 2007**, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Patricio Bernal
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO
Executive Secretary, IOC

Enclosures:

- IOC Resolution XXIV-1
- Document IOC-XXIII/2 Annex 8 "We have a Problem"
- Updated listing of the IOC electoral groups

Annex 1:

Resolution XXIV-1

WORKING GROUP ON THE FUTURE OF IOC

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Recalling the reports of the *ad hoc* Study Group on Measures to Ensure Adequate and Dependable Resources for the Commission's Programme of Work (IOC/FURES-III/3) and the *ad hoc* Study Group for Development, Operations, Structure and Statutes, entitled "Quo Vadis IOC?" (IOC/DOSS-III/3) and the recent documents "We have a problem" (IOC-XXIII/2 Annex 8) and "The Future of IOC: a Proposal by the Officers to the Member States, June 2007" (IOC-XXIV/2 Annex 2),

Noting the benefits arising from the use of the ocean and coastal zones, concerned however, by the growing challenges faced by the international community arising from, *inter alia*, climate variability and change, marine environmental degradation and pollution, habitat and biodiversity losses and natural hazards,

Recognizing the complexity of integrated ocean and coastal management and the increased pressures on the ocean and the coastal zones,

Recalling the need to enhance public awareness of these matters and to increase the visibility of the role of IOC in addressing these issues,

Further recalling the UN conventions and instruments that have a bearing on the mandate of IOC: *inter alia* the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 57/141, 58/240, 60/30 and 61/222,

Recognizing that the 50th anniversary of the Commission, in 2010, presents an opportunity to reinforce the role and capabilities of IOC in addressing such challenges and mandates,

Being aware that the public and governments need to understand the challenges facing the global and coastal oceans and the constraints, under which the Commission operates, reflected in the statement in Annex 1 to the present Resolution,

Calls on the Officers of the Commission, in collaboration with the IOC Executive Secretary, to coordinate consultations with IOC Member States, IOC Subsidiary Bodies, competent UN bodies and other competent international organizations and bodies dealing with ocean issues, in order to ascertain their views on what role IOC should play to contribute to the effective coordination of ocean affairs in the relevant intergovernmental *fora* and on how IOC could be reinforced in order to carry out effectively its mission as set out in Article 2, paragraph 1, of its Statutes;

Requests the Member States to provide inputs to the above-mentioned consultations;

Decides to establish an intersessional Working Group on the Future of the IOC, open to all Member States, with the specific mandate of identifying emerging challenges and opportunities for the reinforcement of the roles, capabilities and status of the IOC and proposing options in accordance with the terms of reference contained in Annex 2 to the present Resolution;

Also decides that the IOC Executive Council at its 41st session (2008) shall:

- (i) include in its agenda an item on The future of IOC, in order to consider the report and conclusions of the intersessional Working Group;
- (ii) submit conclusions to the Assembly at its 25th Session (2009);
- (iii) seek, as appropriate, for consideration of the Assembly, the necessary legal advice, including the examination of the Working Group's conclusions by the UNESCO Office of International

Standards and Legal Affairs and by the IOC Advisory Body of Experts on the Law of the Sea (IOC/ABE-LOS) at its 9th Meeting (2009), with the legal advice to be provided at least three months before the beginning of the 25th Session of the IOC Assembly.

Annex 1 to Resolution XXIV-1

Statement of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission prepared at the 24th Session of the Assembly

Preamble

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO was established in 1960 and now has the mandate to "promote international cooperation and to coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity-building, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and coastal areas and to apply that knowledge for the improvement of management, sustainable development, the protection of the marine environment, and the decision-making processes of its Member States." (Article 2 of the Statutes)

As it nears the completion of its fifth decade since its establishment as an intergovernmental body with functional autonomy within UNESCO, it is timely to review the role that it has played in promoting successful global and regional programmes to underpin the wise governance of the ocean and coasts.

Challenges

The ocean and coasts are experiencing increasing demands upon their renewable and non-renewable resources, including, for example, marine transportation, recreation, and coastal development, all of which produce great benefits to the marine community and society at large. However these benefits are not without their impacts and related challenges. The increased awareness and expectations of society for scientific knowledge and information, and the importance of providing scientific information for policy-decisions in wise governance for the sustainable use of ocean resources, adds a new dimension to the role that the Commission must play in the future. The necessity of this new role is further enhanced in the context of the special challenges posed by climate change, sea-level rise, and the accelerating degradation of the marine environment simultaneously with attendant habitat and biodiversity losses, and the large loss of lives and livelihoods from marine-based natural hazards. This has led to a growth in both the extent and number of tasks which the IOC has undertaken, including a significant role in the coordination of ocean sciences, observations and services, as reflected in the current and future Medium-Term Strategy. This growth has coincided with a period in which there has been a significant decline, in real terms, of the resources available to the IOC to conduct its work. The Commission further appreciates that these challenges must be met with a much greater focus at national and regional levels in a more holistic fashion, if it is to be successful in preserving the ocean heritage for future generations. That we must preserve the ocean environment is unarguable – without a living ocean, we risk losing a liveable planet.

Mechanisms

The Commission therefore recognizes the urgent necessity to reinforce the role and capabilities of IOC, by examining structural, financial and legal mechanisms to allow it to continue its unique contribution to ocean affairs. As the recognized entity within the UN system for science dealing with the oceans, the Commission requires adequate resources and a recognized voice at senior levels of government and amongst other specialized agencies. It will reinforce its links with relevant organizations of the UN system, namely UNESCO and its traditional partners. It must be better equipped to deal with the interdisciplinary nature of ocean science and services and capacity-development both at global and regional level demanded by increasingly complex interactions, to have the capabilities necessary to acquire and share knowledge and data, and the capacity to provide assistance in these relevant domains of ocean affairs. IOC will undertake consultations

and explore intersessionally the most appropriate responses to these issues through the mechanisms established by the present Resolution “Working Group on the Future of IOC”.

Annex 2 to Resolution XXIV-1

Terms of Reference of the Working Group on the Future of IOC

Objectives:

- **Further pursue** the initial study by the Officers, with a view to better identifying challenges and evaluating opportunities and needs for intergovernmental collaboration in oceanographic activities, in light of the mission of IOC, taking into account the mandates of other UN and other international organizations dealing with relevant aspects of ocean affairs,
- **Evaluate** those challenges and opportunities taking particularly into account the results-based criteria of feasibility, relevance, sustainability, continuity and impact,
- **Analyse** options for institutional mechanisms and financial requirements to respond to the above identified challenges and opportunities, and
- **Present** a written report for discussion by the IOC Executive Council at its 41st Session (2008).

Membership and participation:

- IOC Officers,
- A maximum of two (2) representatives of each Electoral Group of IOC Member States selected in accordance with the Rules of Procedures (Appendix II),
- The sessions of the Group will be open to participation of all IOC Member States at their own expense.

Mechanisms:

- The Group will be co-chaired by two individuals nominated by the IOC Officers,
- The Group shall conduct its work through meetings and electronically,
- The Group shall meet once in the beginning of 2008 to generate a draft document for discussion,
- The final document for discussion shall be submitted to the IOC Secretariat three months prior to the 41st Session of the Executive Council to ensure its timely translation and distribution to Member States in accordance with the relevant IOC Rules of Procedure,

The Executive Secretary shall circulate the final document for comments from Member States two months before the 41st Session of the Executive Council.

Annex 2: Document IOC-XXIII/2 Annex 8 "We have a problem" (June 2005)

"We have a problem"

1 Since its establishment in 1960, the IOC has had to operate in the rapidly changing circumstances characteristic of the second half of the twentieth century, which had obvious effects both within its governing bodies, the Executive Council and the Assembly, and its parent organization, UNESCO.

2 These circumstances, highly varied in origin, were, for instance, political, relating to the interests of and relations among Member States, scientific and technological, as a result of continuous developments, and economic (linked to the availability of the resources needed to meet new challenges).

3 Over the years, the Commission and its Member States have displayed an ability to adapt to change and in many instances to lead the way. This has resulted in programmes with worldwide coverage, the regional sub-commissions, pioneering management mechanisms, and many other relevant issues that develop between assemblies.

4 We operate, with many issues yet unresolved, but at the same time marking out a path in which developed and developing, continental and coastal countries endeavour all together, day by day, to be more ingenious, creative and tolerant of diversity in order to come closer to finding solutions to the most varied ocean issues.

5 In this context, and in recognition of the complexity of the subjects covered by oceanography, UNESCO has declared the IOC to be a flagship programme with functional autonomy under its Statutes, revised in 1999.

6 This has made it possible to subsist austerely for many years on the budgets allocated by an organization that acknowledged and appreciated us, and the contributions we have received in solidarity from some Member States and other international organizations.

7 We have always been recognized as the body of scientific reference and coordination in the diversity and immensity of ocean-related themes, as we have been assigned the role of focal point for marine sciences and ocean services within the United Nations system.

8 We have initiated many programmes independently or jointly with relevant organizations (World Meteorological Organization – WMO, United Nations Environment Programme – UNEP, International Maritime Organization – IMO, Food and Agriculture Organization – FAO and the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research – SCOR). They all demand of us ever greater levels of responsibility and participation.

9 In recent years we have arrived at a very precarious relationship between resources available and commitments undertaken or delegated.

10 However, our circumstances have changed again!

11 We have been affected by two very different events that occurred recently and we are still feeling their repercussions:

- the most destructive tsunami ever recorded occurred on 26 December 2004 in the Indian Ocean, leaving some 300,000 people dead or missing;
- a significant reduction in the budget allocated to the Commission by UNESCO for the 2006–2007 biennium.

12 At a time when we are managing the present almost in deficit, this new change in circumstances forces us to rethink our medium- and long-term plans.

13 Any decision adopted at the next session of the Assembly will determine our future, not through a mere change in the balance of themes of interest, but by affecting our identity as an oceanographic commission that is also, at the moment, intergovernmental.

14 Aware that this kind of assessment will go beyond the limited terms of the debate during the Assembly, we must take a break in our daily routine to think about:

“where we are”, and

“where we want to go as an intergovernmental body dedicated to oceanography”.

15 Our medium- and long-term management documents are now unfeasible. To give you an example, the draft 33 C/5 prepared by the Secretariat proposes reductions in Ocean Mapping, Harmful Algal Bloom and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Data Exchange programmes as well as a serious cut in Policy activities. These cuts will hamper seriously IOC’s capacities. This means that with the current allocations we are unable to meet or cannot meet properly planned commitments and responsibilities.

16 The Officers have planned a series of activities that could be called contingency activities:

- dispatching a letter to the Director-General and Members States of the UNESCO Executive Board to express our concern once more at the budget cuts and the little regard in which the Commission is held;
- applying the budget cut imposed by UNESCO (approximately 10% across the board) not to the implementation of the IOC budget in its entirety (including Staff Cost Allocation), but restricting it only to programme execution, which would then make it amount to almost 20%;
- engaging as soon as possible in collective reflection on possible future scenarios for the IOC which could be used to reformulate the organization’s medium- and long-term plans.

17 In our desire to liven up the debate and “trigger joint reflection”, we can see only one way of ensuring that we meet our commitments in the medium term, and this is by establishing and administering accounts for specific purposes to which Member States or future donors may contribute new and more resources, with the guarantee that they will be used exclusively for those purposes (reference to Art. 10 of IOC Statutes). Something like a “Partnership for the Oceans”, along the lines of similar arrangements which have existed within UNESCO for a few years now, as in the case of the World Heritage Centre.

18 In this way we could keep alive programmes for which there is most agreement and support. The accounts for specific purposes would be administered by the Executive Secretary, and overseen by our governing bodies, as would some that have already been established.

19 Contribution to these accounts would not entail any commitment on the part of Member States in that they would be absolutely voluntary, and the existence of the accounts would not represent any change in the priorities and decisions of the Assembly.

20 The systematic use of such accounts would make it possible to maintain, or plan in a better way, activities that would certainly have to be suspended in the current circumstances.

21 Owing to this mechanism we would also avoid passive or uncommitted attitudes that lower the IOC’s visibility when special events occur (natural disasters, conferences convened by other organizations, initiatives outside the scope of the United Nations, and so on).

22 On the other hand, we would, in the long term, have a wider range of options linked quite obviously to our vision of the IOC’s future role.

23 We must be quite clear that we are trying only to stimulate the reflection that will guide our action in the years ahead.

24 Possibly the first question to answer is whether we want our activities to evolve towards or develop into a non-governmental organization outside the UN system or whether we want our governments to maintain the initiative on ocean-related themes.

25 If we choose the first option, we do nothing and in a short time our history as the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, our representative nature and responsibilities will come to an end.

26 If, on the other hand, we choose the second option, we can begin to look into some ideas as possible forms of action:

- (i) further consolidation and vitalization of management through accounts for specific purposes ("Partnership for the Oceans"). This will make it possible to maintain our current profile, which might rise under the influence of the dynamics of donors' interests;
- (ii) suspension of all operational plans and activities and maintenance of the IOC as a forum for the presentation and discussion of ideas on research policies only, leaving the programmes and initiatives arising from those ideas to be implemented by other bodies.

UNESCO funds would thus be allocated in order to maintain the secretariat and to hold a few annual meetings, but not for the implementation of any theme;

- (iii) initiation of a process of change and steps to progress beyond the current state of affairs. In calling on our governments to ensure that they are informed of the challenges that technological developments pose to operational oceanography and the requisite coordination of the numerous ocean services, let us begin by considering the expansion of the current terms of reference so that the IOC actually becomes the body for the development and implementation of ocean policies at the intergovernmental level.

27 These are just three forms of action; there may be a few more, but even without a very elaborate analysis we can see that they give rise to three very different scenarios.

28 The circumstances that we face in today's globalized world mean that there can be no inaction without paying the price.

29 It is for us, as our governments' oceanography representatives, to open this debate and chart the course so that the necessary measures may be consolidated later on at the appropriate political levels.

30 Our communities have many demands and there is still a great deal to be done!

31 As you will see, this call to discussions aims to do much more than describe a programme and budget. Let that be a matter for discussions later on. For the moment let us agree on what future we want.

Annex 3: Updated listing of the IOC electoral groups

The five electoral groups of the Commission (upon a total of 136 Member States as of 1 July 2007) shall be composed as follows:

Group I (24)

Austria	Germany	Monaco	Turkey
Belgium	Greece	Netherlands	United Kingdom of
Canada	Iceland	Norway	Great Britain and
Cyprus	Ireland	Portugal	Northern Ireland
Denmark	Israel	Spain	United States of
Finland	Italy	Sweden	America
France	Malta	Switzerland	

Group II (13)

Albania	Czech Republic	Romania	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Estonia	Russian	Ukraine
Bulgaria	Georgia	Federation	
Croatia	Poland	Serbia	

Group III (26)

Argentina	Costa Rica	Guatemala	Peru
Bahamas	Cuba	Guyana	Saint Lucia
Barbados	Dominica	Haiti	Suriname
Belize	Dominican	Jamaica	Trinidad and
Brazil	Republic	Mexico	Tobago
Chile	Ecuador	Nicaragua	Uruguay
Colombia	El Salvador	Panama	Venezuela

Group IV (28)

Afghanistan	Fiji	Maldives	Samoa
Australia	India	Myanmar	Singapore
Bangladesh	Indonesia	New Zealand	Solomon Islands
China	Iran (Islamic	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Cook Islands	Republic of)	Papua New	Thailand
Democratic	Japan	Guinea	Timor-Leste
People's Republic	Kazakhstan	Philippines	Tonga
of Korea	Malaysia	Republic of Korea	Viet Nam

Group V (45)

Algeria	Gabon	Mauritania	South Africa
Angola	Gambia	Mauritius	Sudan
Benin	Ghana	Morocco	Syrian Arab
Cameroon	Guinea	Mozambique	Republic
Cape Verde	Guinea Bissau	Namibia	Togo
Comoros	Iraq	Nigeria	Tunisia
Congo	Jordan	Oman	United Arab
Côte d'Ivoire	Kenya	Qatar	Emirates
Djibouti	Kuwait	Saudi Arabia	United Republic of
Egypt	Lebanon	Senegal	Tanzania
Eritrea	Libyan Arab	Seychelles	Yemen
Ethiopia	Jamahiriya	Sierra Leone	
	Madagascar	Somalia	