

IOC report

Submitted by Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: The document contains updates of IOC activities relevant to GEBCO (2015-2016).

Action to be taken: paragraph 24

Related documents: none

Overview

1. As for the status of IOC membership, the total number of IOC Member States is 148. The most recent Member State is Nauru, which has joined the IOC since 11 February 2016. The number of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) membership in IOC has been brought to 35.
2. Since the 28th session of the IOC Assembly in June 2015, all IOC activities were conducted in full compliance with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy 2014–2021 (IOC/INF-1314) and with continuously increasing attention to their relevance to the emerging Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the SDG 14 on the Ocean. The Agenda 2030, adopted by the UN in September 2015, and the agreement to reduce emissions of carbon to limit the climate warming to 2°C above the preindustrial values, which was achieved by the Paris Climate Summit in December 2015, complemented the post-2015 UN Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda, agreed in Sendai in March 2015, and the SAMOA pathway in support of SIDS, adopted in 2014. These four major frameworks have a strong bearing on the Ocean and reinforce the mandate of IOC to develop ocean science, observations and services.
3. Like the rest of UNESCO, IOC has worked under the significantly reduced spending plan for the approved regular UNESCO 37 C/5 Programme and Budget (2014–2015) and with reduced staff. It has seen not only the reduction in its regular budget but also a loss of USA's extensive voluntary contributions, which used to provide a solid funding base for some of the IOC's global programmes. The \$518 M (Zero Real Growth+) Expenditure Plan of UNESCO for 2016–2017 foresees the IOC regular budget allocation of \$10.2 M, which is a nominal increase by \$1.5 M over the previously anticipated value. Nevertheless, the current budgetary allocation still represents only 80% of the fully-funded scenario for 2014–2015 and 73% of the fully-funded scenario for 2016–2017. With the foreseen allocation of \$10.2 M, IOC was able to hire a full-time Head of the IOCARIBE Secretariat in Cartagena, Colombia, and reinforce the staffing of its Ocean Science Section in the high-priority areas of activity.
4. Few notable advances, outputs and outcomes of IOC work in the reporting period can be concisely summarized as follows:

- Completion by the Secretariat of all planned tasks for the period and achievement of all assigned targets at the level corresponding to the available budget;
- Active and sustained IOC work in the domains of ocean observations, data/information management and tsunami warnings including actual real time alerts and exercises;
- Continuation of the activities of the Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre;
- Major IOC contribution to the UNFCCC COP21 aimed at adequate inclusion of ocean issues in the scope of UNFCCC decision making;
- Development of the IOC Capacity Development website and start of implementation of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy adopted by the IOC Assembly in 2015;
- Development of the IOC Communication Strategy;
- Development by the IOC Officers and Secretariat, with support of Dr Gunnar Kullenberg, past Executive Secretary, of the Roadmap and vision of IOC in a decadal perspective;
- Successful work on raising extrabudgetary funds, especially the leadership in the UNDP and GEF-supported projects;
- Contribution to the completion of the first World Ocean Assessment;
- Contribution to the initial UN debates on the role of ocean science and observations in protection of biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction;
- Solid contribution of IOC into the work of UN-Oceans and to the expanding scope of activities related to the Ocean SDG14;
- Active regional activities in the IOC Subcommissions WESTPAC, IOCAFRICA and IOCARIBE and re-emerging potential for IOCINDIO;
- Successful continuation of planning and the start of the 2nd International Indian Ocean Expedition, including resources for Joint Project Office support through India and Australia;
- Stronger coordination between IOC global programmes and regional activities; and
- Progress of work on the Global Ocean Science Report.

World Oceans Day 2016

5. World Oceans Day, held every June 8th, is the United Nations-recognized day of ocean celebration and action. A series of World Oceans Day events were held in UNESCO headquarters in June 8, 2016.

6. IOC set up a dedicated website (<http://unesco.org/new/en/oceans-day>), and organized a half-day event programme. This year, under the theme of “Healthy Ocean, Healthy Planet”, IOC organized round tables, exhibitions and a UNESCO Campus for youth, as well as our traditional Roger Revelle Memorial Lecture dedicated this year to the issue of ocean acidification. The aim is to continue the momentum established by the global agreements on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

7. To mark World Oceans Day 2016, UNESCO published an article, “*Shin Tani: Understanding the oceans is much more than an academic exercise*” under Wide Angle section, thanks to contribution from GEBCO. The article is available online at UNESCO website (<https://en.unesco.org/news/shin-tani-understanding-oceans-much-more-academic-exercise>).

The 49th Session of IOC Executive Council (EC49)

8. The 49th session of the Executive Council was held from 7 to 10 June 2016 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Executive Council members and observers including IHO and GEBCO were invited to the session. The Executive Council considered 25 items on its agenda and approved 19 decisions and 2 resolutions.

9. The Executive Council adopted IOC/EC-XLIX, Dec.4.4 on *IOC Role in Support of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Project, State of Progress in the Associated Review*.

10. It was decided that the 29th session of the Assembly would be held for a duration of six working days at UNESCO Headquarters at dates to be decided with IOC Officers from 19 to 30 June 2017, preceded by a one-day session of the 50th Executive Council.

11. All the relevant documents, presentations, decisions and resolutions, a meeting summary and other related information are available at the Executive Council website (<http://www.ioc-unesco.org/EC-49>).

IOC Regional Committee for the Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO)

IOC Regional Committee for the Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) held the Fifth session in Chennai, India from 25 to 27 April 2016. The regional Committee had not met since 2005 and the Fifth session was the culmination of several informal consultative meetings among interested Member States.

12. The Committee adopted a number of priority tasks and activities: (i) drafting of a medium-term strategic plan based on the listing of high-priority starting projects for 2016-2017; (ii) convergence of IOCINDIO activities towards the new global frameworks; (iii) emerging initiatives under UNCLOS; (iv) the Blue Growth; (v) contribution to IIOE-2 and its capacity development component; (vi) development of a communication and awareness initiative; and (vii) organization of forums for science.

13. It elected Chair from India, and Vice-chairs from Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

14. The 6th session (IOCINDIO-VI) will be held in Kuwait in 2017.

The Second International Indian Ocean Expedition: IIOE-2

15. The Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2) Steering Committee is co-chaired by Dr Vladimir Ryabinin (IOC Executive Secretary), Dr Peter Burkill (SCOR: Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research) and Dr Satheesh Shenoi (IOGOOS: Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System).

16. The IOC IIOE-2 Interim Planning Committee completed its work in producing an IIOE-2 Implementation Strategy, released on 4 December 2015. On the same day, the formal launch of the IIOE-2 took place in Goa, India.

17. The two Nodes of the IIOE-2 Joint Project Office (JPO) have been established and are operational: Australia, based in Perth at the IOC Perth Programme Office, led by the IOC IIOE-2 Coordinator, Nick D'Adamo; and India, based in Hyderabad at ESSO-INCOIS, Ministry of Earth Sciences, led by Rajan Sivaramakrishnan. The JPO defines the nodal point network for IIOE-2 delivery and will have day-to-day responsibility for the co-ordination and implementation of IIOE-2. The JPO will facilitate all aspects of IIOE-2, particularly the science and associated infrastructure, as well as capacity building, operational coordination, outreach/communication, data/information management, sponsorship facilitation and knowledge transfer for societal benefit.

18. The IIOE-2 website (<http://www.iioe-2.incois.gov.in/>), hosted by the India JPO Node, was launched on 4 December 2015 covering all aspects of IIOE-2.

IOC Contribution to Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

19. In its resolution 69/292 of 19 June 2015, UN General Assembly decided to develop an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

20. The 49th session of the Executive Council adopted Decision EC-XLIX/4.3.3 to establish an intersessional working group to examine the possible contribution of the IOC particularly in areas related to marine scientific research, capacity development and transfer of marine technology, as well as data and information management, with a view to informing the participation of the IOC representative in the BBNJ process.

21. The Working Group is open to all IOC Member States. It is to conduct the majority of its business by electronic means and to prepare a report for the 29th Session of the IOC Assembly in 2017.

Capacity Development

22. An IOC website on Capacity Development has been launched in April 2016 at <http://www.ioc-cd.org>. The website provides full information on the strategy and its expected outputs but will also offer a wealth of links to capacity development opportunities. IOC Member States are invited to send the Secretariat any information on CD-related opportunities and activities and to promote subscription to the site's new mailing list system.

23. An "IOC Capacity Development Fund" has been launched as a resource mobilization mechanism. It will enable Member States to financially support very specific activities with a strong capacity development focus such as training courses, equipment provision, expert missions or any other activity responding to the Strategy outputs. In order to provide the highest possible flexibility, the maximum budget of each proposal is set to \$100,000. Proposals are invited from the regional sub-commissions and committee and global programmes. The list of proposals is open to additions any time and Member States are invited to check the list regularly. The list is available through the new Capacity Development website.

Actions Required of GEBCO Guiding Committee

24. GEBCO Guiding Committee is invited to:
- a. Note the contents of the report, particularly the recent developments of IOC.
 - b. Consider potential mutual interest for cooperation with IOC's relevant activities.