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| Summary  This report highlights the main outputs of the meeting of the Regional Subsidiary Bodies (RSBs), which was held on Monday 19 June 2017. The IOC Vice-Chair from Group IV, Dr Somkiat Khokiattiwong chaired the meeting. Fifteen Member States attended the meeting. The Executive Secretary, the Technical Secretaries of the three IOC Regional Sub commissions, Heads of Sections with IOC professional staff including consultants and interns attended the meeting. The IOC Regional Liaison Officer from the IOC Secretariat served as the Technical Secretary of the meeting.  The meeting reviewed the main achievements and challenges facing these Bodies and the IOC as a whole including: their strong contribution to the IOC’s global mission as regional foci despite the shortage of resources and staffing. Field offices have a role to play in mobilizing and facilitating Member States from the regions with fund raising. But Member State engagement and support is crucial for overcoming the challenges and bringing the regional subsidiary bodies to their full potential. Finally, the meeting developed a number of propositions aimed at helping to address the common challenges identified and agreed upon with the recognition of the pivotal role of the IOC’s network of regional subsidiaries bodies.  This report is submitted for information. |

1. The intersessional meeting of the IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies (RSBs) was held on Monday 19th June 2017 from 15:00 to 18:00 in room VI at the IOC Headquarters, preceding the 29th Session of the IOC Assembly. The IOC Vice-Chair from Group IV, Dr Somkiat Khokiattiwong chaired the meeting. The following Member States attended the meeting: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, Mexico, Oman, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Tanzania, the United States of America and Viet Nam. The Executive Secretary, the Technical Secretaries of the three IOC Regional Sub commissions, Heads of Sections with IOC professional staff including consultants and interns attended the meeting. From the IOC Secretariat, the IOC Regional Liaison Officer, Mr Justin Ahanhanzo, was the Technical Secretary of the meeting.
2. Dr Somkiat Khokiattiwong, Chair of the meeting introduced the agenda, which was adopted with no changes. The Chair invited the Executive Secretary of the IOC to provide an overview on the strategy and implementation of the global programmes in connection with the RSBs, including allocations of resources for implementation of these global programmes in the regions. The Chair underlined that this overview information by the Executive Secretary will help Member States Representatives to have a better understanding on the process of design and implementation of programmes by the Secretariat.
3. The Executive Secretary welcomed Member States and participants with thanks for their attendance to the RSBs meeting. He recalled that IOC has a number of RSBs including IOCARIBE, IOCAFRICA, WESTPAC, IOCINDIO and Black Sea. However, there are also other regional ocean related groupings outside IOC with focus on specific ocean areas such as the North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean. He stressed that the IOC is evolving very fast, the management is changing, the IOC governance is considered by the UNESCO Working Group 2 on Governance as a model, but IOC is suffering from the financial shortage within UNESCO and there is a need to find innovative mechanisms for fund raising. There is also a shortage of human resources both for global and regional programmes.
4. The new development in all aspects of IOC work includes the following:
5. The *Global Ocean Science Report* was launched in New York at the UN Ocean Conference on SDG#14 at which the IOC played an important role with a high visibility;
6. a Roadmap together with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy, 2014-2021 are the drivers for the Future of IOC;
7. the need for operationalisation and implementation of the Capacity Building Strategy;
8. the proposal for the international UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;
9. the co-design approach for a joint programming and implementation between Headquarters and regions based on the core functions of IOC. Regarding the budget, he informed the meeting that the Financial Committee will hold several meetings during the Session and will submit a budget proposal for the next biennium for consideration by the Assembly.
10. The Chairperson of the meeting further invited the IOC Chair, Prof. Peter Haugan to provide his perspective on the work of the IOC in relation with the RSBs. The IOC Chair thanked the Secretariat for organising this important RSBs meeting. He also thanked the Vice Chair Somkiat for his leadership as the Chair of the meeting and thanked Member States Representatives, regional officers and participants for their attendance. He informed the meeting that from his interactions with UNESCO officials and at the UN Conference on SDG#14, IOC is seen as the avenue for capacity building and as the world leader for promoting ocean science. He stated that there is a need for a framework for the global Agenda. The mobilisation of NGOs, Civil society and partners is required for more support to the work of the Commission. He concluded that he is happy to listen in order to learn more from the RSBs.
11. Constructive discussions followed the interventions of the Executive Secretary and the IOC Chairperson. Officers of RSBs and Member States Representatives reminded the meeting that the RSBs are the key for success in implementing global programmes in line with national and regional priorities. An increased number of the IOC staff and the impacts of the IOC programmes in the regions are the key factors that will improve the visibility of IOC both at global and regional levels and subsequently would help to attract support from Member States and partners. Regarding the question to mobilise the private sector for funding IOC programmes, the Executive Secretary insisted that the Commission should be cautious in order to maintain its integrity and independence *vis à vis* donors while encouraging this cooperation.
12. The Chairperson of the meeting further invited Member States to discuss *agenda item 2 on intra, inter-regional and global cooperation in the implementation of the IOC Agenda*. He more specifically requested them to focus on how to move together as regions from global to regional and national development and implementation of the IOC programmes, in other words, what mechanisms are required for more coherence, integration and interactions between the Headquarters and regions? He further invited first, the Officers of the RSBs to express the views and perspectives from the regions.
13. The Chairperson and Officers of WESTPAC highlighted the following:
14. an active participation amongst Member States is needed for an increased IOC visibility in the regions;
15. lack of funding is a critical challenge for the RSBs;
16. the overload of work, activities and requests on the RSBs and their limited staff with very limited resources requires the IOC Secretariat to put in place efficient mechanisms for fund raising together with the best effective use of the limited funds available;
17. the implementation of ocean and climate-related SDG requires the development of ocean science in all regions in order to promote a science-based governance of ocean.
18. The Vice-President of Group V, representing IOCAFRICA informed the meeting that there has been a good progress since the recent establishment of the Sub-Commission; a collaboration was established between IOCAFRICA and WESTPAC leading to a mutual participation in respective meetings. He stressed that IOCAFRICA is happy to note the progress in the reactivation of the IOCINDIO because it helps for the development and implementation of IIOE-2. A number of IOCAFRICA Member States are contributing to the IIOE-2 with ship-time and training programmes on the continent. The IOC capacity building approach should not be restricted to isolated actions only with a series of short-time workshops disconnected from research programmes in the regions. IIOE-2 could serve as a vehicle to reinforce a cooperation amongst RSBs.
19. The IOCARIBE Chairperson insisted that institutional capacity building is the prerequisite for capacity building that should mobilise senior and midcareer scientists together with students in the regions. The reinforcement of the intergovernmental body such as IOCARIBE requires the cooperation with civil society.
20. The Chairperson of IOCINDIO, Dr Atmanand, recalled that this Committee has been dormant for about ten years. However, since the appointment of the IOC Regional Liaison Officer as the Acting Coordinator and Technical Secretary for the reactivation of the Committee, the IOCINDIO-VI Session was recently organised in Kuwait City from 24 to 25 May 2017 with the support of Kuwait following the successful organisation of IOCINDIO-V with the support of India in Chennai, from 25 to 27 April 2016. The good news is that the IOCINDIO-VI developed a number of attractive problems-solving project proposals as concrete means for reinforcing the cooperation among IOCINDIO Member States based on available resources. He considered that with progress in the implementation of the project proposals, more IOCINDIO Member States would join. He invited IOC Secretariat to provide more support to all RSBs with a specific attention to the full reactivation of IOCINDIO. Regular communications between the IOC Headquarters Secretariat and the RSBs are key for the success of IOC programmes and visibility in the regions. He invited the IOCINDIO Member States to attend the intrasessional consultation meetings during the Assembly. He thanked the Executive Secretary and the Coordinator of the IOCINDIO for their specific support.
21. Following the interventions of the RSBs Officers, individual Member States including Bangladesh, Japan, Kuwait, Philippines, USA and Viet Nam expressed their support to the RSBs in general and to their specific regions in particular, inviting the Secretariat to develop innovative mechanisms for fund raising for the regions. It was noted that IOC has already implemented many considerable advances in applying the capacity development approach identified in the *IOC Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology*. While recognizing the IOC efforts to harmonize programmes, there are still needs and opportunities for enhanced alignment among IOC global programmes and between these programmes and the regional programmes to enhance programme delivery to Member States. IOC Member States Representatives should make every efforts to raise the profile of the IOC in their interagency policy dialogue and with national senior leadership in order to derive greater benefit from and participation to IOC programmes.
22. A specific focus was put on the following:
23. crosscutting issues related to SDG#14;
24. the IOC Secretariat should develop platforms to share best practices amongst regions on ocean sciences and technology and governance, using the limited available resources;
25. a need for an enhanced support from the global programmes to the regions and for more communications between the IOC Secretariat and the regional Officers;
26. the need for the IOC to develop global and regional communications strategy for resources mobilization and fund raising based on the experience of the Education Sector of UNESCO which partnered with the [sic] “Bureau of communication in Geneva” leading to a successful fund raising for education programmes;
27. despite the successful results of a number of IOC global programmes and RSBs with good approaches, for instance, the IOCINDIO science-based approach to ocean governance, there is still a challenge for all Member States to raise the visibility of IOC at national and regional levels;
28. the understanding of the future of IOC is still unclear at the level of Member States after ten years of discussion; subsequently, the Secretary is required to provide a concise documentation;
29. there is a need to identify mechanisms and means for the IOC to jump to the next level;
30. the success of IOC requires the full mobilisation of Member States which are the entire arc for the capacity development and implementation of sustainable development;
31. the IOC Secretariat should foster user’s needs as the prerequisite for ocean science requirements;
32. governments are required to recognize the needs for developing ocean science for the implementation of the ocean and climate-related SDGs with the subsequent national, regional and global funding;
33. the Secretariat is required to take appropriate steps to fill the gap with the lack of understanding of what IOC does and its impacts at national and regional levels;
34. it is useful to know how Member States and partners see IOC in the face of the other UN Bodies?
35. do the Member States appreciate the role of IOC and how do the other Bodies see and appreciate the role of the IOC?
36. does the IOC know what the other bodies do? For instance, some other UN and non-UN Bodies are already engaged in the management of the Blue economy, subsequently, how the IOC deals with this observation and what are the concrete results, both in terms of programmes and at the level of the region?
37. To gain the support of the vast majority of Member States and not only the support of the few traditional donor countries, the Secretariat should engage the Assembly and Member States in a transparent dialogue which will help to respond to the above crucial questions.
38. Regarding item 3 on Fund raising and extra budgetary projects, the RSBs reported as follows:
39. IOCAFRICA informed the meeting that there is a cooperation with the FAO Nansen Programme. In the past, The Flanders, Spain, and the Republic of Korea provided extrabudgetary funding to IOCAFRICA.
40. The practices in WESTPAC is to use the available small seed funding to develop project proposals based on Member States priories with a network of partners that support the funding for implementation. WESTPAC has too many activities with very limited IOC Regular Budget resources and subsequently, requested the IOC Secretariat to use more effectively global programmes funds to support regional programmes.
41. The IOCINDIO Chairperson informed the meeting that the funding for reactivation of IOCINDIO came from in kind-contribution from IOCINDIO Member States who fully funded the organisation of IOCINDO-V and IOCINDIO-VI Sessions with the subsequent technical scoping workshop after a long period of inactivity. Kuwait provided about US$ 90,000 for hosting the IOCINDIO-VI in Kuwait on 24–25 May 2017 and India also fully supported the IOCINDIO-V Session in Chennai, on 25–27 April 2016 and contributed US$ 5,000 in cash to the IOC Trust Funds in 2017 to support IOCINDIO-VI. IOC Secretariat should work more with Member States in order to raise their interests for funding IOC programmes in the regions because the IOC seed funding to the regions is very limited.
42. The IOCARIBE informed the meeting that the Committee develops several Experts Groups in the region with the focus on topics of priority for Member States. The IOC should also recognize the importance of in-kind contribution of Member States for hosting meetings and supporting working groups activities. It was noted that a small seed funding can only attract a small extrabudgetary funding while a large seed funding attracts large extrabudgetary funds because the partners then recognize the commitment of the main institution in charge.
43. The Secretariat staff also provided inputs to the meeting with clarifications on the possibilities and mechanisms for voluntary contributions to the IOC, inviting Member States to support the work of the Secretariat. At the global level, the IOC has a normative and priority setting role; while for programme implementation, interregional approach is key for the operationalisation of the IOC normative function. The Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development should be seen as the important mechanism for the implementation of the SDG#14 Targets and would help to make IOC relevant to Member States achieving societal priorities. South/South and Interregional cooperation are required to achieve the IOC global programmes amongst the RSBs. Political will and support at national level are key. What can the Secretariat do to reinforce the IOC focal points? What are the mechanisms for the Secretariat to reflect regional and national priorities in the global programmes?
44. The Chairperson of the meeting presented a summary of discussions as follows:
45. the need for translating the ocean science applications to solve societal needs;
46. Member States support is important;
47. cooperation amongst RSBs on one hand and with organisations outside UNESCO at global and regional levels on the other hand is very important;
48. shortage of financial and human resources is a real impediment for the successful development and implementation of the IOC programmes in the regions;
49. The IOC Secretariat should find the mechanisms to sustain the effective reinforcement of the RSBs, using the limited available resources,
50. Establishing two-way communications systems, tackling crosscutting issues, reinforcing cooperation of IOC with other partners, fostering IOC ocean science benefits for society are key success factors,
51. the regions are all different and there should not be a blueprint imposed from Headquarters on the regions: the same programme can be differently translated into different regions with different approaches for implementation. The development and implementation of programmes should be based on grassroots approach with bottom-up approach starting with countries involvement in the very early stage of conception of programmes and activities,
52. Best practices from other UN Organisations and Programmes whereby significant human and financial resources are decentralised to the regions could serve as an inspiration to reinforce the IOC RSBs: when there are well extrabudgetary funded projects, the IOC Secretariat should avoid to keep all the project staff at Headquarters. It was finally noted that in the past, IOC programmes were strong in the regions and served as good justification for Member States to establish RSBs with the offer for hosting WESTPAC and IOCARIBE Secretariats in their respective regions.
53. One Member State raised the concern about the absence of interpretation in French during the RSB meeting and requested that the Secretariat consider providing interpretation in the working languages of IOC.
54. The Working Group requested the Chair of the meeting to present the oral report at the Financial Committee. To this end, he should speak to the vice-chair, Chair of the Financial Committee for the required arrangements.

**Recommendations**

Taking into consideration the persistent financial constraints at UNESCO, the RSBs Meeting recommended the following to the Assembly:

1. **Invite** Member States to provide Voluntary and in-kind contributions to the IOC.
2. **Further invite** Member States to contribute to empower the staffing of IOC with secondment and sponsorship to the activities in regions.
3. **Request** Member States to improve marine science component in their national budget with the view to further developing marine science knowledge towards reinforcing institutional capacity building in their own countries.
4. **Request** the Secretariat to reinforce the integration of Headquarters, RSBs and field offices secretariats to facilitate result delivery and monitoring of regional programmes.
5. **Request** also the Secretariat to promote the co-design mechanisms with the view to facilitating integration, coordination and coherence of regional and global programmes with enhanced two-way communications between Headquarters, the RSBs and field projects offices.
6. **Further request** the Secretariat to develop a concrete plan for human resources management and development with the view for IOC to gaining support from Member States and partners for the further reinforcement of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy and objectives.