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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
(of UNESCO)**

**Thirtieth Session of the Assembly**

UNESCO, Paris, 26 June-4 July 2019

**DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT**

**Part 1**

(Agenda items 1, 2.1-2.3, 2.4 (*1<sup>st</sup> part*), 3.1, 3.2, & 12.1-12.3)

Decisions will be published separately in document IOC-XXX/Decisions  
at the end of the session



## 1. OPENING

1           The Chair, Professor Peter M. Haugan, opened the 30th session of the IOC Assembly at 10:00 on Wednesday 26 June 2019 in Room I at UNESCO Headquarters. He expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to welcome IOC delegations and representatives of partner organizations in the main conference hall in UNESCO for the first time in the history of Assembly plenary sessions. He announced that one new IOC Member State joined the IOC since the last Executive Council in 2019: Equatorial Guinea as from 5 April 2019, taking the IOC membership to 150. He welcomed the new officers recently elected in the following subsidiary bodies of the Commission: ICG/IOTMWS, ICG/PTWS, IOCAFRICA, IOCARIBE, IODE, IPHAB, and WESTPAC. He concluded with his personal reflections on his time as Chairman of the Commission, this Assembly being his last in this capacity, and thanked Member States for the opportunity to serve the Commission.

2           The Deputy Director-General of UNESCO Mr Qu Xing addressed the Assembly on behalf of the Director-General Ms Audrey Azoulay. He highlighted the pivotal role of the IOC in bringing together the scientific communities, the governmental decision-making system, and a broader set of stakeholders within our Member States, including the private sector and the civil society as a whole, to create an efficient science-based integrated ocean management. IOC's strong contribution to the sustainable development agenda and the planning of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) have shown that the IOC can play a key role in ocean-related approaches to global challenges of our time. He stressed that the Decade will offer an exceptional opportunity to highlight the societal benefits of all IOC programmes through a transformative approach to generating actionable scientific knowledge at the service of decision-makers. Full text of the address is available in Annex \_\_\_\_.

3           The Chair asked participants to stand for a minute of silence to honour distinguished individuals who had participated in the work of the Commission and have passed away in the past years: Dr Fauzi (Indonesia, –2018), J. Frederick M. Grassle (USA, 1939–2018), Angus McEwan (Australia, 1937–2018), Walter Munk (USA, 1917–2019) and Joanna Toole (U.K., 1983–2019).

4           The Chair invited participants to visit the exhibition in the Foyer. On behalf of the Assembly, he thanked several partners and sponsors for supporting the session in

various ways including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), the Korea Institute of Marine Science & Technology promotion (KIMST), the USA, the UK, the Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences, Ocean Technology Institute, SCOR, and the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO of Norway [the list will be updated through the session]. The traditional IOC reception was organized by the IOC Secretariat.

## **2. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

### **2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

5           The Chair reminded the Assembly that the Executive Council, acting as the Steering Committee for this Assembly session, examined the revised provisional agenda for the session and noted there was no request for supplementary items.

### **2.2 DESIGNATION OF THE RAPPORTEUR**

6           The representatives of 6 Member States took the floor.

### **2.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF INTRASESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

7           Referring to the recommendations made by the Executive Council (EC-LII, Dec. 3.1) on this item, acting as the steering committee for the present session, the Chair reminded the Assembly of the mandate of the three statutory sessional committees, the open-ended composition thereof, and the working arrangements made for their meetings.

### **2.4 INTRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTATION TIMETABLE AND MEMORIAL LECTURES** *[1<sup>st</sup> part]*

8           The Executive Secretary introduced this item. He explained that it was a deliberate choice to welcome the Assembly in room I of UNESCO for the first two days of its plenary session. The Assembly would then continue its work in room II until the end of the session. He then briefly reviewed the list of working documents and reminded the Assembly that the report would be focused on decisions. Referring to IOC-XXX/Inf.1, the Executive Secretary reminded the Assembly that draft decisions would be agreed upon during the discussion of each agenda item and draft resolutions would be adopted at the end of the session under item 13. The complete set of adopted decisions and resolutions in all four languages would be made available at the end of

the session, in line with the established UNESCO practices. The translation and the adoption of the narrative part of the report will be done after the session. He then referred to his presentation to the Executive Council under item 3.3 to explain the reasons that led the Secretariat to propose this approach. Dr Ryabinin reminded the Assembly that two Draft Resolution(s) were received by the deadline of 21 June. Member States that wished to have specific, particularly important, plenary interventions recorded, were invited to provide written records thereof in one of the four working languages of the Commission, to be annexed to the report, in their original language as an informational annex to this report. A template and a dedicated e-mail address (iocgovbody@unesco.org) was set up to this end (IOC-XXX/Inf.1 Add.).

9           With reference to the timetable for the session, the Executive Secretary informed the Assembly about the interpretation arrangements during the session. Meetings of the Financial Committee benefitted from English/French interpretation.

10           The Executive Secretary informed the Assembly that the second day of the session (Thursday 27 June) was dedicated to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and therefore open to a wider audience, in particular during the Ocean Science Day event in the morning. That event consisted of round table discussions around the three first strategic objectives of the Decade: Filling Gaps in Current Knowledge; Knowledge on Multiple Ocean Stressors for Ecosystem-based Management; and Ocean Science for Saving Lives.

### **3.     IOC MATTERS AND REPORTS**

#### **3.1   STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

11           In accordance with rule of procedure 8.1(a), Chair Peter M. Haugan delivered an oral statement on recent developments in the work of the Commission and perspectives for the coming years (Annex \_\_\_\_).

12           The decision of the 2017 United Nations General Assembly to proclaim the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) was truly historic. It rewarded the leading efforts by the IOC of UNESCO to bridge ocean science and policy – to go from research to action. IOC is now bringing all stakeholders together to design an ambitious and transformative Implementation Plan for the Decade, which has the potential to grow into one of the largest targeted scientific campaigns in Earth sciences ever. The importance of a healthy ocean for eradicating

poverty; ensuring food security; generating employment, from the artisanal to the industrial level; and protecting coastal communities from natural disasters, among many others, has now been highlighted and understood by key players. To maintain this momentum and make the Decade truly transformative, we need to build relationships of trust and mutual benefit between governments, businesses, academic institutions, civil society and international organizations across different fields and regions.

13           In this context, the Chair highlighted his attendance on behalf of the IOC in a number of high level meetings, engaging with senior stakeholders on the importance of the IOC programmes to the global ocean agenda.

14           The Assembly thanked the Chair for his remarks and leadership that was critical to the recent achievements, placing the ocean at the heart of the sustainable development agenda and opening avenues for the Commission for further collaboration thereby fulfilling its mission in the best possible way. The Assembly in particular commended the Chair for his success in increasing the recognition and visibility of the IOC and the stronger positioning of the IOC in the UN system. The Assembly recognized the importance of these efforts for the development of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

15           The representatives of 14 Member States took the floor.

### 3.2   REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE LAST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND ON BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION (JULY 2018-MAY 2019)

16           The Executive Secretary introduced this item using a PowerPoint presentation. He reminded the Assembly that the end of the year 2017 was very special for the Commission with the endorsement by the UN General Assembly at its 72nd session of the IOC's proposal to proclaim the years 2021–2030 the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Decade). The IOC has now less than two years to work with Members States, the UN, all partners and stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for the Decade. This is a once-in-a-life-time opportunity for all to achieve a breakthrough in the capacity of oceanography to serve people and the planet. Steadily, a very promising image of the Decade emerges including a number of proactively designed revolutionary developments in ocean observations, sciences and services, matched by their large-scale uptake in all

activities related to increased but sustainable use of the ocean space and resources.

17 Significant progress was made in the development of the methodology to support Member States' implementation of and reporting on SDG Indicator 14.3.1 and Target 14.a, for which the IOC has been assigned the custodianship role. Based on the work of the IOC-coordinated Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) and the IOC's first Global Ocean Science Report, both indicator and target have been upgraded to Tier 2 status. After more than four years of international collaboration, coordinated by the IOC, the South China Sea region now has its own dedicated Tsunami Advisory Centre. The Palu tsunami in September, as well as the Sunda Strait tsunami in December 2018, caused significant loss of lives and property damage. Post-tsunami field investigations by the International Tsunami Survey Team, assisted by the IOC at the request of Indonesia, were conducted.

18 Through three flagship events at the Sustainable Blue Economy conference organized by Kenya and Canada, 26–28 November 2018 in Nairobi, the IOC put forward its experience in supporting nations in the implementation of maritime spatial planning. As part of its awareness raising strategy with regard to gender equality, the side event 'Making waves: Women in Ocean Science' was organized with the support of Canada at the High-Level Scientific Conference 'From COP21 towards the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development'. The event focused on the role of women in ocean science, in improving global ocean knowledge and in supporting informed and inclusive decision-making.

19 Among other key achievements, the Executive Secretary highlighted the progress made in the preparation of the 2nd edition of the IOC's Global Ocean Science Report, including the joint efforts of the IOC and the OECD to advance on the valuation of the societal benefits from ocean science and services. He attracted the attention of Member States to the IOC-SCOR draft policy brief on multiple ocean stressors *Ocean under Stress: A changing ocean at all locations* and its potential significant contribution in informing Strategic Objective 2 of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which focuses on the science of multiple ocean stressors as a basis for ecosystem-based management. He also welcomed the IIOE-2 Steering Committee's resolution at its third annual meeting of 12–13 March 2019 to continue the IIOE-2 to at least 2025, which will allow a strong and tangible contribution, at both regional and global levels, to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–

2030.

20           Having stressed the main IOC achievements and successes as well as the issues during the reporting period, he then provided a detailed update on each of the six IOC functions, including the work of the regional and technical subsidiary bodies of the Commission, and relevant UNESCO Category 2 Centres.

21           The Executive Secretary also updated the Assembly on status of negotiations with Australia of the formal seat agreement for the Perth Programme Office and the ICG/IOTWMS Secretariat, hosted by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

22           With regard to the Commission's financial situation, he confirmed that the Secretariat has been implementing the workplans in accordance with the budgetary allocations and resource mobilization targets approved by the IOC Executive Council's Resolution EC-LI.2 as presented in document IOC/EC-LI/2 Annex 2 and Addendum.

23           Overall, the Executive Secretary identified as the main challenge for the Commission's small Secretariat the dual task to raise not only extrabudgetary resources necessary to maintain its core operational programmes, but also significant additional resources to lead and coordinate the Decade preparation phase. A new approach to fund-raising and outreach, based on highlighting the societal benefits of the IOC's work and demonstrating the return on investment in ocean science and observation is being developed. In this context, the Executive Secretary highlighted the key role of outreach and communication, both to the Commission's core constituencies but also to the society at large, and the increased need to invest in this area in the context of a truly inclusive and transformative approach to the Decade.

24           The representatives of 28 Member States and 1 observer organisation took the floor.

25           The Assembly was unanimous in thanking the Executive Secretary and his team for a very complete and comprehensive report, which clearly summarizes the extensive work. Sound science organized by Member States and coordinated by the Secretariat led to increased credibility and visibility in major international frameworks and fora of which the IOC, as a community, can be proud. The attribution to the IOC of the coordinating role for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 is a clear vote of confidence in the IOC's ability to deliver. All speakers highlighted the key leadership role of the Chair and the Officers of the Commission in



this success.

26 In the opinion of most speakers, the IOC has a critical role to play in the development of SDG 14 indicators, and its efforts in advancing the two indicators for which it is a custodian are quite remarkable, despite limited financial resources. In the context of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), the Commission's contribution on capacity development and transfer of marine technology was noted as particularly important. The Assembly stressed the need for more operational services and exchange of data, with a particular focus on real-time data exchange.

27 The Assembly reiterated that the Decade is an unprecedented opportunity to realise critical societal goals and mobilize stakeholders and resources. New platforms and activities are emerging in many Member States and several speakers provided concrete examples of national and regional commitments and investments, while also stating their enthusiasm to step up in their engagement and support. The Assembly also reiterated that this will require full mobilization of national expertise, as well as strengthening of the IOC regional networks, with priority given to Africa and the most vulnerable communities. To achieve this, forward planning, in particular on issues of human resources, will be required. The Pan-African conference in Egypt would be one such opportunity to consolidate baseline scientific information and identify priorities moving forward, creating synergies with the objectives and approaches of the African Union. IOC's strength in bringing together stakeholders should be expanded to better involve young scientists and youth in general.

28 Several Member States welcomed the continuation of the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2) until 2025, decided by its Steering Committee, as an important contribution to the first half of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

29 The Assembly acknowledged the Second United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, co-organized by Portugal and Kenya, as an essential milestone in moving towards stronger ocean science serving sustainability.

30 Several Member States' interventions expressed concern regarding the low level of non-earmarked voluntary contributions and stressed that an increase of such support would be a testimony of confidence in our collective work and allow addressing the most critical gaps and needs.

31 In his closing remarks, the Executive Secretary thanked the Member States for their constructive comments and suggestions for improvement. He assured the Assembly that all of them were fully taken on board by the Secretariat. He further stressed the importance of further joint efforts, by the Secretariat and by the Member States, to make the next editions of the Global Ocean Science Report more comprehensive and representative so that it can deploy its full potential in helping develop our work in capacity development and transfer of marine technology in an informed way. He also highlighted the potential role of Maritime Spatial Planning in addressing many issues related to economic development of coastal nations.

32 The following Member States chose to provide records of their plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: Russian Federation, \_\_\_\_\_.

## **12. ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **12.1 FOLLOW-UP TO RESOLUTION EC-LI.2: FINANCE AND REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE, WORKING METHODS AND PROCEDURES – REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE INTERSESSIONAL FINANCIAL ADVISORY GROUP**

33 Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi, Chair of the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (IFAG), introduced this item. He updated the Assembly on the work of the group in follow-up to Resolution EC-LI.2, which endorsed the Implementation Plan of the Recommendations of the UNESCO Open-ended Working Group on Governance. He highlighted that the intersessional work focused on the review of the proposed new referencing approach for the IOC Governing Bodies documentation, in order to make it more user-friendly, as well as on the review of the Draft Guidelines for the IOC Officers, prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the Executive Council's recommendations. Prior to being shared with the IFAG, both documents benefitted from a discussion at the annual meeting of the IOC Officers, 15–17 January 2019. He also informed the Assembly of the correspondence on this issue between the IOC Chair and the UNESCO General Conference President, as well as of the IOC Chair's participation in the Meeting of the UNESCO Working Group on Governance on 27 March 2019, which gave the opportunity to all International/Intergovernmental Bodies, including IOC, to exchange views and information on their approaches to the implementation of the recommendations.

34 Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi reminded the Assembly that the Executive Council at

its 51st session in July 2018 also reviewed the Revised Financial Regulations for the IOC Special Account aimed at addressing 38 C/Resolution 86 and at aligning, to the extent possible, the existing financial regulations with the new standard Financial Regulations as approved by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 200th session. The Council was satisfied that 'the Revised Financial Regulations fully reflect the specificity of the IOC's governance and its status as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO'. The Executive Council then recommended that 'the IOC Assembly formally adopt the Revised Financial Regulations for the IOC Special Account as presented in Annex 2 to resolution EC-LI.2 at its 30th session.

35           The decision was adopted without changes.

## 12.2 DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2020–2021 (DRAFT 40 C/5)

36           The Executive Secretary introduced this item. He clarified that the UNESCO Draft Programme and Budget for 2020–2021 is the second part of the quadrennial Programme adopted by the General Conference at its 39th session (39 C/5). It will close the cycle of the Organization's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014–2021 (37 C/4). The working document in front of the Assembly contains the Secretariat's proposal for the Draft 40 C/5, with programmatic targets and budget scenarios for the second biennium (2020–2021) of the quadrennial programme (2018–2021), as approved by the IOC Assembly at its 29th session in 2017.

37           In keeping with the decision of the Executive Board at its 205th session, draft document 40 C/5 has been drawn up within an integrated budget framework; it presents four UNESCO and three IOC budget scenarios, as requested by the Member States, based on the appropriated regular programme budget of:

- \$507 million (\$10,276,200 for the IOC),
- \$518 million and \$523.6 million (\$10,776,100 for the IOC) ,
- \$534.6 million (\$11,075,500 for the IOC).

38           The Executive Secretary then went on to briefly explain the impact of various budgetary scenarios on the work of the Commission.

39           Building on work launched in the current 2018–2019 biennium (39 C/5 approved), the IOC has now less than two years to work with Member States, the UN, partners and stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for the Decade.

40 For the IOC Secretariat, which is quite small, the challenge is now to raise not only extrabudgetary resources necessary to maintain its core operational programmes but also significant additional resources to lead and coordinate the Decade preparation phase. Critical understaffing, already highlighted by the UNESCO External Auditor in 2016, undermines these fundraising efforts and threatens the sustainability of the Secretariat.

41 None of the proposed budgetary scenarios adequately address the situation. The critical need to provide at least basic support to all programmatic sections by creating one additional general service staff position, implies an 11% cut to IOC programmatic activities in the 40 C/5 \$518 million (and \$523.6 million) budget scenario. While every effort will be made to offset the impact of this cut through extrabudgetary resource mobilization, one must be conscious that increased reliance on extrabudgetary support brings with it a number of constraints. Even with full alignment of extrabudgetary projects' objectives with the IOC programmatic goals, the project-oriented approach often leads to shifts in focus and does not facilitate harmonious and continuous implementation based on the collectively agreed upon priorities. This is of particular concern for the IOC operational programmes in ocean observations and services and for data and information management, which require stable investment in core system design and maintenance. The reduced resources will also harm the capacity to work regionally, in particular as regards the operationalization of the IOC Capacity Development strategy. Lack of sufficient staff at the regional level but also at the central coordination level threatens to transform the IOC's capacity development activities into donor-prioritized and less coordinated efforts.

42 The \$534.6 million scenario allows for some seed funding for the Decade coordination and fund-raising activities, while maintaining the rest of the programme at the same level as in 2018-2019. Without the minimal breathing space allowed by the \$534.6 million scenario only, the Secretariat may not be in a position to deliver a Decade plan, which fully reflects the needs of all nations, mainly because it would not be possible to hold thorough consultations in all regions. The \$534.6 million scenario would also allow for the operationalization of a global clearing house mechanism to facilitate the transfer of marine technology, in response to regional needs of developing nations, including LDCs and SIDS. This would be central to the implementation of the IOC capacity development strategy and would allow to respond to various international calls on the IOC to take the lead on this topic (e.g. UNGA, SDG 14, and UNCLOS in

the context of the future international legally binding agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, currently under negotiation).

43 As regards the \$507 million scenario, it was prepared based on the re-costed 39 C/5 staff establishment without any change, and with the 19% cut to programme activities distributed across the board. Given the impact of such a cut, should this scenario become a reality, the IOC would need to undertake a major re-prioritization exercise. This would likely require discontinuation or considerable downscaling of certain programs and cuts in their supporting staff. Core programmes of the IOC would then operate below the sustainability level and may even face closing down. The Assembly's general guidance is sought on the approach to be followed by the Secretariat in the face of such a scenario, including as to the validity of the budgeting criteria adopted in Resolution XXVII-2 (C), Annex 2.

44 The representatives of 1 Member State took the floor to request a minor clarification on the staff establishment proposals in various scenarios, to which the Executive Secretary provided a response.

45 The decision was adopted without changes.

#### 12.3 DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY 2022–2029: PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS BY THE SECRETARIAT

46 The Executive Secretary introduced this item. He highlighted that the first version of the document was tabled during the annual meeting of the IOC Officers, 15–17 January 2019, and the version in front of the Assembly benefitted from the Officers' initial review and inputs. The document was also shared with the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group so as to facilitate the work of the Assembly and its sessional Financial Committee.

47 The Executive Secretary explained that the document builds on the current Medium-Term Strategy 2014–2021, preserving the comprehensive framework of six functions for its implementation, while at the same time attempting to further clarify and sharpen the High-Level Objectives of the Commission. He informed the Assembly of the proposed, fifth, High-Level Objective, on sustainable ocean economy. Also, he stressed the importance of a constructive and inclusive discussion of these preliminary proposals, both in the plenary and in the Financial Committee, with a view of guiding

the future work of the Secretariat on this key document. He reminded the Assembly that the next draft will be circulated to IFAG in the intersessional period leading to the 43rd session of the Executive Council in 2020 and the final adoption of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2029 by the 31st session of the IOC Assembly in 2021.

48           The representatives of 13 Member States took the floor.

49           The Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Officers and the Secretariat for their work on the document. It gave its overall endorsement to the approach adopted in this first draft of the Commission's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029, while noting the importance of giving due attention to the use of consensually acceptable terminology.

50           The Assembly positively noted the alignment with many objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030, prominent place given to gender equality and to Africa and island States as priority beneficiary groups, as well as the intent to work closer to the field.

51           Member States highlighted the need to include social sciences in the IOC's programmatic vision, ensure full coverage of all regions, both through established IOC structures as well as other frameworks, support inter-regional cooperation and enhance communication activities to fully demonstrate the importance of the IOC's work.

52           The Assembly considered that in order to be successful, broad approaches described in the draft need to be backed by a solid action plan to support the thrust to improve delivery on the ground.

53           The Assembly was unanimous in highlighting the importance of continuing the inclusive consultative process, including at regional and at national levels, both through formal consultative mechanisms and by involving as many stakeholders and beneficiary communities as possible.

54           In his brief response to the debate, the Executive Secretary summarized the main points made by Member States and thanked the Assembly for this preliminary feedback. He stressed that defining the priorities of the Commission and the strategy to address them in the most proactive, participative and inclusive manner is the key objective of the Secretariat. He expressed his enthusiasm at the perspective of

continuing this fruitful exchange in the intersessional period and invited all Member States to facilitate national consultations and share their vision, concerns and proposals that will guide the further drafting work of the Secretariat.

55           The following Member States chose to provide records of their plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report:  
\_\_\_\_\_.