



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 Circular Letter No 2818**  
(Available in English, French and Spanish)

IOC/VR/KY/AT/pbo  
7 December 2020

- To** : Official National Coordinating Bodies for Liaison with the IOC in States Members of the IOC Executive Council
- cc.** : Other IOC Member States  
The Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Commission  
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States  
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States  
Officers of Major IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)

**Subject: The 53rd Session of the IOC Executive Council, 3–9 February 2021  
as an on-line meeting and an update on the proposed arrangements**

In my capacity as IOC Chairperson, I would like to inform you about the results of our consultation on the possibility of holding the 53rd session of the Council on-line, with the agenda reduced to the items requiring decision prior to the 31st session of the IOC Assembly.

I am pleased to note that Member States have expressed overall support to this proposal. The Executive Secretary's invitation to the session will follow shortly, along with all the technical guidelines aimed to maximize your effective and efficient participation.

I am fully aware of the reservations expressed by some of you regarding potential difficulties that may arise in terms of connection to the platform, organisation of the debate, credentials and, most importantly, about ensuring the conditions of an intergovernmental decision-making process under these exceptional circumstances. Conversely, I am happy that we all agree these concerns are largely outweighed by the need to provide timely guidance to the Secretariat with regard to the Commission's programming and budgeting issues and to its most important undertaking for the sake of the entire UN system – the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, starting in 2021.

As already mentioned above, these many challenges led us to limit our agenda to the most essential issues supported by fully and timely developed documentation and having benefitted from intersessional consultations and reviews. Since my last letter to you, the proposal to change the status and scope of IOCINDIO has been further reassessed by the IOCINDIO Chair and Officers,

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the IOC Vice-Chair for electoral group IV, the Executive Secretary and myself. We have reached a consensual view on the need to have broad Member States consultations on this issue in early 2021, taking advantage of the 2021 IOCINDIO session and with a view of presenting the IOC Assembly with a fully developed proposal for decision. In the meantime, the Executive Secretary will inform and consult the Executive Council on the latest developments on this matter under the item dedicated to his report on the work accomplished in the intersessional period, supported by an information document prepared by the IOCINDIO Chair.

The revised provisional agenda and timetable of the session, as well as the Action Paper, are available on the EC-53 website at <https://oceanexpert.org/event/2805>.

I trust we shall have a successful and productive session in early February 2021, and in the meantime I look forward to addressing you in a collegial and festive manner on the occasion of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Commission on 14 December 2020 from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. (Paris time). More information and the programme of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and Launch of the GOSR2020 will become gradually available on <https://oceanexpert.org/event/2855>.

I thank you very much for your understanding and continuing support.

Yours sincerely,



Ariel Hernan Troisi  
Chairperson