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INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Fifty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council
UNESCO, Paris, 20 June 2023

SUMMARY REPORT

1. OPENING

1. The Chair, Mr Ariel Hernan Troisi, opened the 56th session of the Executive Council at 10.00 hrs in Room X on Tuesday 20 June 2023. He welcomed the participants and briefly referred to the documentation prepared for this session. He reminded delegates that the Council was acting as the Steering Committee for the 32nd session of the Assembly, in accordance with Rule of Procedure No. 12(2), limited to the discussion of only organizational matters except notably the voting for the list of preferential candidates for the open position of IOC Executive Secretary in an *in camera* session.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Executive Secretary introduced this item.
3. The Executive Secretary reminded the Council that it would start discharging its duties as the Assembly's Steering Committee in the morning and that it would be then devoting the first part of the afternoon session, from 15.00 hrs (Agenda Item 5), to the consultation process to draw up a shortlist of candidates for the post of Executive Secretary in the same room, in an *in camera* session. Only one official representative of a Member State of the IOC Executive Council would be present and vote during the *in camera* session. The Executive Secretary informed the Council that, to date, he had received nominations of such representatives from all the 40 Member States that make up the Council.
4. The candidacy of the IOC Chair for the post of Executive Secretary made IOC Chair Ariel Troisi unable to continue chairing the session under the Agenda Item 5. In accordance with Rule of Procedure 14, Mr Srinivasa Kumar Tummala, Vice-Chairperson for Electoral Group IV accepted the task of chairing the consultation process and the discussion on item 5. After the vote, the Executive Council resumed its work in plenary session at 17:00 hrs and adopted its report. Decisions were adopted at the end of the discussion of each agenda item.

EC-56, Dec. 2.1

Agenda

The Executive Council,

1. Adopts the agenda as set out in document IOC/EC-56/2.1 Doc.Prov.

2.2 DESIGNATION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

5. The Chair invited the Executive Council to designate the Rapporteur for the present session.

EC-56, Dec. 2.2

Rapporteur

1. Upon a proposal from France, seconded by United Kingdom, Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco,
2. Designates Ms Devin Burri (United States of America) Rapporteur for its present session to assist the Chair and the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the summary report of the session.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 32nd SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY

3.1 DESIGNATION OF SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

6. With reference to the revised provisional agenda for the Assembly, the Chair reminded the Executive Council of the role of each committees (Nominations, Resolutions and Financial) and proposed that items 6.1 (Draft Programme and Budget), 6.2 (revision of IOC Rules of Procedure), and 6.3 (IOC Strategic Positioning) be furthered examined by the Financial Committee after their discussion in plenary and the decisions be reflected in the draft resolution prepared under item 6.4 (Report of the Financial Committee). The Financial Committee is open-ended and its meetings had English/French interpretation.
7. He also reminded the Council that it could submit proposals on the committee chairpersonship and composition, but that the ultimate decision remained entirely with the Assembly. He invited Member States to consider participating in the work of committees. He reiterated the importance of all electoral groups being represented on the committees, in particular on the Nominations Committee.
8. The Chair indicated that, during the Assembly, he would not read out the names of the Member States wishing to participate in the various committees by show of hands during the Assembly with the exception of the Nominations Committee. Only the names of the Member States present and participating in the committees and sessional working groups were to be listed in the final report of the Assembly.
9. Some Member States expressed their wish to participate in the various sessional committees:
 - Nominations Committee: Bulgaria, China, Japan, Thailand, USA
 - Resolutions Committee: China, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Russian Federation, USA
 - Financial Committee: Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, France, Germany, Grenada, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom, USA.

EC-56, Dec. 3.1**Sessional Committees**

The Executive Council,

1. Pursuant to Rule of Procedure No. 12(2) the Executive Council, acting as the Steering Committee of the Assembly, recommends to the Assembly the formation of each of the following committees:
 - Financial Committee: under the chairship of Dr Karim Hilmi (Morocco, Vice-chair). Ms Ksenia Yvinec provides the Secretariat support to the Financial Committee.
 - Resolutions Committee: under the chairship of Prof. Yutaka Michida (Japan). Mr Julian Barbière provides the Secretariat support to the Resolutions Committee.
 - Nominations Committee: under the chairship of Frederico Saraiva Nogueira (Brazil, Vice-chair). Mr Bernardo Aliaga and Mr Henrik Enevoldsen provide the Secretariat support to the Nominations Committee.

3.2 CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

10. The Executive Secretary informed the Executive Council that, under Rules of Procedure 8, 9 and 11.2, concerning the preparation of the agenda for the Assembly, no request for a supplementary item was received at the Secretariat by 21 April 2023 (two months before the date of the opening of the 32nd session.)

3.3 CONSIDERATION OF SESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS

11. The Chair informed the Council that the Officers had identified no item on the agenda of the Assembly that would need further examination through a working group. Ariel Troisi then invited Member States and the Executive Secretary to express views by briefly explaining the scope of the work of the working groups they would propose. There were no proposals from the floor.

3.4 TIMETABLE

12. The Executive Secretary briefly presented the revised provisional agenda and timetable for the Assembly and the main side events recorded on the Assembly webpage. The large number of side events combined with the fact that several other events were being held at UNESCO during the session made it particularly difficult to manage the rooms available to the Commission. Dr Ryabinin then referred to the Ocean Science Day to take place on 22 June in the same room II as the plenary session of the Assembly, but with a different setting. The OSD would be exceptionally live-streamed. The Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the sponsors of a number of events which would provide useful information for the session, as well as to the sponsors of the coffee breaks and receptions who would be acknowledged during the session and on the online calendar.
13. The IOC Executive Secretary then expanded on the draft resolutions received by 16 June and the volume of the documentation prepared for the Assembly session. He highlighted that all draft decisions and resolutions, with the exception of the draft resolution on Governance, programming and budgeting matters of the Commission to be prepared during the session, were available in the Action Paper together with a substantial presentation of each item. Decisions would be adopted at the end of the discussion of an item with the draft resolutions to be adopted under item 7. A document with the adopted decisions would be made available at the end of the session in all languages in line with the established UNESCO governing bodies practices. As customary, the narrative part of the report would be prepared by the Secretariat and published in English only during the session and made available in the languages soon after the session.

14. The Chair invited comments on the timetable and organizational matters of the session.

EC-56, Dec. 3.4

Timetable for the 32nd session of the Assembly and organizational matters

The Executive Council,

1. Taking into consideration the comments made by the Officers and the need to ensure sufficient time for the reporting of sessional working groups and committees in plenary and scheduled invitation of speakers,
2. Accepts the provisional timetable for the 32nd session of the Assembly as set out in document IOC/A-32/2.1Doc Add. Prov.Rev. and corresponding provisional Agenda.

4 DATES AND PLACE OF THE 57TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND PROPOSAL FOR DATES AND PLACE OF THE 33rd SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY

15. The Chair reminded the Executive Council of the duration of both the Executive Council and the Assembly during the current biennium and proposed, in agreement with the Officers, the same scheme in 2024 and 2025.
16. Then he invited delegates to share information on the main events/conferences to be taken into account when choosing the dates for the next sessions of the Council in 2024 and the Assembly in 2025, preferably both likely to be held in June.
17. The Executive Council identified a number of UNESCO international conferences and programme meetings scheduled for June 2024 and recommended that religious days be taken into account by the Secretariat's planning purposes in order to ensure the widest possible participation of IOC Member States. The Council noted the Preparatory meeting of the third UN Conference on the Ocean on 7–8 June 2024; the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme at Headquarters on 14–20 June 2024 and the UN Ocean Conference in Nice on 9–13 June 2025. Additional events may be brought to the attention of the Assembly during its session, notably WMO's meetings.
18. Some Member States recommended that the IOC Secretariat and Governing Bodies take into account the annual United Nations official holidays when considering the dates of their intergovernmental sessions with a view to avoiding internationally recognized holidays.
19. The Member States pointed out that it was becoming increasingly difficult to organise meetings at headquarters in June due to the growing number of meetings.
20. The Chair pointed out that a change of month of the IOC Governing Body sessions would affect the calendar of intergovernmental sessions of the IOC regional subsidiary bodies.
21. The Chair requested the Secretariat to enquire about the availability of rooms for holding the 57th session of the IOC Executive Council from 25 to 28 June 2024 and to report to the Assembly.

EC-56, Dec. 4

Dates and places of next sessions of the Executive Council and Assembly

The Executive Council,

1. Confident that the next sessions of the IOC governing bodies will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in 2024 and 2025,
2. Recommends to the Assembly to identify any potential calendar conflicts with important meetings or cultural or religious days in June 2024 for the 57th session of the Executive Council and a period of six working days preceded by a one-day session of the Executive Council over a period to be decided in June/July 2025 for the 33rd session of the Assembly.

5. CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SHORT LIST OF APPLICANTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF IOC TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

21. This item was introduced by Vice-Chair Srinivasa Tummala who referred to IOC Circular letter 2941 dated 18 March 2023, which conveyed information on the consultation process and the list of 11 applicants selected by HRM and the representative of the Director-General with the participation of some IOC Officers. Additional information on the applicants was transmitted to the Member States of the Council. Document IOC/INF-1316 rev. served as reference for an overview of the process and the arrangements for the consultative vote in an *in camera* session of the IOC Executive Council.
22. In accordance with article 8.2 of the IOC Statutes, the Executive Council is responsible for establishing a short list of six applicants for submission to the Director-General of UNESCO, through secret ballot at an *in camera* session.
23. Mr Tummala informed the Council that the Secretariat had received one request for additional information on candidates, which was provided to all the designated national representatives to the *in camera* session.
24. The Executive Secretary reminded the Council that this consultation process is following UNESCO recruitment approaches.
25. Mr Tummala further informed the Council of who would be present at the vote count: the Executive Secretary, two Officers as scrutineers, a representative of UNESCO's Human Resources Management Bureau and a legal adviser.
26. After the public introduction, the Council shifted to an *in camera* (private) session. Only one representative of each Member State of the Executive Council was allowed in the meeting room. Prior notice of the name of each representative was given to the Executive Secretary of IOC. No observers were allowed to follow the proceedings. After the vote, the session was suspended until after coffee break to allow for the ballot counting.

Then the Vice-Chair reconvened the Council in *in camera* session to provide a short list of the six highest scored applicants in alphabetical order to be submitted to the Director-General and concluded this item.

6. ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

27. The IOC Chair introduced this item.

EC-56, Dec. 6

Report

The Executive Council,

1. Having considered the draft summary report of the session (IOC/EC-56/SR prov.) which contains the decisions adopted during the discussion in plenary session,
2. Takes notes of the summary report of its 56th session as the Executive Council recommendations to the Assembly at its 32nd session.

7. CLOSURE

28. The Chair thanked the members of the Board for their participation with special thanks to Vice-chair Tummala for taking over the chairship during the consultation process to establish a short list of candidates for the post of Executive Secretary (item 5).
29. The Chair closed the 56th session of the Executive Council at 17.35 on 20 June 2023.