

IOC Circular Letter No 3009
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IOC/VH/WZ/ns
22 October 2024

To : Member States of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC)

C.c. : IOC National Coordinating Bodies for Liaison with the IOC
National Commissions for UNESCO, and
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO of IOC Member States
Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of IOC
Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of WESTPAC
Directors of UNESCO Offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Beijing

Subject: Invitation to the Fifteenth Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-XV), Tokyo, Japan, 11–13 March 2025

I have the pleasure of inviting you to participate in the Fifteenth Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-XV), to be generously hosted by the Government of Japan, through its Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) from 11 to 13 March 2025 in Tokyo, Japan.

As a statutory meeting, the session will bring together national competent governmental agencies for ocean, marine scientific communities and other relevant ocean stakeholders in the region, to foster ocean science-policy interface, advance ocean science development and cooperation, enhance technical and institutional capacities, promote transfer of ocean technology, and jointly develop ocean science solutions to sustainable development in the Western Pacific and its adjacent areas.

During the session, the Sub-Commission will review its developments and achievements during the intersessional period, be updated with the international ocean-related developments, including the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), and then deliberate on the Sub-Commission's engagement in and contribution to those relevant international instruments and frameworks. The Sub-Commission will be expected to elect its Officers, and to formulate its programme and budget for the period 2026–2027. Kindly note that given the limited regular budget allocated from IOC, the WESTPAC Programme and Budget normally

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serves as guidance on the programmes and activities that Member States would like to jointly promote and seek funding from various sources to support their implementation.

A Senior Governmental Officials Roundtable (SGOs Roundtable) will be organised during the session. The Roundtable will review progress and identify challenges for the development and implementation of the Ocean Decade in the region, as a follow-up to the high-level commitments at the UN Ocean Decade Regional Kick-off Conference for the Western Pacific (2021), and the outcome document of the 1st Senior Governmental Officials (SGO) Roundtable (4 April 2023, Jakarta). Moreover, the SGOs Roundtable will facilitate decision-makers from our Member States to exchange views and share practices how Member States recognized the importance of ocean scientific knowledge and leveraged it to inform policy and decision-making, and how the Sub-Commission could further mobilize actions in the region. In addition, the organization of a National Decade Committees Forum (NDCs Forum) is envisaged as a side event to the session in order to facilitate the sharing of NDC development and challenges by Member States.

A copy of the Provisional Agenda is attached for your information as Annex 1. Given the extensive agenda session scheduled over three days, I would like to kindly request delegations to focus their interventions on providing the vision, guidance, and recommendations for practical actions. Reporting on past activities will be done in writing in advance of the session. As you compose your delegation, please take fully into account the agenda, your commitments and the events that will be held, and the importance of gender equality, and the necessary engagement of early career ocean professionals in IOC meetings.

Following past practice, working and information documents, and logistics arrangements for participants, will be forwarded to you via electronic means and will be posted on the WESTPAC website (<http://ioc-westpac.org/>) in due course.

At this session, WESTPAC Member States will elect the Officers of the Sub-commission, i.e. one Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons for the next 2-year intersessional period. Elected Officers may be re-elected for one additional term of office. Information about the election procedure and prescribed nomination forms are attached hereafter as Annex 2. Kindly note that nominations should be sent to me with a copy to Wenxi Zhu, Head of the WESTPAC Office & Decade Coordination Office for the region (w.zhu@unesco.org), no later than 11 March 2025 at 17:00 p.m. (Tokyo time). As a reminder, the Chair Kentaro Ando (Japan) and Vice-Chair Aileen Tan Shau Hwai (Malaysia) currently serve their second terms, and Vice-Chair Fadli Syamsudin (Indonesia) currently serves his first term since the 14th Session ([WESTPAC-XIV](#), 4–7 April 2023, Jakarta, Indonesia).

I would appreciate your understanding of the proposed arrangement. Should you have any enquiries and comments, kindly respond to this letter by 30 November 2024. Let me also invite you to communicate in writing the names, positions, and contact addresses of the members of your delegations to Ms Nachapa Saransuth (n.saransuth@unesco.org, or by fax: +66 2 143 9245), at your earliest convenience but no later than 10 January 2025, with a copy to iocwestpac@unesco.org.

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

Vidar Helgesen
Executive Secretary

Enclosures (2): Annex 1: Provisional Agenda
Annex 2: Election Procedures & Form

ANNEX 1

Fifteenth Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-XV), Tokyo, Japan, 11–13 March 2025

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. OPENING

- 1.1 WELCOMING REMARKS
- 1.2 KEYNOTES

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

- 2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
- 2.2 CONDUCT OF THE SESSION

3. STATUTORY REPORTS

- 3.1 STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON
- 3.2 REPORT BY THE HEAD OF WESTPAC OFFICE ON INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION, INCLUDING THE OPERATION OF THE WESTPAC OFFICE AND DECADE COORDINATION OFFICE
- 3.3 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN UNESCO, IOC, AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO WESTPAC
 - 3.3.1 IOC Executive Secretary's report**
 - 3.3.2 IOC and the Future of Ocean**
 - 3.3.3 IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management**
 - 3.3.4 Other initiatives**

4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 THE AGREEMENT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION (BBNJ AGREEMENT)
- 4.2 THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK
- 4.3 THE UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2021-2030)
 - 4.3.1 UN Ocean Decade global developments-national report**
 - 4.3.2 WESTPAC-led Decade Actions and Decade Coordination Office**
 - **UN21:** Accelerate Marine Spatial Planning in the Western Pacific and its Adjacent Areas
 - **UN22:** Stem the tide of Asia's riverine plastic emission into the ocean
 - **UN23:** Accelerating transformations in capacity development in the Western Pacific - Regional Network of Training and Research Centers (RTRCs) on Marine Science
 - **UN 24:** Explore the strongest ocean current in the Western Pacific: the 2nd Cooperative Study of Kuroshio and Adjacent Regions
 - Decade Coordination Office
 - 4.3.3 Engagement with other Decade Actions, such as CoastPredict**

- 4.3.4 Results of the 2nd UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference & 11th WESTPAC International Marine Science Conference (22-25 April 2024, Bangkok, Thailand)
- 4.3.5 Preparations of the 3rd UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference & 12th WESTPAC International Marine Science Conference (2027, the Philippines)
- 4.3.6 Senior Governmental Officials Roundtable (SGOs Roundtable)

5. REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND WORKING GROUPS FOR APRIL 2023–MARCH 2025

Note: Due to the time constraints, reporting will be consolidated and conducted according to thematic areas of action, as specified below. However, each programme, project and working groups will prepare the progress report in written form, which will be uploaded to the event webpage. Posters of programmes, projects, and working groups are encouraged to be displayed at the meeting venue.

- 6.1 OCEAN-BASED SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE
- 6.2 MARINE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, OCEAN ECOSYSTEM AND HUMAN HEALTH, AND BLUE ECONOMY
- 6.3 OCEAN LITERACY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
- 6.4 KNOWLEDGE FOR EMERGING ISSUES/DEMANDS OF MEMBER STATES

6. RECOMMENDATION OF THE WESTPAC ADVISORY GROUP ON THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT/WORKING GROUP TERMINATION, AND IMPROVEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

7. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROGRAMME/PROJECT/WORKING GROUP

8. FURTHER ENGAGEMENT IN AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2021–2030)

9. WESTPAC WORKPLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE PERIOD 2026–2027

10. ELECTIONS

11. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

12. OTHER MATTERS

13. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

14. CLOSURE

ANNEX 2

Election Procedures and Forms

As customary, at its Fifteenth Intergovernmental Session, the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC-XIV), Tokyo, 11–13 March 2025, shall elect one Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons, for the term April 2025– April 2027.

The Chairperson shall preside over the sessions of the Sub-Commission and carry out the duties which are entrusted to him/her. The Vice-Chairpersons assist the Chairperson in his/her functions and substitute him/her where necessary. The Vice-chairpersons will be entrusted with specific responsibilities.

The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons of an IOC Subsidiary Body shall not remain in his/her mandate for more than two successive terms, according to the IOC Manual.

Nominations

Nominations of individuals to either the post of Chairperson or the posts of Vice-Chairpersons shall be submitted by Member States through the officially designated Head of Delegation to the WESTPAC-XV or through the IOC Focal Point in the Member State or the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO.

Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary using **Form A** (Chairperson) or **Form B** (Vice-chairperson). They must reach the Executive Secretary or his representative by the specified deadline for nomination.

Each nomination shall contain a declaration from the candidate that he/she is prepared to stand for the post for which he/she has been nominated and is willing to take on the obligations that would devolve upon him/her, should he/she be elected. Each nomination shall also contain a CV with the profile of the candidate (**Form C**).

Each candidate must be seconded by two Member States of the Sub-Commission other than the nominating Member State.

Elections

The IOC general practice is working and deciding by consensus (Rule 19.2).

Should voting be necessary, decisions shall be made by a simple majority of the members present and voting, by secret ballot (Rule 25.1).

Current WESTPAC Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons

Chairperson: Kentaro Ando (Japan, second term)
Vice-chairpersons: Aileen Tan Shau Hwai (Malaysia, second term)
 Fadli Syamsudin (Indonesia, first term)

They were elected, by acclamation, at the 14th Intergovernmental Session (4-7 April 2023) for the term (April 2023-April 2025).

IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC)

Biennial Elections for Chairperson

Form A – Chairperson

Name of Member State:

Name of Nominee:

I declare that I am prepared to stand for election to the post of Chairperson of **the Sub-Commission** and, if elected, to take an active part in the work of it.

Signature of the Nominee:

Second 1

Second 2

Member State of the WESTPAC

Name in capitals

Position

Signature

Date sent to the IOC Secretariat

Date and time received by the IOC Secretariat

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IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC)

Biennial Elections for Vice-Chairperson

Form B – Vice-Chairperson

Name of Member State:

Name of Nominee:

I declare that I am prepared to stand for election to the post of Vice-Chairperson of the Sub-Commission and, if elected, to take an active part in the work of it.

Signature of the Nominee:

Seconder 1

Seconder 2

Member State of the WESTPAC

Name in capitals

Position

Signature

Date sent to the IOC Secretariat

Date and time received by the IOC Secretariat

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IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC)

Biennial Elections for Chair and Vice-Chairpersons

Form C– CV of Nominee

[NAME]

Date of birth:

Languages:

Address:

Phone number:

Fax number:

Email:

CURRENT POSITION

[Please insert text]

EDUCATION

[Please insert text]

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

[Please insert text]