



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

**EIGHTEENTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION OF THE
UNESCO-IOC SUB-COMMISSION FOR THE CARIBBEAN
AND ADJACENT REGIONS (IOCARIBE-XVIII)**
(Brasilia, April 23-25, 2025)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 48.3 ([IOC/INF-1166](#)), IOCARIBE, as a primary Subsidiary Body of IOC, is required to report to an IOC Governing Body on its sessions.

The documentation for the session and more information is available [online](#).

The IOC Assembly at its 33rd Session (Paris, France, 25 June - 3 July 2025) will be invited to consider the Executive Summary as presented in the Action Paper (IOC/A-33/AP Prov.) and by the Chairperson of the Sub-Commission in plenary as well as the recommendations contained in this document.

Introduction

1. The Eighteenth Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII) was held in Brasilia, Brazil, from 23 to 25 April 2025. The session was attended by 128 participants, including representatives of 17 countries, four (4) UN agencies and three (3) regional organizations. At this session, the Sub-Commission reviewed progress made during the Intersessional period 2024–2025 and adopted 14 recommendations.

2. The Sub-Commission thanked the Government of Brazil and the UNESCO Office in Brasilia for their collaboration in hosting the Eighteenth Session of the IOC Sub-Commission and commended Brazil for becoming the first country recognized by UNESCO to officially commit to integrating Ocean Literacy into its national school curriculum.

3. The Sub-Commission acknowledged the continued support received from the Government of Colombia for hosting the Secretariat in the city of Cartagena since its initial establishment in 1986 and for seconding two professionals to work at the Secretariat.

4. The Sub-Commission welcomed the commitment received from the Government of Antigua and Barbuda expressing the country's interest to join IOC-UNESCO and to become

actively engaged in IOCARIBE activities in the region.

Main Outcomes of the Session

5. The Sub-Commission took note of the Secretary's report and acknowledged the significant progress of the work of the Secretariat to facilitate international cooperation in ocean research, services and capacity development across the region.

6. The Sub-Commission has strengthened regional ocean governance and science coordination by expanding the IOCARIBE-ANCA network on Harmful Algal Blooms, strengthening the relationship with the Caribbean Hub of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON), enhancing integration of ocean data systems through IOCARIBE-GOOS and IODE, and building momentum for ocean literacy through the establishment of the IOCARIBE Ocean Literacy Task Team and the rollout of the IOCARIBE Blue Schools Network across the region.

7. The Sub-Commission's priority areas of implementation include strengthening ocean observing systems for improved forecasting and resilience, supporting the expansion of multi-hazard early warning systems, promoting marine spatial planning in support of sustainable ocean management, advancing capacity development tailored to regional needs, and integrating ocean literacy into national education systems to foster a culture of ocean stewardship.

8. The Sub-Commission's new implementation areas reflect emerging regional needs and opportunities. These include advancing deep-sea science and exploration in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), deploying fishing vessel-based ocean observations to enhance coastal data collection, expanding ocean science efforts to address the impacts of ocean warming, developing blue carbon initiatives as part of nature-based climate solutions, establishing regional best practices through the ADAPT project, and strengthening ocean governance through the Ocean Coordination Mechanism under the UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project.

9. The Ocean Decade has catalyzed regional action through the Tropical Americas and Caribbean (TAC) Roadmap and the expansion of Decade coordination structures, including the newly established TAC Decade Coordination Office (DCO), the TAC Task Force, National Decade Committees, the TAC Ocean Decade Network, and a mechanism allowing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to appoint individual Ocean Decade Focal Points to participate in a Regional Decade Committee (RDC) when establishing full National Decade Committees is not feasible due to capacity constraints. These structures support 120 endorsed Decade Actions in the region, 108 of which are led by TAC-based institutions, and have facilitated greater engagement of youth, Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs), and SIDS through inclusive, co-designed programmes.

10. Mr Vidar Helgesen, IOC Executive Secretary and UNESCO ADG/IOC, noted that it would not be practical to address budget issues during SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII due to ongoing processes in governance management, planning, and budget, which will be finalized at the 33rd Session of the IOC Assembly in June 2025, and due to new financial uncertainties related to a potential withdrawal of USA from UNESCO and systematic changes at NOAA. He recommended that subsequent Intergovernmental Sessions of IOCARIBE be held during the third quarter of the year prior to an IOC Assembly to better align with the planning and budgeting cycle of IOC.

Elections of the Board of Officers of the Sub-Commission

11. Member States elected the Board of Officers for the 2026-2027 biennium in accordance with the applicable rules of procedure. Dr Marck Oduber (Aruba) was re-elected as Chairperson; Dr Soraya Silva (Venezuela) and Dr Roberto Dantas de Pinho (Brazil) were

re-elected as Vice-Chairpersons; and Dr Rahanna Juman (Trinidad and Tobago) was elected as a new Vice-Chairperson. The new Board of Officers was elected by acclamation.

12. The Sub-Commission expressed its sincere appreciation to Dr John Victor Cortinas (USA) for his years of dedicated service to IOCARIBE, following his retirement and departure from the Board.

Dates and Place of the Nineteenth Session of the Sub-Commission

13. The Sub-Commission decided to hold its Nineteenth Intergovernmental Session during the third quarter of 2026 to better align with the timeline of IOC's work plan and budgeting period for 2028-2029. Expressions of interest to host the 19th Session were received from Guatemala, Mexico and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Adoption of Decisions and Recommendations

14. The Sub-Commission adopted fourteen (14) Recommendations as follows:

No.	Title
<u>1</u>	United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development
<u>2</u>	Ocean Literacy
<u>3</u>	Capacity Development
<u>4</u>	IOCARIBE-GOOS
<u>5</u>	Blue Carbon
<u>6</u>	Regional Ocean Coordination Mechanism
<u>7</u>	Marine Spatial Planning
<u>8</u>	UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project
<u>9</u>	Ocean Data and Information
<u>10</u>	Sargassum Working Group
<u>11</u>	Ocean Acidification
<u>12</u>	National Contacts
<u>13</u>	Harmful Algal Blooms
<u>14</u>	All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance

15. Additional recommendations were made during SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII, though not formally adopted, including:

- a. Collaborating with the IOCARIBE Board to co-develop a draft Action Paper for SC-IOCARIBE-XIX at least 1–2 months in advance, enabling earlier input from Member States.
- b. Considering the establishment of a dedicated subgroup under the IOCARIBE Board to initiate early consultations on the workplan and budget for the upcoming biennium.
- c. Strengthening support for locally led deep-sea research, including onboard capacity development for regional scientists.
- d. Enhancing coordination between IOCARIBE and ICG/CARIBE-EWS through the development of a joint strategy aligned with the Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) and Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiatives.
- e. Exploring additional funding mechanisms to support delivery of the ADAPT ocean

observation training program in English, alongside its existing Spanish version.

- f. Encouraging Member States to work with Ministries of Education to formally integrate Ocean Literacy into national curricula, building on Brazil's example.
- g. Continuing efforts to establish a trilingual IOCARIBE Secretariat (English, Spanish, and French) to improve communication and inclusivity across the region.

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.1

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling IOCARIBE Sub-Commission Recommendation XVII.9 which encouraged Member States to actively support the implementation of the UN Ocean Decade in the region.

Recognizing the work carried out by the Regional Task Force for the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean (TAC) during the previous biennium and the development of the Roadmap for the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 ('Ocean Decade') in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean (TAC) Region ("TAC Decade Roadmap").

Welcoming the establishment of the Regional Decade Coordination Office (DCO) at the IOCARIBE Sub-Commission.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Prepare an assessment of the progress on endorsed UN Ocean Decade Actions in the region.
- ii. Develop an implementation plan for the TAC Decade Roadmap that enhances coordination among Member States, UN agencies, regional bodies with ocean-related mandates, and other stakeholders.
- iii. Coordinate funding mobilization efforts to enable the implementation of unfunded and partially funded UN Ocean Decade Actions in the region.
- iv. Facilitate the creation of a Regional Decade Committee to engage Member States throughout the TAC Region and to promote the sharing of experiences, particularly in cases where the formation of National Decade Committees is not currently viable.

Invites Member States to:

- i. Provide in-kind and financial resources for the operations of the DCO, including through the provision of secondments, internships, Junior Professional Officers, the loaning of personnel and the hosting of regional and international UN Ocean Decade events.
- ii. Form National Decade Committees to lead national engagement, or, where this is not currently feasible, contribute through official representatives in a Regional Decade Committee.
- iii. Support other Member States by sharing successful approaches and lessons learned in establishing National Decade Committees.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.2**Ocean Literacy**

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling IOCARIBE Sub-Commission Recommendation XVI.11 requesting the IOCARIBE Secretary, Member States and stakeholders to enhance Ocean Literacy in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Recognizing the value of promoting ocean stewardship to raise awareness, inspire responsible behavior, and cultivate a sense of shared responsibility for the marine environment.

Further recognizing the importance of the work carried out by the Ocean Literacy Task Team of the Capacity Development Working Group and by the IOC Ocean Literacy Group of Experts.

Having examined the information and offer from the Georgia Aquarium to support the region in Ocean Literacy and the expansion of the Blue Schools Caribe Network.

Having also examined the report received from One Ocean Hub and having identified opportunities for strengthened Ocean Literacy initiatives in the region.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Enter into an agreement with the Georgia Aquarium to support Ocean Literacy and the expansion of the Blue Schools Caribe Network in the region.
- ii. Enter into an agreement with One Ocean Hub to empower coastal communities in the region through Ocean Literacy.
- iii. Leverage regional partnerships to pilot joint programs and share knowledge.

Urges Member States to:

- i. Nominate national focal points to the Ocean Literacy Task Team to guide national programmes on Ocean Literacy.
- ii. Nominate official coordinators to lead national Blue Schools programmes.

Invites Member States to:

- i. Integrate Ocean Literacy into educational policy frameworks and curricula.
- ii. Promote inter-ministerial collaboration, especially with ministries of environment, education, and science, technology and innovation.
- iii. Fund national Ocean Literacy programmes through core budgets and donor alignment.
- iv. Support the continuation of the work of the Ocean Literacy Task Team and of the IOC Ocean Literacy Group of Experts.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.3**Capacity Development**

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recognizing the work carried out by the Regional Capacity Development (CD) Working Group during the previous biennium.

Further recognizing the differences between the definitions, foci and interests of “Youth” and “Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs),” and the efforts of the Sub-Commission to engage with ECOPs.

Considering training gaps identified in the recently prepared implementation plan of IOC’s global Capacity Development Strategy (2023-2030).

Acknowledging the considerable technical expertise within Small Island Developing States (SIDS), despite persistent challenges related to limited financial resources and access to equipment.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Engage with the UN Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility to identify innovative approaches to mobilizing funding for capacity development on priority issues in the region, both at sea and in the laboratories, and help to partially fund the Ocean Decade endorsed project No. 136.2: Enhancing capacity development in the TAC Region.
- ii. Contribute to the joint development and implementation of the next iteration of the IOC biennial CD survey in close coordination with the IOC CD Secretariat and the Group of Experts on Capacity Development (GE-CD).
- iii. Establish a Task Team on Marine Spatial Planning in support of capacity development activities such as those supported by the UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project, and to expand Marine Spatial Planning to other IOCARIBE Member States.
- iv. Establish a Task Team on Deep-Sea Research to train a new generations of science leaders and researchers aboard regional research vessels and, where feasible, support Member States in generating relevant scientific knowledge in line with 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 known as the BBNJ Agreement, “ and with the capacity-development, training and technical assistance of the International Seabed Authority (ISA).
- v. Continue seeking opportunities to engage with Youth and ECOPs.
- vi. Seek opportunities for technical cooperation, for example with deep-sea global and regional networks (Ocean Decade Laboratory (ODL), Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI), Deep Ocean Observing Strategy (DOOS), Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO), Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), High Seas Alliance (HSA)), that can contribute ocean observing equipment and related training to Member States.
- vii. Assist in sourcing seed funding with philanthropic organizations to maintain research vessels with deep-sea capabilities that are active in the region and useful to capacity

development.

- viii. Support the facilitation of access for researchers to existing regional research vessels, ongoing training programs at sea, and improve the access of researchers to deep sea vehicles, sensors, and data tools.

Invites Member States to:

- i. Nominate National Focal Points to the Capacity Development Working Group.
- ii. Encourage the participation of ECOPs in internships in support of IOCARIBE activities.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.4

IOCARIBE GOOS

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling its commitment to advancing the objectives of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), the UN Ocean Decade, and the Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL) initiative.

Further Recalling

- i. The IOC Assembly Decision A-32/4.8.2 (2023), pertaining to Ocean Observations in Areas under National Jurisdiction, and the decision to establish an ad hoc intersessional Working Group on Ocean Observations in Areas under National Jurisdiction.
- ii. The IOC Executive Council Decision EC-57/4.2 (2024) pertaining to the Progress Report of the IOC Ad hoc Intersessional Working Group on Ocean Observations in Areas under National Jurisdiction.
- iii. IOCARIBE Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVII.6 (2023) to enhance IOCARIBE Member State relationships with international programmes, projects and initiatives to foster the opportunity for collaboration among groups, reduce duplication, and encourage collaborative efforts and the production of knowledge, applications, services, tools and products; and aligning all threats that IOCARIBE is working on under a multi-hazard framework, utilizing the Integrating Coastal Hazard Early Warning Systems for the Tropical Americas and Caribbean (iCHEWS) UN Ocean Decade endorsed project.
- iv. IOCARIBE Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVII.10 (2023) pertaining to IOCARIBE GOOS.

Recognizing the need for enhanced regional coordination, stakeholder engagement, and operational support to strengthen ocean observing and forecasting capacities in the IOCARIBE region.

Noting the recommendations and outcomes of the 16th Session of the GOOS Observations Coordination Group (OCG) from 7-10 April 2025 and the associated IOCARIBE-GOOS Workshop held on 9 April 2025.

Further noting the GlobalCoast / CoastPredict UN Decade Programme regional initiative addressing climate change and coastal resilience challenges, seeking to enhance regional

disaster preparedness, foster ecosystem restoration, and support sustainable development in the IOCARIBE Region.

Further recognizing the importance of the GlobalCoast / CoastPredict initiatives and the affiliated project in the region iCHEWS as key contributions to the UN Ocean Decade, and their alignment with regional priorities for advancing coastal resilience, operational oceanography, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Acknowledging the efforts undertaken to formulate and promote regional endorsement and ownership of these initiatives through the development of pilot sites and proposals.

Welcoming the activities undertaken to develop and promote the GlobalCoast / CoastPredict initiatives in the region, and continued efforts to align these with regional and national priorities.

Supports the project proposal under the GlobalCoast / CoastPredict Decade Programme, including support for the implementation and possible expansion of pilot sites in the region.

Invites Member States to:

- i. Contribute endorsement letters from Nationally Designated Authorities in order to participate in the GlobalCoast / CoastPredict programme funding proposal.
- ii. Continue supporting activities related to GlobalCoast / CoastPredict in the region, particularly those advancing pilot implementation, national engagement, and the formulation of regional strategies under the UN Ocean Decade endorsed projects such as iCHEWS.
- iii. Designate a National Focal Point for ocean observations and ocean resilience coordination to contribute to the IOCARIBE-GOOS Working Group.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Establish a partnership framework with the Fishing Vessel Ocean Observing Network (FVON) to enable cooperation in regional observation efforts under IOCARIBE-GOOS.
- ii. Encourage continued collaboration with the GOOS Observations Coordination Group (OCG), and other global and regional partners in support of IOCARIBE-GOOS to:
 - Co-develop observing system components that help improve national forecasting capacities, especially for hurricanes and coastal flooding events.
 - Provide technical assistance.
 - Deliver capacity development opportunities, including joint technical training facilitated by IOCARIBE-GOOS and the Capacity Development Working Group, targeting Caribbean institutions and stakeholders.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.5

Blue Carbon

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Acknowledging that robust science is the foundation of effective markets and actions in blue carbon credit schemes.

Noting research that has estimated the mangrove soil carbon stocks in countries at a global scale.

Recognizing the importance of blue carbon studies in support of reporting on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Facilitate technical cooperation with Member States on methodologies for spatial quantification of blue carbon ecosystems, which are needed for recognition of economic losses as part of blue carbon credit schemes.
- ii. Explore opportunities to develop a regional knowledge hub on Blue Carbon in the Wider Caribbean Region as a new UN Ocean Decade Action in collaboration with the Global Ocean Decade Programme for Blue Carbon (Go-Bc) and in support of nature-based solutions and related Blue Carbon actions.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.6

Regional Ocean Coordination Mechanism

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling the progress made in implementing the 10-year “Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems” (the “CLME+ SAP”, 2015 - 2025).

Acknowledging the opportunity to support the continued implementation of the SAP through the UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project: “Protecting and Restoring the Ocean’s natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-Economic development.”

Noting the recent operationalization of the "Coordination Mechanism to Support Integrated Ocean Governance in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems", also further referred to as "Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM)".

Applauding the regional milestone achievement of the OCM’s commencement, its importance as a key enabling platform/instrument for the advancement of the IOCARIBE mandate, and the region's pioneering role in a context of increasing global calls for enhanced multi-country, multi-agency and inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration on oceans.

Noting the upcoming First Meeting of the OCM Steering Group, "SGM1" (i.e. the Group of

OCM Member Countries), scheduled to take place on 13-14 May 2025 ahead of UNOC3, to be hosted by the Government of Grenada.

Encourages IOCARIBE Member States to:

- i. Give due consideration to signing the OCM MoU and become an OCM Member at their earliest convenience, if they have not yet joined, with the support of the IOCARIBE Secretariat and the PROCARIBE+ Project Unit.
- ii. Participate in the First Meeting of the OCM Steering Group, either as OCM Members or as Observers.
- iii. Take advantage of the opportunities provided through the PROCARIBE+ funding to exploit, to the best possible extent, the added value of the OCM during the 2025-2028 period.

Recommends that the IOCARIBE Secretariat continue to effectively engage in the OCM activities in the region that contribute to the advancement of the IOC-UNESCO mandate.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.7

Marine Spatial Planning

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Considering the importance of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) for the effective implementation of national development strategies, along with those related to sustainable ocean economies.

Welcoming the establishment of a new Decade Collaborative Centre on sustainable ocean economies in Barcelona, Spain.

Recognizing the importance of incorporating climate change adaptation strategies in the development of MSP National Plans, as well as ensuring participatory development and the application of the ecosystem-based approach.

Acknowledging the phased approach to MSP developed by the joint MSPglobal initiative of IOC-UNESCO and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE).

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Seek training opportunities for MSP processes in Member States, including the application of global toolboxes.
- ii. Facilitate training for the implementation of economic valuation studies in support of MSP processes.

Encourages Member States to actively participate in national and regional MSP activities being carried out including those that are part of the PROCARIBE+ Project.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.8**UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project**

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Acknowledging the opportunity to support the continued implementation of the SAP through work carried out by the UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project: Protecting and Restoring the Ocean's natural Capital, building Resilience and supporting region-wide Investments for sustainable Blue socio-Economic development.

Noting the agreement established between the UNDP/GEF/UNOPS PROCARIBE+ Project and IOCARIBE for the implementation of marine spatial planning activities in the region.

Recommends that the IOCARIBE Secretariat continue to effectively implement activities of the PROCARIBE+ Project in the region contributing to the advancement of the IOC-UNESCO mandate.

Encourages IOCARIBE Member States to optimize their participation in the PROCARIBE+ Project and related activities to ensure timely delivery on the project objectives and results framework, maximizing the benefits from the PROCARIBE+ GEF grant for Member States and the region.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.9**Ocean Data and Information**

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recognizing the work carried out by IODE in its three programme components: Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA), the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS) and the Ocean Data Information System (ODIS) and their role in supporting the management and sharing of data and information in the region.

Acknowledging the importance of establishing National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs) and Associated Data Units (ADUs) or collaboration agreements between Member States, where fully fledged NODCs may not be possible, such as in the case of SIDS.

Highlighting the benefits of the Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA) in assisting with capacity development and continued training of people in the region.

Noting Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.4 on IOCARIBE-GOOS.

Expresses appreciation to the IODE-28 Committee, which welcomed the requests to:

- i. Support the integration and use of data and information from national projects within IOCARIBE Member States, as well as from the Secretariat's projects and programs, focused on addressing the region's needs.
- ii. Further cooperation beyond OTGA and ODIS during the 2026-2027 biennium, including the development of a regional OBIS network.
- iii. Support the IOCARIBE region in the development and implementation of a plan for SIDS to maximize their benefits from, and contributions to, ocean data and

information management, using a value chain approach.

Invites Member States to:

- i. Assemble national working groups that identify required end use products and services (e.g. for decision-making support) and the data, information and ocean observations required to provide these.
- ii. Establish NODCs or ADUs as a means of strengthening national capacities in data and information management.
- iii. Collaborate with OBIS and ODIS by sharing available data and information with these programme components.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Facilitate the development of courses supporting the use of data platforms, such as ODIS and OBIS, and supporting decision-makers in the use of data for reporting on Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- ii. Promote greater interaction and alignment in the region between the activities of GOOS and IODE.
- iii. Explore new opportunities for international collaboration that support the incorporation of IODE data platforms in the IOCARIBE region, including through the Ocean Coordination Mechanism.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.10

Sargassum Working Group

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling IOCARIBE Sub-Commission Recommendation XVI.7 encouraging the advancement of research and collaboration on Sargassum in the region.

Recognizing the detrimental impacts that Sargassum inundation are having on ecosystems and economies across the Wider Caribbean Region.

Noting the development of innovative approaches to tracking and forecasting Sargassum influx, including applications of oil spill tracking technology and citizen science on beaches.

Acknowledging the report of the IOCARIBE Sargassum Working Group on work carried out during the current biennium and plans for the 2026-2027 biennium in collaboration with GEO Blue Planet.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Enter into a Cooperation Agreement with GEO Blue Planet to jointly support and guide the continued work of the regional IOCARIBE Sargassum Working Group.
- ii. Seek opportunities to collaborate with other working groups in the region focused on Sargassum.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.11

Ocean Acidification

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling IOCARIBE Sub-Commission Recommendation XVI.4 encouraging further work on ocean acidification in the region.

Recognizing the work of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) including 14 scientists from IOCARIBE Member States.

Further recognizing the establishment of a Caribbean Hub of GOA-ON in 2023 with the participation of 28 members from 16 countries.

Acknowledging the progress of the REMARCO Project in addressing capacity limitations to respond to multiple stressors on the ocean.

Noting the limited resources in Member States in providing National Data Submissions to report on Sustainable Development Goal target 14.3.1 in response to ocean acidification.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Strengthen regional connections with the GOA-ON community to support new membership from IOCARIBE Member States and partners.
- ii. Promote the Ocean Teacher Global Academy courses on Ocean Acidification to Member States and partners.
- iii. Enter into a cooperation agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to facilitate processes for improved data sharing and support for maintenance of marine research equipment.
- iv. Expand relevant IAEA projects to other interested IOCARIBE Member States that are not yet involved, with the objective of strengthening national capacities.

Encourages Member States, especially those who have received equipment and training from the IAEA to submit monitoring reports to the SDG 14.3.1 portal.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.12

National Contacts

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recognizing the importance of effective communication between the IOCARIBE Secretariat, IOC-UNESCO, UNESCO and Member States.

Acknowledging the efforts made by the IOCARIBE Secretariat in maintaining direct contact with National Focal Points and in regularly requesting updated contact information from Member States.

Noting that the effectiveness of communication strategies differs across countries, with some responding better to top-down engagement at the ministerial level, while others benefit more from bottom-up communication at the technical level.

Requests Member States to update their designations and contact details of:

- i. National Coordinating Bodies for Liaison with the IOC-UNESCO.
- ii. National Commissions for UNESCO.
- iii. Permanent Delegations to UNESCO.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.13

Harmful Algal Blooms

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Recalling the significant ecological and socioeconomic impacts of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in the IOCARIBE region, and the strategic importance of coordinated monitoring and response systems.

Acknowledging the progress made by the ANCA Working Group in improving HAB-related data collection, analysis, and training initiatives in the region.

Recognizing the critical contributions of the IOC-UNESCO HAEDAT platform in supporting HAB monitoring and data sharing.

Further acknowledging collaboration with IAEA through regional projects such as RLA 7020, RLA 7022, RLA 7026, and RLA 7028 which enhance regional monitoring capacity for HABs and associated marine stressors using nuclear and isotopic techniques.

Noting the persistent challenges identified in the ANCA registry, including data gaps, underreporting, and low verification rates of ciguatera and other toxins.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to:

- i. Coordinate a regional strategy to improve data entry, georeferencing, and verification within the HAEDAT platform.
- ii. Organize regional training courses and workshops (including virtual formats) focused on HAB monitoring, early warning systems, and data analysis.
- iii. Foster cooperation with IAEA and other partners to apply nuclear techniques for the detection and characterization of HAB toxins.
- iv. Increase regional awareness of the socioeconomic impacts of ciguatera and aerosolized toxins, especially in the tourism sector.

Encourages Member States to:

- i. Designate or reaffirm national ANCA focal points and facilitate regular national

reporting to the HAEDAT platform.

- ii. Actively participate in regional training and contribute to collaborative research on HABs and their associated syndromes.
- iii. Promote intersectoral collaboration between environmental, health, and tourism authorities to mitigate risks from marine biotoxins.

Supports continued expansion of the ANCA network and the strengthening of regional HAB early warning systems through partnerships and knowledge exchange.

Recommendation SC-IOCARIBE-XVIII.14

All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance

The IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE),

Noting the signature of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance Declaration, the "ALL-ATLANTIC DECLARATION," which establishes the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance (AAORIA).

Welcoming the status of the IOC-UNESCO as Supporter of the Alliance.

Recognizing the importance of collaboration in the wider Atlantic for the work carried out by IOCARIBE.

Requests the IOCARIBE Secretary to explore opportunities where the activities of IOCARIBE could benefit from wider Atlantic cooperation by engaging with AAORIA.

Encourages IOCARIBE Member States to:

- i. Give due consideration to joining AAORIA and participating, where appropriate, in its actions, with the support of the IOCARIBE Secretariat and the IOCARIBE Member States in the Alliance.
- ii. Participate in the All-Atlantic Fora.