To: Official National Coordinating Body for Liaison with the IOC in States Members of the IOC

cc: The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons 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)


Sir/Madam,

The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 4–6 June 2012) has three major objectives: to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assess progress and gaps in implementation of agreed commitments, and to address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will also address two themes: green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The assessment of results achieved and lessons learned since Rio '92 demonstrates that convergence among the three pillars of sustainable development has been slow and uneven. In particular, mounting evidence shows that the convergence between environmental improvement and economic and social progress has been especially unsatisfactory, and that achieving sustainable future will only be possible if the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development are given equal footing with the economic one. This is particularly true to oceans and coastal issues.

.../…
In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg in 2002, and led to the adoption of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPoI) as the main outcome. IOC played an important role in ensuring that oceans and coasts where included in the final document. This was done through the IOC Declaration that was adopted by an Extraordinary Session of the IOC Executive Council (December 2001) and through mobilization of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands. In this regard, IOC was highlighted in the JPoI in relation to its role in implementing GOOS and in strengthening marine scientific capacities of its Member States. A call was also made to strengthen the ability of IOC as an organization to support these goals.

In light of the importance of this global process, it is important that ocean issues are considered in the main outcome document of Rio+20. IOC has therefore engaged in the preparation process of the Conference and I recently participated in the 2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting of the Conference (New York, 7–8 March 2011), where I made several interventions to highlight the role of oceans in sustainable development. IOC has received direct accreditation to the process and conference, allowing the Commission to raise its own voice for oceans, in addition to UNESCO’s official delegation.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development is in charge of the preparatory process and organization of the conference. A number of preparatory meetings are scheduled in 2011 and 2012 with a view to adopting an outcome document by June 2012. A draft of the negotiated outcome document will be available in November 2011 and discussed at UN Headquarters from January to March 2012. More information on the calendar of preparatory meetings can be found at: http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/.

Although at this stage it is expected that the main document to be adopted in Rio will be more of a political declaration rather than a plan of action, it should nonetheless provide an opportunity to highlight the role of IOC and oceans in sustainable development issues and strengthen IOC’s mandate. IOC needs to define what the key messages and issues that it would like to have highlighted at the Conference and possibly addressed through the political outcome document are. With this objective in mind, it is expected that a Declaration on the role of oceans in sustainable development will be prepared and adopted by IOC Member States at the 26th Assembly and transmitted to the UNCSD preparatory process.

It is also critical that IOC Member States take part, through their official UN Delegations, and provide substantive inputs to the formal negotiation process. In this respect, please find enclosed a letter from the Co-chairs of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee, inviting inputs to the Conference’s output document, from Member States, United Nations system organizations, and relevant stakeholders.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

[signed]

Wendy Watson-Wright
Executive Secretary, IOC
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO

Enclosure:

Request for contributions and inputs for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as basis for the preparation of zero-draft of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development
Dear Madam/Sir,

Subject: Request for contributions and inputs for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as basis for the preparation of zero-draft of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

Please be informed that the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) took place from 7 to 8 March 2011 in New York.

The meeting adopted a decision concerning the process to be followed for the preparation of the outcome document. This decision is attached at Annex 1 for your ready reference.

According to paragraph (b) of the decision attached at Annex 1, the Preparatory Committee invites all Member States, the relevant United Nations system organizations, and relevant stakeholders to provide their inputs and contributions in writing by 1 November 2011 for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as basis for the preparation of zero-draft of the outcome document.

On behalf of the Bureau for the preparatory process of the UNCSD, we would like to request your Government/institution to provide contributions and inputs for the preparation of the compilation document, eventually leading to the preparation of zero draft of the outcome document. In this regard, please ensure that contributions and inputs submitted by your Government/institution cover the objective and two themes of the conference as spelled out in General Assembly Resolution A/64/236, which are reproduced below.

Objective: To secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges.

Themes: (1) A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (2) The institutional framework for sustainable development.

All Heads of United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds
Please send your contributions to the UNCSD Secretariat by e-mail at uncsd2012@un.org or by fax at +1 212 963 1267 by 1 November 2011.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

John Ashe, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations Co-chair UNCSD Bureau

Park In-Kook, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Co-chair UNCSD Bureau

Encl. Decision adopted by the second PrepCom of UNCSD
Annex 1: Decision adopted by the second Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Process for the preparation of the draft outcome document for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

The second Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development:

(a) 
requests the Bureau to initiate an open, transparent and inclusive process led by Member States, to prepare in a timely manner a draft text, based upon all preparatory inputs, to serve as the basis for an outcome document for the Conference;

(b) 
invites all Member States, the relevant United Nations system organizations, and relevant stakeholders to provide their inputs and contributions in writing by 1 November 2011 for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as basis for the preparation of zero-draft of the outcome document;

(c) 
requests the Bureau to compile these inputs and contributions and present their compilation text to Member States and other stakeholders at the second intersessional meeting to be held in mid-December 2011 to seek their comments and further guidance;

(d) 
calls upon the co-Chairs on behalf of the Bureau to present the zero-draft of the outcome document for consideration by Member States and other stakeholders no later than early January 2012;

(e) 
recommends the Bureau to convene a three-day meeting in January 2012 for the purposes of having initial discussions on the zero-draft of the outcome document, and set aside one full week for negotiations in each of the months of February, March and April 2012, ensuring that all these meetings are informal informals and, as such, are to be accommodated within existing resources.