To: Members of the Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on IOC’s Regional Activities

cc: Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission
Official National Coordinating Body for liaison with the IOC in IOC Member States
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States
Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of Major IOC Subsidiary Bodies
(Scientific, Technical and Regional)

Subject: Meeting of the Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on IOC’s Regional Activities, 20 June 2011 (14:30–17:30), Room VII, UNESCO HQ, Paris

I have the pleasure of informing you that a meeting of the Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on IOC’s Regional Activities will be held on 20 June 2011 in Room VII at UNESCO Headquarters, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France, together with the meeting of IOC’s Regional Subsidiary Bodies. The Working Group was established by the IOC Assembly at its 25th session (Paris, 16–25 June 2009), through Resolution XXV-2, to conduct an objective and comprehensive assessment of the IOC’s regional activities and prepare a report for consideration by the Assembly at its 26th session in June 2011.

The meeting will prepare recommendations for improved implementation of IOC’s Regional Activities on the basis of a review of the current status of IOC’s Regional Activities, and an analysis of the questionnaire survey undertaken by the working group. Mr Julián Reyna, Vice-Chair of IOC in charge of regions, will chair the meeting and report its recommendations to the 26th session of IOC Assembly. It would be greatly appreciated if you can confirm your attendance to the Secretariat (the Focal Point is Mika Odido, m.odido@unesco.org) by 31 May 2011 at the latest.

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

[signed]

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

Enclosure: Resolution XXV-2
Resolution XXV-2

IOC REGIONAL SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Recalling IOC Resolution XXIII-6 on Regional Cooperation in Marine Science and Technology and the Role of the IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies (RSBs), IOC Resolution XXIV-11 on Enhancing the Role of the Commission at the Regional Level, and IOC/INF-1193, Guidelines for the Structure of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission, and for the Establishment of Decentralized Offices, in which it is emphasized that:

(i) the regional scale is particularly appropriate for addressing global issues, including climate impacts on marine ecosystems, assessment of the state of the marine environment, namely marine pollution, large marine ecosystems and biodiversity

(ii) strengthening regional mechanisms is fundamental to responding better to the requirements of IOC Member States in their efforts to implement and support IOC objective

(iii) the IOC has a long tradition in implementing regional programmes and the regional components of its global programmes through RSBs and IOC decentralized offices,

Further recalling the Report by the IOC Executive Secretary on the Status of IOC Subsidiary Bodies, in IOC/EC-XLI/2 Annex 5, which recommends strengthening RSBs and IOC decentralized offices to ensure the full regional implementation of the IOC Medium-term Strategy 2008–2013,

Appreciating the steps taken to enhance and strengthen capabilities of RSBs and IOC decentralized offices when implementing the Medium-term Strategy 2008–2013 and the Programme and Budget 2008–2009,

Noting the diversity and great number of IOC regional offices and activities,

Welcoming the progress achieved in some regions to strengthen the capacity of Member States and their participation in IOC global programmes,

Recognizing:

(i) the differences in the viability and functionality of RSBs and the regionally unbalanced and sometimes minimal progress in achieving their objectives

(ii) with concern that some RSBs and IOC decentralized offices require immediate assistance to build their capacity to meet IOC objectives and provide assistance to IOC Member States

(iii) the urgent need to rationalize and strengthen RSBs and regional activities to adequately respond to IOC Member States needs and priorities, and to ensure the full regional implementation of the IOC Medium-term Strategy,

Agrees to include in the 2010–2011 Programme and Budget a balanced and transparent allocation of funds among global and regional components of the IOC programme of work to improve and give continuity to what has been achieved in the IOC regions, and to meet critical needs;
Decides to establish an open-ended intersessional Working Group chaired by an IOC Vice-Chairperson. A core Membership of the Working Group will be formed by inviting Member States to nominate experts, including some with expertise in governance. The Working Group should include representatives from RSBs and decentralized offices. The purpose of this Working Group is to conduct an objective and comprehensive assessment of the IOC’s regional activities and prepare a report for consideration by the Assembly at its 26th Session. This report should:

(i) be based on a review of present and potential capacities of existing RSBs, Sub-Commissions, Committees, Coordination Groups, and decentralized offices, Programme Offices, Project Offices, and other regional activities to evaluate their fundamental objectives, priorities and institutional and administrative arrangements

(ii) include a regional strategy for organizational improvements, efficiencies through better integration, potential consolidation of regional resources, streamlined operations, enhanced cooperation with the UN and with other appropriate regional organizations on issues of common interest and other elements to promote implementation of the IOC Medium-term Strategy at the regional level

(iii) make recommendations for implementing the new strategy;

Requests the IOC Executive Secretary, without prejudice to the consideration of the report and its recommendation by the Assembly, to:

(i) ensure that a meeting on IOC RSBs and other regional activities be held in conjunction with the IOC Assembly sessions; and

(ii) re-activate IOCINDIO and IOCEA, giving consideration to the activities of the existing IOC and other relevant regional bodies;

Urges IOC Member States to actively participate in and financially support these activities.