Item 3.1 of the Agenda

STATEMENT FROM IOC OFFICERS FOR THE OPENING OF THE 27TH ASSEMBLY

By Prof. Adoté Blivi, Dr Sang-Kyung Byun, Prof. Peter Haugan, Prof. Yutaka Michida, Dr Atanas Palazov, Capt Frederico Antonio Saraiva Nogueira,

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Our Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is in a moment of financial crisis.

We, the IOC Officers, believe that the Commission provides the Member States with a valuable platform for international cooperation and coordination of programmes in research, observations, data exchange, services and capacity-building. The IOC allows us to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and coastal areas, and to apply that knowledge for the improvement of management, sustainable development, the protection of the marine environment, and in our decision-making processes.

We consider it very unlikely that UNESCO's full cash flow and budget will be restored in the next two years. So although you are asked to review and adopt a draft budget for 2014-2015 for the Commission that requests about $12 million of regular programme contribution from UNESCO, we believe it very unlikely that the Member States of the Commission will have all of these resources available to implement their programme.

We recall that the 2012-2013 regular programme budget for the Commission received from UNESCO was only about $7 million.

This means that there is likely to be an approximately $5 million shortfall in the next two years in order for our Commission to function properly in support of our goals. The viability of IOC in these next two years depends entirely on whether Member States and/or regional groups of Member States are prepared to put additional funds towards the operation of Commission programmes.

We have 145 Member States. We propose that Member States make a minimum voluntary contribution to the IOC in line with the UN standard scale of assessments to make up for this shortfall.
This would amount to a few tens of USD for some Member States and up to of the order of 100 000 USD for those which are expected to be able to contribute the most. We run a very serious risk, if nothing happens, to lose the leadership in ocean sciences, observation systems and ocean services, and to be unable to properly run the administrative structure of the Secretariat.

We call on you to make this your minimum voluntary contribution to the work of the IOC, to contribute to the success of our Commission. We cannot evaluate how each Member State can contribute, but we count on the willingness of each of us to think seriously about an urgent solution for this issue, each one within its own capabilities and constraints.