IOC/Circular Letter 2496 (Available in English, French, Spanish, Russian) 26 August 2013

To: IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies of IOC Member States
Member States having participated in the sessional working group on the Development of a Capacity Development Strategic Plan during the 27th session of the IOC Assembly

cc: Permanent Delegates / Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States Chair and Vice-Chairs of IOC and Major Subsidiary Bodies

Subject: Intersessional Working Group for the Development of IOC Capacity Development Strategic Plan

During the 27th session of the IOC Assembly, Decision IOC-XXVII, Dec.5.5.1 called for the setting up of an Intersessional Working Group for Developing an IOC Draft Strategic Plan for Capacity Development.

The working group, which is open to all IOC Member States, will develop a Draft Capacity Development Strategic Plan which will be presented for consideration by the IOC Executive Council at its 47th session in 2014. IOC Vice-Chairperson, Prof. Adoté Blim Blivi, will chair the group and Deputy Executive Secretary, Dr Mitrasen Bhikajee, will serve as Technical Secretary. The group is expected to conduct its business by electronic means to the extent possible.

I invite IOC national coordinating bodies to designate members of this intersessional working group and send letters of nomination to the secretariat not later than 10 October 2013 to m.bhikajee@unesco.org with a copy to e.iasyreva@unesco.org.

The Assembly also requested Member States to consider funding and supporting the activities leading to the formulation and adoption of the Draft Strategic Plan for Capacity Development. The support can be in the form of funds for organising consultative meetings or in the form of staff

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secondment for assisting the Capacity Building Section and the intersessional working group in the development and formulation of the Draft Strategic Plan. I am counting on your full support and cooperation in this ambitious endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

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

Enclosure (1): Decision IOC-XXVII/Dec.(5.5.1)
Attachment to IOC Circular Letter No. 2496

Decision IOC-XXVII/Dec.(5.5.1)

The Assembly,

Taking note of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20 whereby the UNSD recognizes the importance of building the capacity of developing countries to be able to benefit from the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and their resources,

Having examined document IOC-XXVII/2 Annex 10,

Decides to set up an Intersessional Working Group for Developing a Draft Strategic Plan for Capacity Development with the annexed Terms of Reference;

Agrees that the regular budget for these activities will be considered as part of the overall IOC Programme and Budget resolution XXVII/DR.(6.1, 6.2);

Requests:

(i) the Executive Secretary to include the Strategic Plan for Capacity Development as an item on the Agenda of the Executive Council at its 47th session in 2014; and

(ii) Member States to consider funding and supporting the activities leading to the formulation and adoption of the Strategic Plan for Capacity Development.

Annex to IOC-XXVII, Dec.5.5.1

Draft Terms of Reference for the Intersessional Working Group for the Development of IOC Capacity Development Strategic Plan

Purpose

The Intersessional Working Group will develop a Capacity Development (CD) Strategic Plan for IOC. This plan will then be implemented through partnership with Member States, donors, UN Agencies, global financial institutions and the private sector.

Term

The Intersessional CD Strategy Group will be constituted at the 27th IOC Assembly and will operate until the 47th IOC Executive Council in 2014.

Functions

(a) Review documents given below to identify the relevant components that should be considered in an IOC CD strategy along with an outline of the strategy document

- IOC/INF-1313 – Baseline Study for an Assessment of National Capacities and Needs in Marine Research, Observation and Data/Information Management;
- IOC/INF-1211 – IOC Principles and Strategy for Capacity Building (2005);
- IOC/INF-1276 – Empowering Developing Countries to Sustainably Use Their Coastal Resources (Self Driven Capacity Building) Closure Report of the SIDA Funded Project -2010;

• Practices of States in the Fields of Marine Scientific Research and Transfer of Marine Technology: an update of the 2005 analysis of Member State responses to Questionnaire No 3 – [Ref to be filled in by the IOC Secretariat in the final report];

• IOC/INF-612 – UNESCO/IOC Comprehensive Plan for a Major Assistance Programme to Enhance the Marine Science Capabilities of Developing Countries (1985);

• Documents produced by IOC subsidiary bodies and sister organisations;

• Other documents relevant to this exercise.

(b) **Incorporate elements arising from the following considerations**

• Recent UN Conference outcome documents, especially Rio +20’s Outcome document “The Future we Want” and resolutions requesting actions in capacity development;

• The present High Level Objectives of IOC and its mandate as well as existing IOC programmes;

• Lessons learned from previous CD plans of IOC (Success stories and implementation problems);

• Gaps identified through prior assessments and surveys of capacities and needs requirements;

• Regional priorities as identified through the different IOC sub-commissions and relevant bodies and other IOC regional subsidiary bodies;

• Existing capacity development initiatives of Member States, other UN agencies and competent international organisations, for example, POGO and SCOR, with a view to developing partnerships, create synergies and avoid duplication;

• The problem faced by developing countries in not being able to retain qualified staff because of inadequate research infrastructure;

• Gender Equality, Priority Africa, SIDS and LDCs;

• The regional requirement for capacity as priorities may not be global.

(c) **Identify**

• IOC’s existing CD strengths and IOC’s unique intergovernmental CD niche

• The essential elements/pillars of IOC’s CD draft strategy (IOC-XXVII/2 Annex 10), consistent with IOC’s Medium Term Strategy, that will complement international CD partner development contributions;

• The need for a consistent level of extra-budgetary funding;

• Priorities for actions in relation to available resources focussing on specific geographical areas and specific science areas for effective and efficient capacity development, and informed by IOC’s regional bodies;

(d) **Prepare a report for consideration of the 47th IOC Executive Council in 2014**

**Composition**

• The Vice-Chairperson of the IOC for Group V, Prof Adoté Blim Blivi will serve as Chairperson and the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr Mitrasen Bhikajee will be the Technical Secretary of the Intersessional Working Group;
• The Working Group will be open to all IOC Member States;

**Working arrangements**

• The Working Group will conduct the majority of its business by electronic means;
• If appropriate, the Chairperson may convene a meeting in time, and for a long enough period, to prepare a report prior to the commencement of a session of the Executive Council;
• The Group will provide a report on all its activities to the 47th session of the Executive Council;
• Relevant documents would be made available before the Group meeting, in due time; and
• The Group will follow procedures for IOC Subsidiary Bodies, seeking to formulate its conclusions and recommendations through consensus.