IOC Circular Letter No. 2539
(Also available in French)

To: IOC National Official Coordinating Bodies of IOC Member States
Member States having participated in the intersessional and sessional working
groups on the Future of IOC during the 47th session of the IOC Executive Council

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 on the Future of IOC


In pursuance to the above-mentioned decision, the open-ended Intersessional Working Group is being re-convened under the chairmanship of Vice-chair Peter Haugan, with the assistance of past Chair Javier Valladares. Technical secretariat will be provided by Xenia Yvinec.

As per Decision EC-XLVII/Dec.4, the group will work by correspondence to provide proposals for each of the following issues to the IOC Assembly at its 28th Session in 2015:

(i) formulate a common message from IOC to UNESCO and other UN organizations about the societal benefits of the IOC mission, programmes and activities, and develop a strategy for dissemination, including preparation of information material on IOC for use in Member States,

(ii) develop recommendations for strengthening IOC mission implementation by linking the issues already identified during the process with the Medium-Term Strategy, revised with criteria of prioritization,

(iii) consider new or expanded roles for sub-commissions and other regional subsidiary bodies of IOC in achieving the strengthening under (ii),

(iv) consider the information provided under 8 (iii) […] and develop recommendations, as appropriate, in the context of its function as a joint specialized mechanism in the UN system.
I invite IOC national coordinating bodies to designate members to work within this intersessional working group, while maintaining close consultation with the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group, also chaired by Vice-chair Peter Haugan.

I would appreciate receiving your letters of nomination by 31 October 2014 at the very latest. The relevant documentation will be posted online as the work of the group progresses at: http://www.ioc-unesco.org/Future-14-15.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Wendy Watson-Wright
Executive Secretary, IOC

Attachment: (1): Decision IOC-XLVII, Dec.4 of the Executive Council
The Future of the IOC

The Executive Council,

Having considered the report of the Chair of the intersessional and sessional working groups on the Future of IOC (IOC/EC-XLVII/2 Annex 6),

Noting the consensus reached by IOC Member States that the IOC Governing Bodies should maintain in their agendas an item and mechanism to enable Member States to continuously reflect and exchange ideas on this highly strategic and important subject,

Recalling that the Assembly at its 27th Session suggested in Decision IOC-XXVII/Dec.5.1 that the areas of deliberation should focus on sharpening IOC’s identity, as well as on rationalized cooperation and communication between IOC and other organizations, and enhanced flexibility and adaptability of IOC governance,

Taking into account the documents of the 47th session of the Executive Council on the Future of the IOC which provided an overview of issues, suggested solutions and priorities, including the Report of the Chair of the Intersessional Working Group on “The Future of the IOC”, and the IOC Workshop Reports 250, 254, and 261 and Future 13-14/Inf.1,

Taking advantage of the self-assessment of the IOC in the context of the ongoing process of the External Audit of the Governance of UNESCO,

Acknowledging the relevance of the Medium-Term Strategy for the Future of the IOC,

Expresses its appreciation to Professor Peter M. Haugan for his leadership and contribution to the work of the intersessional and sessional working groups;

Requests the IOC officers on behalf of the Member States and with support from the secretariat to intensify efforts prior to the next IOC Assembly to:

(i) pursue clarification of the interpretation and implementation of the role of IOC as an intergovernmental body with functional autonomy within UNESCO,

(ii) explore regular and extrabudgetary funding mechanisms to provide stability and continuity to the work of IOC, consistent with article 10 of the IOC Statutes,

(iii) undertake an assessment of the established IOC functional autonomy within the UNESCO dispositions, and provide information on its degree of implementation for the use of the Intersessional Working Group on “The Future of the IOC”;

Requests Member States and the IOC officers, with support from secretariat to intensify efforts to:

(i) Raise the profile of IOC within the United Nations system to make sure that the unique mandate of IOC in the United Nations systems understood and communicated widely,

(ii) ensure enhanced visibility of IOC across the marine science and marine policy sector and stimulate involvement from youth and young scientists, including through taking advantage of modern social media technologies;

Decides that the open-ended intersessional working group on the Future of the IOC be reconvened under the chairmanship of Professor Haugan with a view to providing proposals for each of the following issues to the IOC Assembly at its 28th Session in 2015:

(i) formulate a common message from IOC to UNESCO and other UN organizations about the societal benefits of the IOC mission, programs and activities, and develop a strategy for...
dissemination, including preparation of information material on IOC for use in Member States,

(ii) develop recommendations for strengthening IOC mission implementation by linking the issues already identified during the process with the Medium-Term Strategy, revised with criteria of prioritization,

(iii) consider new or expanded roles for sub-commissions and other regional subsidiary bodies of IOC in achieving the strengthening under (ii),

(iv) consider the information provided under 8 (iii) above and develop recommendations, as appropriate, in the context of its function as a joint specialized mechanism in the UN system;

Decides that the intersessional working group shall work primarily by electronic means and should consider establishment of a task team on 10 (iv) and consider establishment of other task teams led by interested Member States to develop the different sub-tasks where appropriate.

Decides to request the IOC Assembly at its 28th Session to consider the appropriateness of presenting a special report on these issues for the consideration of UNESCO Governing Bodies, including the decisions taken on the Future of the IOC by the IOC Assembly at its 28th Session in 2015.