To: Members of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB)
Official National Coordinating Body for liaison with the IOC of IOC Member States

cc.: IOC Officers
Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, IOC Intergovernmental Subsidiary Bodies
Permanent Delegations/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions of UNESCO in IOC Member States
President and Executive Director, SCOR
Executive Director, ICSU
Relevant Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations

Subject: Thirteenth Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB-XIII), UNESCO, Paris, 3–5 May 2017

On behalf of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), I have the pleasure to invite you, in your capacity as representative of your country, to take part in IPHAB-XIII, which will be held from 3 to 5 May 2017, at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France.

The Panel was formed in accordance with Resolution XVI-4, adopted by the IOC Assembly at its sixteenth session (March 1991). At its Twenty-eight Session (June 2015), the IOC Assembly decided to convene a thirteenth session of the IPHAB in order to maintain and accelerate momentum in the development and implementation of the Harmful Algal Bloom Programme (see the text of the Decision IOC-XXVIII/Dec.8.3 attached).

The basic reason to form the IPHAB was the need to improve the managerial, scientific and financial resources available for the implementation of a global HAB Programme. A primary task is still to identify the required resources, so that we, the international community jointly, can continue to implement activities addressing capacity building, international cooperative research, and communication networks.

For those Member States who have not declared their intention to participate actively in the HAB Programme as per Resolution XVI-4 of 1991 yet and would like to do so, I highlight a paragraph of the resolution that refers to the composition of the IPHAB:
"The membership of the IPHAB is open to Member States of IOC which have declared to the Secretary IOC their involvement or intention to participate in the development and implementation of the HAB Programme on a global, regional, or national scale. The Panel shall include representatives of IOC Regional or other subsidiary bodies, and other interested international organizations particularly SCOR. Invitations to participate in the IPHAB activities may be extended to scientific experts at the request of the Panel and with the approval of Secretary IOC."

Member States should declare their interest in the programme by means of a letter of interest and the nomination of their representative to the IPHAB.

Member States who wish to change their nomination for the IPHAB are invited to inform the IOC Executive Secretary in the same way.

For the effectiveness of the IPHAB Intergovernmental Panel, it is crucial that nominated representatives have responsibilities at national HAB science or management activities, and that their seats on the Panel are acknowledged at the appropriate national level. It is through their nominations of national representatives to IPHAB that Member States are able to include their priorities for action, and help implement cooperative and productive efforts in finding solutions at the regional and global scales.

With reference to Resolution XVI-4, section 3 of its Annex, I would like to remind that IPHAB sessions are intergovernmental in nature and are considered as UNESCO category II meetings. Therefore, members of the IPHAB participating in the capacity of national representatives are expected to support their travel and per diem expenses from national sources.

IPHAB sessions are conducted in English only. Reports are prepared in English and in other IOC working languages as appropriate and required. The draft Provisional Agenda for the session is attached. The Provisional Agenda and documentation for the session will be sent to the IPHAB members in due time and be made available at the IPHAB home page at:


The major foci of the Thirteenth Session of IPHAB are tentatively:

1. Formulation/endorsement of specific objectives for Regional HAB Working Groups: IPHAB’s Regional HAB Working Groups are a critical link to Member States and can serve to highlight international priorities for research, capacity building, data, communications, and other technical support required to prevent, control or mitigate HABs and their public health and economic impacts. Each regional HAB working group will report on the priorities for its region and IPHAB will seek to strengthen regional HAB Programme components through formulation and endorsement of specific objectives for regional activities based upon this input from regional HAB working groups.

2. Capacity building: The aim of IPHAB capacity building activities is to strengthen the capacity of governments and agencies to monitor and manage harmful algal events and enhance the research capacity to deliver better forecasting tools and mitigation techniques. Based on the strategic plan for capacity building adopted by the Panel at its Sixth Session, and input from the regional HAB working groups, the IPHAB will assess progress and identify actions to be taken.

3. The Global HAB Research Programme: GEOHAB, as a decade-long international research framework, has facilitated and coordinated research to deliver greater understanding of harmful algal bloom ecology including improved and more operational detection as well as modelling and forecasting tools. The Panel will assess advances in the development of the follow-up programme GlobalHAB as decided by IPHAB-XI under a joint sponsorship by the IOC and SCOR.

4. Ciguatera, a plan for improved research and management. Continuing studies are increasing the certainty about the true incident rate for ciguatera. A plan for improved research and
management of Ciguatera was initiated by IPHAB at its Eleventh session. The Panel will assess progress in developing the plan and will decide on how to advance it further in the context of GlobalHAB as well as a joint IOC-IAEA-FAO-WHO interagency effort.

5. Global Assessment of HAB Events: At its Eleventh Session, IPHAB decided to develop a periodic Global Harmful Algal Bloom Status Report to provide: (i) a global status and overview of HAB events and their societal impacts; (ii) a global overview of the occurrence of toxin producing microalgae; and (iii) assess the status and probability of change in HAB frequencies, intensities, and range expansions resulting from global change. The Process of data compilation is ongoing by a team of data editors. The Panel will assess progress and advice on further development for a Global HAB Status Report.

The Panel will also be invited to discuss issues raised at the last session (IOC/IPHAB-XII/3s) including HAB species and ship’s ballast water; socio-economic impacts of HABs with regards to standardization of assessment methods and models; fund raising methods to sustain IPHAB activities either at global or regional levels; IPHAB approach and support to facilitate the participation of Member State scientists and other relevant counterparts in international HAB programmes.

The Agenda for the session is still open to other priorities expressed by Member States.

The Session will be organised as a series of discussion panels, each of which we seek to have a co-chair by two IPHAB members with research and managerial background respectively.

Based on its discussions the IPHAB will recommend to the next session of the IOC Assembly a work plan for the HAB Programme for 2018–2019.

We would be grateful to be informed as soon as possible, and preferably not later than 1 April 2017, on your governments’ position with regard to:

1. Attendance at the Thirteenth Session of the IPHAB;
2. Comments on the draft Agenda and suggestions for additional items requiring intergovernmental attention;
3. Designation of candidates to chair the discussion panels listed above and provision of coordination and planning thereof ahead of the session;
4. Nominations for Chair and Vice-chairship of the IPHAB to be sent not later than 1 April 2017. Candidates should submit their names, contact information as well as a curriculum vitae and a short statement outlining their views on the future of IPHAB. Nominations should be sent to Mr Henrik Enevoldsen by email to h.enevoldsen@unesco.org. Elected chairs of the IPHAB are expected to assist the Secretariat in implementing the work plan adopted by the Panel. They may need to participate in meetings, on-line discussions during the intersessional period of the Panel and be involved in the drafting of documents, and other activities in support of the IPHAB.

With the assurance of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary

Enclosures (3) :  
Annex 1: IOC-XXVIII/Dec.8.3 
Annex 2: Resolution XVI-4 and IPHAB Terms of Reference 
Annex 3: Draft Provisional Agenda (IOC/IPHAB-XIII/1 prov.)
Annex 1

Twenty-eighth Session of the Assembly

IOC-XXVIII/Dec.8.3

(Extract from Doc IOC-XXVIII/3)

Intergovernmental panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB)

8.3 HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS: 12TH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (IPHAB), 28-30 April 2015

1. The Chair of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), Mr Gires Usup (Malaysia), introduced this item and presented the report, work plan, eight decisions and two recommendations of the 12th Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms Paris, 28–30 April 2015.

2. The Chair IPHAB emphasized the decisions and recommendations made regarding: an international strategy for ciguatera fish poisoning, for the joint IOC-SCOR research initiative on HABs in a changing world to meet societal needs; the development of the Global HAB Status Report; long-term capacity building; and the regional development of the Programme. He also stressed the unique role IOC can play in resolving scientific issues and management solutions to the problems encountered by the desalination industry due to HABs, provided that the adequate extra-budgetary funds are identified for the Complementary Additional Programme.

3. The Chair advocated for participation of Member States in IPHAB sessions and recognition of the HAB programme in the appropriate national agencies and institutions.

4. The Chair IPHAB urged the IOC Member States to carefully match the HAB Programme work plan with national priorities and potential funding in order to actively interact with and support its implementation.

5. The Assembly expressed appreciation of the progress made and the priorities set for the biennium 2016–2017. Member States referred to the continuous, and in several cases, increasing major public health threats from neurotoxins, impact on aquaculture, massive fish kills, damage to coastal ecosystems, and impacts of Ciguatera Fish Poisoning (CFP). The Assembly acknowledged that HAB occurrences may be determined by both natural and anthropogenic factors and that the IOC should continue to pursue the science for improved management and mitigation through GlobalHAB. Particular importance was given to the interagency strategy on CFP under development and implementation. The Assembly recognized that the Global HAB Status Report will be important for informing public opinion and the broader international community.

6. The Assembly stressed the need for effective and continuous coordination between regional and global IOC activities on HAB to ensure benefits of complementarity and synergy.

7. Several Member States expressed their willingness to directly support work plan implementation; Spain expressed its willingness to support the continued publication of the IOC newsletter Harmful Algae News; the USA expressed it willingness to provide scientific expertise and financial resources to address CFP; Malaysia offered to host a workshop on biotoxins for South East Asia; and Colombia expressed commitment to contribute to capacity development activities on HAB. India expressed its wish to associate with IPHAB.
8. The representatives of 12 Member States took the floor. The following Member States chose to provide records of their plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: Australia, Canada, Colombia, France, India, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand.


**Harmful Algal Blooms**

The Assembly,

Recalling IOC Resolution XVI-4, which established the Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms,

Having considered the Executive Summary Report of the 12th Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), its eight Decisions and two Recommendations and the work plan for 2016–2017 adopted at the Session (IOC/IPHAB-XII/3),

Expresses its appreciation for the support for the HAB Programme provided by Member States through regional HAB groups, the IOC Science and Communication Centre on Harmful Algae, provision of experts, and through the provision of HAB data, and financial and in-kind contributions to IOC;

Noting with satisfaction that IPHAB has continued to provide an efficient mechanism to respond to new HAB-related problems experienced by Member States, to leverage resources from diverse sources to focus on priority needs, and to establish partnerships with relevant organizations,

Endorses the Executive Summary Report of IPHAB-XII and the recommendations contained therein (IOC/IPHAB-XII/3s);

Agrees to the HAB Work Plan for 2016–2017 (Recommendation IPHAB-XII.2) and to consider it in the overall IOC Programme and Budget resolution XXVIII-3;

Urges funding agencies and institutions in IOC Member States to assist in the mobilization of funding that will ensure the implementation of the IPHAB Work Plan for 2016–2017 (~US$ 460.000 for full implementation).

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE *ad hoc* IOC-FAO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

The IOC Assembly, at its Sixteenth Session, Paris 7-21 March 1991, adopted the following resolution with respect to the formation of an *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms in order to identify adequate resources for a sufficiently broad programme to solve some of the real problems caused by algal blooms:

Resolution XVI-4

**AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS**

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Recalling that the IOC, at the Fourteenth Session of its Assembly, endorsed the development of the sub-programme on Harmful Algal Blooms, and that the Twenty-third Executive Council, through its Resolution EC-XXIII.1, endorsed the programme development so far,

Being aware of the increasing socio-economic risks posed by toxic algae and harmful algal blooms to marine organisms, fisheries, aquaculture, human health and the coastal environment,

Approves the formation of an *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms, with the Terms of Reference shown in the Annex hereto;

Invites FAO to co-sponsor the *ad hoc* Panel;

Invites Member States which intend to be involved in the implementation of a programme on Harmful Algal Blooms to nominate their representatives for the *ad hoc* Panel and inform the Secretary IOC accordingly;

Decides to review, at the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly, the Terms of Reference of the *ad hoc* Panel, in conjunction with the Commission's review of the overall organization of the OSLR Programme;

Instructs the Secretary to convene the First Session of the *ad hoc* Panel as soon as possible.

Annex

Terms of Reference of the *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms

1. **FUNCTIONS**

The *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms is established to meet the scientific, managerial, implementation, and resource needs of the Harmful Algal Blooms Programme.

The Panel will carry out the following functions:

1.1 Review and identify programme requirements;

1.2 Promote efficient and cost-effective implementation of the HAB programme and prepare recommendations on this implementation to the Assembly and Executive Council;
1.3 Identify the resources necessary to meet HAB programme needs;

1.4 Ensure effective interaction and communication with regional intergovernmental (e.g., ICES, ICSEM and GFCM) as well as regional and global non-governmental (e.g., SCOR) organizations involved in research on toxic algae and harmful algal blooms; and

1.5 Report to the Twenty-fifth Session of the Executive Council and the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly.

2. COMPOSITION

The membership of the Ad hoc Panel is open to Member States of IOC (and FAO, if it agrees to co-sponsor the Panel) which have declared to the Secretary IOC their involvement or intention to participate in the development and implementation of the Harmful Algal Bloom Programme on a global, regional, or national scale. The Panel shall include the Chairman of the OSLR Guiding Group of Experts, representatives of IOC regional and other subsidiary bodies, and of other interested international organizations, particularly SCOR. Invitations to participate in Panel activities may be extended to scientific experts at the request of the Panel and with the approval of the Secretary of the IOC.

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSIONS

3.1 The Panel will, prior to the closure of each Session, elect from its members a Chairman who will serve in that capacity until the closure of the next Session.

3.2 The Sessions shall, in principle, be arranged without financial costs to IOC. Sessions will be conducted, documentation will be provided, and the report of each session will be prepared in English and in other working languages of the Commission as appropriate and required.

3.3 Secretariat support for the Panel will be provided by the Secretary IOC.

* The IPHAB is by decision of the IOC Assembly permanently established and the prefix ad-hoc does no longer apply
INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Thirteenth Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms
UNESCO, Paris, 3-5 May 2017

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. OPENING
1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS.
1.2 DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE IOC ASSEMBLY

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS
2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
2.2 DESIGNATION OF RAPPORTEUR

3. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE IOC HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM PROGRAMME AND THE IPHAB STRATEGY

4. HABP DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD
4.1 CHAIR IPHAB AND TECHNICAL SECRETARY’S SUMMARY REPORT (on activities, implementation of IPHAB-XII decisions, and recommendations of IPHAB groups)
4.1. REGIONAL HAB WORKING GROUPS
4.2. IPHAB XII TASK TEAMS
4.3. WORKSHOPS CALLED FOR BY IPHAB XII
4.4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

5. MAJOR ONGOING AND EMERGING ISSUES REQUIRING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION (INCLUDING INTERACTION WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES AND ORGANIZATIONS)
This agenda item will be organized as a series of Panels with a potential outcome of new recommendations or resolutions:
5.1 FORMULATION/ENDORSEMENT OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR REGIONAL HAB WORKING GROUPS
5.2. CAPACITY BUILDING
5.3 SCOR-IOC GLOBAL HAB
5.4. CIGUATERA, A PLAN FOR IMPROVED RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT
5.5. GLOBAL ASSESSMENT of HAB EVENTS

6. REVIEW AND FINALIZATION OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF IPHAB-XII

7. WORKPLAN 2018–2019 INCLUDING OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES AND NEEDS

8. OPERATION OF THE IPHAB
9. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11. ADOPTION OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12. CLOSURE