INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Twenty-Ninth Session of the Assembly
UNESCO, Paris, 21-29 June 2017

DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT

Part 1

(Agenda items 1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.3, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2)
1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

The Chair, Professor Peter M. Haugan, opened the 29th session of the IOC Assembly at 10 a.m. on Wednesday 21 June 2017 in Room II at the UNESCO Headquarters. He welcomed the new officers recently elected in the following subsidiary bodies of the Commission: IOCARIBE, IODE, and WESTPAC.

UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, addressed the IOC Assembly (complete text in Annex____).

The Director-General called IOC a flagship UNESCO activity and recalled the recent very successful United Nations Conference on the Ocean. She emphasized the need to improve communication about ocean issues and to work closely with civil society to educate public opinion and to ensure that ocean science supports adequate policies. This work must be initiated in the regions. The IOC of UNESCO has established Regional Sub-commissions and we can build upon them, by working with civil society. The Director-General shared her conviction that the ‘Decade of Oceans’ will give us great potential to work on visibility of the ocean science and ensure broad outreach of that work. Success of the future work will be had by establishing adequate partnerships. The Assembly warmly welcomed the address by the Director-General and her responses to the questions and comments made by Member States. The Assembly gave the Director General a round of applause in recognition of her genuine and major support to the work of IOC.


The Chair invited participants to visit the exhibition in the Foyer. He thanked, on behalf of the Assembly, the Marine Technology Society (USA) for hosting the reception at the end of the second day and several partners for sponsoring coffee/tea services and events during the session: Japan, Canada, Germany, Republic of Korea, Norway and the Marine Technology Society.

The representatives of three 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: ___________.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair reminded that the Executive Council, acting as the Steering Committee for this Assembly session, examined the revised provisional agenda for the session and noted there was no request for supplementary items as per Rule of Procedure 8. In April, the IOC was apprised of a proposal submitted to the Director-General to establish the International Training Centre on Operational Oceanography hosted by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) of Ministry of Earth Sciences, as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre. Item 3.4.6 was added on the revised provisional agenda.

The Chair agreed with the proposal from one Member State that coffee breaks would be cancelled in the case that no support for the breaks has been offered.

The representative of 1 Member State took the floor. The following Member State chose to provide records of its plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: ___________.
See Decision IOC-XXIX/2 (I) at the end of item 2.

2.2 DESIGNATION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

The representatives of three 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: ___________.

See Decision IOC-XXIX/2 (II) at the end of item 2.

2.3 ESTABLISHEMENT OF INTRASESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Referring to the recommendations made by the Executive Council (EC-L/Dec.3.3) on this item, acting as the steering committee for the present session, the Chair reminded of the mandate of the three statutory sessional committees, the open-ended composition thereof, and the working arrangements made for their meetings.

With reference to the recommendations of the Executive Council at its 48th session, the Chair proposed the establishment of one sessional working group on item 9.2. He then invited proposals for sessional working groups.

No representatives of Member States took the floor.

See Decision IOC-XXIX/2 (III) at the end of item 2.

2.4 INTRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTATION TIMETABLE AND MEMORIAL LECTURES

The Executive Secretary introduced this item. He reviewed briefly the list of working documents and reminded the Assembly that the report would be focused on decisions. Referring to IOC-XXIX/Inf.1, the Executive Secretary reminded that draft decisions would be agreed to during the discussion of each agenda item. The Action Paper, intentionally drafted as a pre-report and completed by a summary of the discussion, was to be submitted for adoption under item 12 as possible during the plenary session or alternatively by correspondence after the session. Dr Ryabinin reminded the Assembly that one Draft Resolution was received by the deadline of 16 June. He invited delegates to consider the online evaluation questionnaire concerning governing body session working arrangements (Web Page TBA) as early as possible and to complete it before the discussion on working arrangements in item 12. Member States that wished to have specific, particularly important, plenary interventions recorded, were invited to provide written records thereof in one of the four working languages of the Commission, to be annexed to the report, in their original language as an informational annex to this report. A template and a dedicated e-mail address (iocgovbody@unesco.org) was set up to this end (IOC-XXIX/Inf.1 Add.).

With reference to the timetable for the session, the Executive Secretary informed about the interpretation arrangements during the session. Meetings of the Financial Committee benefitted from English/French interpretation.

The Executive Secretary elaborated on the second day entirely dedicated to item 4 ‘IOC and the Future of the Ocean’ and the holding of a special discussion forum to share views on the IOC proposal for a Decade of ocean science for sustainable development with partner organizations. The IOC Anton Bruun Memorial Lecture on ‘Deoxygenation – Declining oxygen in the world’s ocean and coastal waters’ was delivered by Dr Véronique Garçon (France) in this context. Day-2 was also dedicated to the memory of Professor Mário Ruivo, past IOC Executive Secretary and Head of the Portuguese delegation with a special tribute in presence of his wife.
Dr Suchana ‘Apple’ Chavanich, Deputy Director, Chula Unisearch and Associate Professor at the Chulalongkorn University of Thailand delivered the IOC N.K. Panikkar Memorial lecture on the theme ‘Capacity Development and Transfer of Technology: a key to restoration, conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs in the Western Pacific’. Following their presentation, Dr Garçon and Dr Chavanich were awarded the IOC Anton Bruun medal and the IOC N.K. Panikkar Medal respectively.

No representatives of Member States took the floor.

The Assembly adopted Decision IOC-XXIX/2 below.

Organization of the Session

The Assembly,

I. Agenda

Adopts the agenda and the timetable of work as set out in document IOC-XXIX/1 Prov. Rev. and Add. Rev.2;

II. Rapporteur

On a proposal of Norway, seconded by Japan,

Designates Mr Atanas Palazov of Bulgaria, Rapporteur for its present session to assist the Chairperson and the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the draft provisional report of the Session;

III. Sessional Committees and Working Groups

Establishes the following sessional open-ended committees and working group and referred to them the following agenda items and responsibilities:

Financial Committee: to examine the financial implications of draft decisions/resolutions, workplans of subsidiary bodies and prepare a resolution under items 3.2, 3.3 and 11.1; under the chairship of Ariel H. Troisi (Argentina, Vice-chair). Ksenia Yvinec provided the Secretariat support to the Financial Committee.

Resolutions Committee: to report on all draft resolutions duly presented for consideration at the session; under the chairship of Terry Schaeffer (USA). Julian Barbière provided the Secretariat support to the Resolutions Committee.

Nominations Committee (to examine all proposals of candidates for the elections to the chair, vice-chairs and to the Executive Council at the present session, and to report on them – item 11.2): under the chairship of Sang-Kyung Byun (Republic of Korea) with the following Member States participating: Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Gabon, India, Japan, Malaysia, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Spain, Togo, Turkey and USA. Thorkild Aarup and Salvatore Aricó provided the Secretariat support to the Nominations Committee.

Establishes also one sessional working group on the IOC relevant Issues related to the United Nations Preparatory Committee on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Prepcom) – item 9.2: under the chairship of Ariel H. Troisi (Argentina). Julian Barbière and Ward Appeltans provided the Secretariat support to the group.
3. IOC MATTERS AND REPORTS

3.1 STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE STATE OF IOC

In accordance with rule of procedure 8.1(a), the Chair delivered an oral statement on recent developments in the work of the Commission and perspectives for the coming years (Annex ____).

The Chair highlighted his attendance on behalf of the IOC to high level meetings, including the UN Ocean Conference June 2017 in New York, engaging with senior stakeholders on the importance of the IOC programmes to the global ocean agenda. The Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development towards: The Ocean We Need for the Future We Want has gained momentum and wide-ranging support. The Decade can provide a framework to support many platforms, beyond the SDG-14, sustaining ocean services and capacity development.

The Assembly thanked the Chair for his remarks and leadership. The need to continue to develop communications at all levels, within UNESCO, regional and within global programmes was highlighted.

The representatives of eight 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: ____________.

3.2 REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE LAST SESSION

3.2.1 Report on Programme and Budget Implementation

In accordance with Rules of Procedure 8(b) and 49, the Executive Secretary reported on the work accomplished by the Commission since the 49th session of the IOC Executive Council (Paris, 7–10 June 2016) and on the budget execution 2016. He also provided a brief outline of the 2017 budget (IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 2).

Dr Ryabinin reminded the Assembly that the Secretariat had to operate for a third biennium with a regular budget of Member States assessed contributions to UNESCO reduced to the actual cash inflow of the Organization.

Based on the adoption by the UNESCO General Conference at its 38th session in November 2015 of the Zero Nominal Grown Plus (US$ 667 M) Programme and Budget for 2016–2017 (38 C/5) and the corresponding US$ 518 M Expenditure Plan, the budgetary allocations for the IOC were set as follows:

- US$ 13,860,900 to the IOC in the ZNG+ US$ 667 M budget for UNESCO
- US$ 10,155,000 to the IOC in the ZNG+ US$ 518 M expenditure plan for UNESCO

The Executive Secretary recalled that the Assembly (June 2015) in its Resolution XXVIII-3 ‘Financial Matters of the Commission’ expressed its satisfaction with the budgetary allocations proposed for the IOC in the UNESCO Budget for 2016–2017 (Draft 38 C/5) and the IOC Executive Council (June 2016) in its Resolution EC-XLIX.2 confirmed that the workplans for 2016–2017 developed by the Secretariat and presented in Part II of document IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 2 were fully consistent with the IOC Assembly guidance. He further reminded the Assembly that while the allocation of US$ 10,155,000 represented a nominal increase of US$ 1.5 M compared to the 2014–2015 biennium, it still represented 85 % of the approved fully-funded budget for 2014–2015 and 73 % of the approved fully-funded budget for 2016–2017.

At the same time, he stressed the importance of acknowledging the efforts of the Director-General to preserve the Commission's budget to the extent possible and despite the
overall cashflow constraints faced by the Organization, which allowed the IOC to strengthen tsunami and coastal sea-level hazard preparedness and awareness with focus on SIDS, increase its engagement with UN institutions and processes with regard to Ocean SDG objectives and climate change adaptation and mitigation and to ensure at least partial restoration of funding to core ocean research and observational activities.

In terms of addressing the most pressing agreed staffing needs, the IOC could finally create a full-time P4 IOCARIIBE Secretary in Cartagena, Colombia, and a new professional post to coordinate the work on ocean warming and acidification – one of the SDG 14 targets for which the Commission has been designated as a custodian. In addition, through a combination of regular budget resources and a voluntary contribution to the IOC Special Account by the Government of the Netherlands, the IOC was able to maintain its contributions to the functioning of the Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre.

He further reported that the Secretariat efforts in terms of extrabudgetary resource mobilization continue to be guided by the Complementary Additional Programme (CAP) for 2016–2017 as adopted by the IOC Executive Council in Resolution EC XLIX.2 and the allotment of extrabudgetary contributions to the IOC Special Account followed the budgetary framework endorsed in the same resolution. Document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 2 proposes adjustment to this framework to better reflect the emerging needs and actual contribution pattern. The document also contains additional information, namely as regards the human resources of the Commission, in response to the UNESCO External Auditor’s recommendations.

The Executive Secretary presented a succinct summary of the accomplishments of the Commission during the intersessional period (IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 1), focusing in particular on the main strategic aspects related to the first edition of the Global Ocean Science Report, contribution to the IPCC Special Report on climate change, oceans and the cryosphere, follow up to COP-21 and COP-22 in terms of the importance of ocean observations for climate change adaptation and mitigation, polar matters and Arctic research in particular. He elaborated on the successes and challenges related to the operationalisation of the IOC Capacity Development strategy and the need to further strengthen the co-design approach to achieve better integration between regional needs and priorities in the global objectives of the Commission. A major part of the presentation was devoted to the Commission’s role in the 2030 Agenda implementation and in particular the UN Oceans Conference in New York, 5–9 June 2017, as a specific SDG 14 implementation mechanism and the IOC’s initiative regarding an Ocean Science Decade ‘Towards the Ocean We Need for the Future We Want’.

In the course of a very constructive exchange, the majority of Member State speakers welcomed the programmatic choices made by the IOC leadership and complimented the Executive Secretary of IOC and his team on the quality of the report. The Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the exceptional level of IOC’s involvement in the UN Oceans Conference in New York, 5-9 June 2017 and the resulting unprecedented visibility of the Commission’s activity within the UN system and stakeholders’ communities in general. The initiative of an International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development ‘The Ocean We Need for The Future We Want’ gained considerable momentum through partnerships with other international organisations. The initiative has resulted in increased awareness of the IOC’s mission and mandate, consistent with its empowerment by the IOC Statutes ‘to act as a joint specialised mechanism of the organization of the United Nations…’ Member States expressed strong appreciation for this example of what such a small Secretariat team can achieve under the exceptional leadership of elected officers with the commitment of Member States. The Assembly highlighted the need to strengthen the donor base to reduce the risk of depending on a small group of bilateral donors and multilateral funding agencies and to ensure that IOC remains a truly Member States-driven organisation. Sustainable and predictable funding is crucial to the IOC’s core operational programmes in observations and data, information management and services. In this context, the importance of major national investments in global programmes should not be underestimated.
Capacity development, primarily in the core areas of the IOC's mandate but also expanded to newer initiatives like ocean literacy and support to young scientists, is a key IOC function. Regional subsidiary bodies are key to its successful implementation. Their work could benefit from sharing of best practices, with each and every one contributing invaluable and unique experience toward global success.

The representatives of 24 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: ___________.

The Assembly adopted Decision IOC-XXIX/3.2.1 below.

Report of the Executive Secretary

The Assembly,

Having examined documents IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 1 and IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 2 and Addendum,

Takes note of the report of the Executive Secretary on programme and budget implementation, including the report on budget execution 2016 and outline of 2017 budget, subject to further examination by the Financial Committee with a view of formulating draft resolution XXIX-(11.1) for discussion and adoption in plenary.

3.2.2 IOC External Audit Recommendation Follow-Up

The Executive Secretary introduced this item. He briefly informed the Assembly of the positive and constructive spirit in which the IOC Management Team approached the interaction with the UNESCO’s External Auditor, as he has already communicated to the IOC Executive Council at its 49th session. The report and the recommendations of the auditor were made available to the UNESCO Executive Board at its 200th session in October 2016 as documents 200 EX/20 Part II Rev. and 200 EX/20.INF.2 and shared with all Member States of the IOC through IOC Circular Letter 2643 of 26 September 2016. The Chair of the IOC Professor Peter M. Haugan was present during the UNESCO Executive Board discussions and his statement to the Board is available as Appendix I to document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 3.

The Executive Board in its decision 20.II invited the Director-General of UNESCO ‘to transmit documents 200 EX/20 Part II Rev. and 200 EX/20.INF.2 to the IOC for consideration by its appropriate Governing Bodies’.

The IOC Secretariat has subsequently elaborated a draft implementation plan which was shared with all Member States by the Chairman of the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group, IOC Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi in an email communication of 15 November 2016. All the relevant documentation, including formal written feedback received from France and Kuwait, can be found at the dedicated part of the IOC website: http://www.ioc-unesco.org/ifag-16-17.

The Chair then gave the floor to Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi who further elaborated on the intersessional consultations and the proposed way forward with the examination of this item by the Assembly, with the initial exchange of view in the plenary, following by an in-depth review within the sessional open-ended Financial Committee and concluding with the report of the Chair of the Financial Committee under item 11.1 and adoption of the Resolution on the Financial Matters of the Commission.

No representatives of 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: ___________.

The Assembly adopted Decision IOC-XXIX/3.2.2 below.
IOC External Audit Recommendation Follow-up

The Assembly,

Takes note of documents IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 3 et addenda, IOC/IODE-XXIV/3, 200 EX/20 Part II Rev. and 200 EX/20.INF.2, subject to the further examination by the Financial Committee with a view of formulating draft resolution XXIX-(11.1) for discussion and adoption in plenary.

3.2.3 Recommendations on Governance, Working Methods and Procedures of the Commission

The Executive Secretary briefly introduced this item referring to the development described in IOC Circular Letter 2670 of 9 May 2017.

He reminded the Assembly that at its 38th session the General Conference of UNESCO established an open-ended working group on governance, procedures and methods of work of the governing bodies of UNESCO (38 C/Resolution 101) under the chairmanship of the President of the General Conference Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa. Two sub-groups have been established to consider respectively:

- “Structure, composition and methods of work of the Governing Bodies (General Conference and Executive Board)”; Sub-Group 1 (2016) co-chaired by Norway and Philippines, and

The General Conference having invited all intergovernmental entities under review to inscribe, in 2016, if feasible, an item on their agenda concerning the follow-up to the recommendation of the External Auditor’s report contained in document 38 C/23, this item was included in the agenda of the IOC Executive Council at its 49th session in June 2016. The item was supported by document IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 10 which explores general governance issues including additional ways of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of preparing and organizing the work of the IOC governing bodies. This document was examined by the sessional working group on the ‘Future of IOC’, co-chaired by the IOC Chair Peter M. Haugan and Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi. The sessional working group benefitted from a presentation by the UNESCO working group co-chairs from Norway and the Philippines, who clarified the context and scope of this exercise. The ensuing exchange of views was highly constructive and informative, concluding with a consensus on the value of continuing this dialogue with a view of ensuring that the IOC specific role and status within UNESCO is adequately addressed.

However, in further addressing this issue under item 6.2 of its agenda, the Council regretted that the relevant working document IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 10 on the UNESCO Governance audit and its draft decision were not discussed in plenary. In particular, there was some discussion on the approach and timeline for preparing a contribution to the work of the General Conference Working Group on this issue. A consensus was reached on extending the consultation on this issue to all Member States during the intersessional period and on reporting the results to the next session of the Executive Council preceding the Assembly and the Assembly in 2017.

During the intersessional period, the President of the UNESCO General Conference addressed a letter to the IOC Chair, requesting him to provide some input and a response to a questionnaire to be examined by the Sub-Group 2. This document was reviewed by the Sub-Group 2 at its meeting on 28 February 2017.

In pursuance to decision EC-XLIX/6.2(II), the item was included in the agenda of the 50th session of the IOC Executive Council and in order to ensure a broad and inclusive consultative process, Circular Letter 2670 was sent to all IOC Member States inviting them to...
prepare for and actively participate in the open-ended Working Group on Governance on 20 June 2017 afternoon.

In order to provide further clarity on the Sub-Group 2 agenda and process, Mr Jesus Enrique G. Garcia II, Deputy Permanent Delegate of the Philippines and Sub-Group 2 Co-chair, briefly addressed the Executive Council.

Following the introduction of the item by the Executive Secretary the IOC Chair highlighted that the review of the governance is still a work in progress, with the Sub-Group 2 having its next meeting scheduled on 23 June 2017. He confirmed that he had kept close contact with the developments in Sub-group 2 and appreciated the openness and good communication with the Sub-group 2 co-chair about the emerging draft recommendations. Recognizing the preliminary character of these recommendations, the Chair suggested that the Assembly may consider it appropriate to await the outcome of the discussions among IOC Member States before suggesting a way forward in the short and longer perspective. He then passed the floor to the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi, who reported that the group had a very productive discussion from 15:00 to 16:30 on 20 June 2017. He then briefly summarised the main conclusions. that are also presented to the Assembly in document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 4.

The IOC Chair invited Member States to share their views on the subject in the plenary discussion so as to guide the more in-depth examination of this item by the sessional Financial Committee, with a view of reporting back to the plenary under item 11.1 and elaborating a proposal within the Draft Resolution on the Financial Matters of the Commission for adoption by the Assembly.

The representatives of 18 Member States took the floor. The speakers congratulated the IOC Chair and Vice-Chair Ariel H. Troisi for their oversight of this important matter. Member States particularly commended Vice-Chair Troisi for the excellent report of the 20 June meeting of the open-ended Working Group, which perfectly captures the discussion and reflects the view of all participating Member States that took the floor. The Assembly agreed that the IOC’s functional autonomy should remain at the forefront of any governance review. All speaker shared the opinion that UNESCO review process certainly provides food for thought and gives an overview of the best practices from all Intergovernmental and International Bodies (IIBs). It also prominently acknowledges the many best practices of the IOC, which are possibly at least partly due to its functional autonomy. The Assembly considered that as any healthy and strong organisation, the Commission should not be complacent but should voluntarily and constructively learn from others’ expertise and best practices, in the context of its own history, specificity and experience. The Assembly agreed that some of the draft recommendations are already being implemented, many others can be taken on board immediately without any change to the IOC’s fundamental texts, while others need to be approached with careful consideration and without undue haste. Member States of Group V informed of the outcome of their preliminary consultations on this matter in a side meeting. The Assembly was of the view that the draft recommendation to change the number of electoral groups to six by splitting Group V in Va and Vb should be considered with extreme care so as to ensure that procedural changes do not affect the substance of IOC’s work. The potential impact on the existing synergies and work efficiency, including in relation to IOCAFICA, needs to be carefully assessed. The Assembly reached consensus that, given the fragile financial situation of the Commission and the fact that it is currently at a crossroads in a number of crucial substantive issues, these should be given first priority and not the matters of process. Issues like the composition of the Bureau, number and composition of electoral groups etc, need to be considered in a holistic manner, placing credence in a temperate approach and not the one of ‘one size fits all’.

The Assembly adopted Decision IOC-XXIX/3.2.3 below.
Recommendations on Governance, Working Methods and Procedures of the Commission

The Assembly,

Takes note of documents IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 4 and Co-Chairs’ Draft Rev.1 (as of 12 June 2017) of the UNESCO General Conference Working Group on Governance Sub-group 2, subject to the further examination by the Financial Committee with a view of formulating a proposal in draft resolution XXIX-(11.1) for discussion and adoption in plenary.

3.3 DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2018-2021 (39 C/5) AND SECOND PHASE OF THE IOC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY

52 The Executive Secretary introduced this item. He explained that the Secretariat’s proposal for the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018–2021 (39 C/5) as presented in document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 5, covers the second and final quadrennium of the Medium-term Strategy, 2014–2021. It is consistent with the guiding principles, mission and vision statement, functions, high-level and strategic objectives and global priorities defined therein.

53 The Executive Secretary attracted the attention of the Assembly to the fact that, in pursuance to the decisions of the IOC Executive Council in June 2016, endorsed by the UNESCO Executive Board in October 2016, the IOC is for the first time presented in a stand-alone chapter of the UNESCO C/5, thus highlighting its specific functioning, intervention modalities and key role in the achievement of the SDG 14 on the Ocean.

54 At the time when the IOC’s work and competences are in high demand, reconfirmed by the Member States responses to the UNESCO 39 C/5 questionnaire that place SDG 14 on Ocean and SDG 13 on Climate Change among the five highest priorities for more than 50% of responding Member States, the Commission has undertaken an extensive mapping exercise, linking key aspects of its mandate and core functions to the new international strategic frameworks and the current proposal for the IOC Draft Programme and Budget for 2018–2021. This exercise also builds on the priorities and guidelines agreed by the IOC Governing Bodies, including the June 2016 review by the IOC Executive Council of the Strategic Results Report (IOC/EC-49/2 Annex 3), the Executive Roadmap “Future of the IOC” (IOC/EC-49/2 Rev.), and the recommendations of the External Auditor of UNESCO in his report on the audit of IOC conducted in April 2016 (200 EX/20.INF.2).

55 These proposals were subject to an in-depth discussion by the IOC Officers at their annual meeting in Paris, 16-18 January 2017. They further benefitted from the co-design approach to programming through integration of regional priorities into global programmes objectives established in consultation with IOC’s Regional Subsidiary Bodies.

56 In preparing it, the Secretariat’s intention was to sharpen its action and to fully reflect the critical intergovernmental value of the IOC to its communities of stakeholders.

57 In accordance with UNESCO Member States’ decisions, the Programme and Budget proposals submitted to the 201st session of the Executive Board contain two scenarios: one based on the regular budget of US$ 667 M for UNESCO ($14.5 M for IOC) and one based on the regular budget of US$ 653 M for UNESCO ($13.9 M for IOC). These are presented in Part I of document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 5.

58 In addition, two corresponding expenditure plans are prepared based on the expected assessed contributions for 2018–2019: one based on regular budget of US$ 518 M for UNESCO ($10.7 M for IOC) and one based on regular budget of US $507 M for UNESCO ($10.2 M for IOC). These are presented in Part II of the document.

59 In accordance with the Financial Regulations applicable to the IOC, the draft budgetary appropriations 2018-2019 for the IOC Special Account are proposed for the consideration of
the Assembly (in appendix to IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 5). Any funds contributed to the Special Account, together with voluntary contributions channelled through Funds-in-Trust mechanism and additional appropriations to regular budget, would count towards the achievement of the IOC’s extrabudgetary resource mobilization targets that will be prepared at a later stage, once there is further clarification on the final retained budgetary scenario. The document will be submitted to the IOC Executive Council at its 51st session. Similarly to the Report on Budget Execution 2016 and outline of 2017 budget (IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 2), document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 5 contains additional information, namely as regards the human resources of the Commission, in response to the UNESCO External Auditor’s recommendations.

In addressing the second matter under this item, the Executive Secretary recalled that the IOC Medium-Term Strategy, 2014-2021 was subject to very constructive and extensive discussions at the 27th session of the IOC Assembly, 26 June – 5 July 2017, a long in-depth examination by the sessional Financial Committee, followed by its ‘word-by-word’ adoption in plenary as part B of Resolution XXVII-2. As a result, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy reflects the shared vision and collectively agreed objectives of the Commission’s Member States and its conceptual framework of functions provides a solid base for programmatic continuity over the two consequent quadrenniums. In this context, the draft update prepared by the Secretariat for consideration by the Assembly in document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 6 concerns only the ‘introduction’ part of the Medium-Term Strategy which could, it is opinion, benefit from an updated reference to the international development agenda and the main frameworks that guide the work of the Commission. This will also allow to address Recommendation N°1 of the UNESCO External Auditor who in his report on the audit of the Commission suggests that ‘IOC’s medium-term strategy should take into account the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.’

The Executive Secretary concluded by inviting the Assembly to provide its recommendations on both subjects that he presented under this agenda item in the plenary discussion so as to guide the more in-depth examination of this item by the sessional Financial Committee, with a view of reporting back to the plenary under item 11.1 and elaborating a proposal within the Draft Resolution on the Financial Matters of the Commission for adoption by the Assembly.

The Assembly congratulated the Executive Secretary and his team for the quality of provided documentation. The fact that the Commission appears now as a stand-alone chapter of the UNESCO Draft 39 C/5 was acknowledged as a tremendous achievement. Member States expressed concern regarding the sustainability of the IOC’s funding base, and in particular as regards its staffing, with a very small team supporting the ever-growing mission and expectations of delivery from Member States in the context of SDG 14. The Assembly invited the Executive Secretary to prepare a comprehensive study to serve as a basis for the formulation of a human resources strategy until 2030, to guide Member States investments. This study should cover the main staffing priorities and gaps, as well as future requirements in terms of expertise and succession planning.

The representatives of three Member States and one observer 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: ___________.

The Assembly adopted Decision IOC-XXIX/3.3 below.

**Introduction to Draft Programme and Budget 2018–2021 and Second Phase of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy**

The Assembly,

Having examined documents IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 5 Rev. and Annex 6,

Takes note of the Executive Secretary’s introduction of these matters, subject to the further
examination by the Financial Committee with a view of formulating draft resolution XXIX-(11.1) for discussion and adoption in plenary.

4. IOC AND THE FUTURE OF THE OCEAN

4.1 IOC ROAD MAP

The Executive Secretary briefly introduced this item. He recalled that the IOC Executive Council at its 49th session in June 2016 considered the presentation by the IOC Chair of the work accomplished by the Officers and the Secretariat since the 28th session of the IOC Assembly (18-25 June 2015) and the document IOC/INF-1337. In its decision EC- XLIX/5, the Council expressed its appreciation to Professor Peter M. Haugan and to the IOC Officers for their leadership and guidance to the Secretariat in the intersessional period and endorsed the course of action proposed in the “Roadmap”, including the Concept note: A Second International Decade of (Integrated) Ocean Exploration, 2021–2030. The document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 8 proposes for consideration by the Assembly the slightly revised version of the ‘Roadmap’, based on the discussion and Member States’ recommendation expressed at the Executive Council.

The Executive Council also acknowledged the work done by the Officers and the Secretariat in developing the messages to be addressed to specific audiences about the societal benefits of IOC’s mission, programmes and activities as presented to it in Appendix I to document IOC/EC-XLIX/2 Annex 9 Rev. The Member States encourages the Chair, the Officers and the Executive Secretary to finalise these messages taking into account the discussions at the 49th session of the Executive Council, to share them with Member States through a circular letter and to convey these messages widely and in a timely fashion to UNESCO and other United Nations organizations. The final version of the messages was approved by the IOC Officers during their annual meeting in Paris, 16–18 January 2017, translated into the four official languages of the Commission and shared with all Member States through Circular letter number 2670.

The Executive Secretary concluded by inviting the Assembly to consider continuing such constructive intersessional work on the main strategic issues under the leadership of the IOC Chair and the Officers as elected representative of their regions, broadly engaging all Member States and informing, where appropriate, the work of the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group.

The Assembly expressed its appreciation to the leadership of the IOC for a comprehensive and balanced document that truly captures the complexity of the many issues and aspects of the IOC’s work, including their societal impact. The majority of speakers highlighted that the operationalisation of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy is and shall remain at the heart of the IOC. Capacity development drives IOC’s mandate supports its Member States and is instrumental to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other major international development frameworks.

The Assembly agreed that the IOC must maintain a focus on areas where it makes a unique contribution by fostering sustained ocean observations and, even more importantly, their application and use for society and policy-making. IOC’s demonstrated success in organizing tsunami early warning systems between the scientific community and emergency response services is a perfect example of the Commission’s ability to foster linkages between various disciplines and sectors. Effective capacity development in fields such as operational oceanography, data and information management and related services, and adaptation to climate change is instrumental in addressing the difficulties of developing countries and SIDS. IOC’s Regional Subsidiary Bodies are the key vehicles of this priority task. The IOC’s key function enabling the transfer of marine technology is of paramount importance due to the ever-increasing role of new technologies in ocean science such as the transition from ship-based observations to the use of autonomous robotic systems to measure geochemical parameters etc. Action plans need to be focused on the development of innovative
management that combines research, observations, services, enabling policies and sharing of best practices.

Taking into account the financial constraints, the Assembly was of the opinion the success of this work would only be made possible through strategic partnerships and outreach towards all major stakeholders, including the civil society. Recent initiatives in ocean literacy and dissemination of scientific knowledge at grassroot level will play an important role in this regard.

The Assembly agreed that the Roadmap presents an excellent foundation for representing its objectives to all partners and stakeholders. The Roadmap needs to be kept alive and built on, with Member States continuing to enrich it by proffering additional inputs, including during the intersessional period.

The Chair invited all Member States, who so wish, to submit their proposals, additions and comments on the Roadmap in writing so that the Secretariat can include them in an Annex to the report and use as guidance in the intersessional work. He also confirmed that the document title will be corrected to ‘The IOC Roadmap’.

The representatives of 15 Member States and 1 observer 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: ___________.

The Assembly adopted Decision IOC-XXIX/4 below:

The Assembly,

I. IOC Roadmap

Having examined document IOC-XXIX/2 Annex 8,

Expresses its appreciation to Professor Peter M. Haugan and to the IOC Officers for their leadership and guidance to the Secretariat in the intersessional period;

Encourages Member States to use the common IOC messages as a reference to assist them in raising the profile of the mandate and work of the Commission and related capabilities in fostering a common national approach in intergovernmental fora;

Entrusts the Officers of the Commission, in consultation and with the support of IOC Member States, with the mission of further clarifying the special status of IOC within UNESCO in particular, but not limited to, in connection with the ongoing process of the open-ended Working Group on governance, procedures, and working methods of UNESCO and dependent funds, programmes and entities, and of exploring, in consultation with the Member States, of means of ensuring to the Commission the required institutional and operational sustainability, including the possibilities offered by Article 10 of the IOC Statutes;

Decides that the inter-sessional exchange on this matter and other strategic ones that may arise, should continue under the leadership of the IOC Officers engaging broad participation by Member States through electronic consultations, with a view of providing timely guidance to the Secretariat and informing the work of the Intersessional Financial Advisory Committee, where applicable.

4.2 PROPOSAL OF AN INTERNATIONAL (UN) DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The IOC Chairperson introduced this item recalling that, at its 49th session, the IOC Executive Council encouraged the IOC Officers and Executive Secretary to pursue the development of the concept of an International decade on ocean science for sustainable development (2021–2030) – Towards the ocean we need for the future we want – potentially
under the auspices of the United Nations. Following consultations with IOC Officers in January 2017, document IOC/INF-1341 describing the preliminary objectives of the Decade was prepared. The document provides a broad rationale and context, outlines possible goals and activities, themes and expected results. The document is intended to serve as a starting point for further elaboration in discussion with Member States of IOC, UNESCO, and the UN as well as other UN bodies and external collaborators.

Given the potential contribution that the Decade could bring to Member States in providing a framework for concerted action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, the proposal was presented to UN Member States by the IOC Chair during the SDG 14 Conference Preparatory Committee (15-16 February) in New York. During the UN Member States consultations held in March, April and May 2017 in relation to the “Call for Action” Outcome document to be adopted by the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, several Member States expressed their support to have the Decade proposal reference in the “Call for Action” document. In May 2017, the IOC Executive Secretary wrote to the heads of UN Agencies, international organizations, scientific unions that have an interest in ocean science with a view to engage them in the development of the Decade proposal.

Prior to the plenary consideration of this agenda item, a high-level Discussion Panel took place and was opened by UNESCO Director-General. The following speakers took part in the Panel: Dessima Williams, Special Adviser to the President of the UN General Assembly; Robert Ward, Secretary General of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO); Heide Hackmann, Executive Director, International Council for Science (ICSU); Wenjian Zhang, Assistant Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO); Satish Shenoi, Director, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services; Lisa Emilia Svensson, Coordinator, Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch, UN Environment; and Gunnar Kullenberg, former IOC Executive Secretary.

All Member States that took the floor expressed their strong support for the establishment of the international decade under the auspices of the United Nations. The Assembly welcomed the work of the IOC officers and Secretariat in taking further the development of the Decade concept note during the intersessional period and in raising visibility on this initiative, including at the UN Ocean Conference.

The Assembly noted that the Decade could provide an opportunity, through the IOC, to:

- Raise public awareness on the role of the ocean and engage civil society in communication activities;
- Strengthen the generation of new marine assessments and ocean information at regional and global level;
- Address the science issues related to ocean and climate underpinning the UNFCCC Paris Agreement;
- Bridge the gap between natural and social science through the development of interdisciplinary activities;
- Engage the ocean data community, through IODE, to ensure wide dissemination of ocean data and their transformation into policy-relevant information;
- Establish new cooperation mechanisms amongst Member States in marine science and oceanography;
- Launch new flagship research activities that would respond to the global agenda for sustainable development and would not just repackage existing activities;
- Establish new partnerships amongst intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- Develop a robust capacity development plan, including mechanisms for transfer of marine technology, as an integral part of the Decade plan, and especially address the needs of Africa and SIDS.

The Assembly highlighted that the lessons learned from the implementation of the 2nd
International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2) could benefit and be applied in the context of the Decade.

81 The Assembly stressed the importance of recognising that Decade activities must be in line with the provisions of UNCLOS and should avoid overlap with the mandate of other UN bodies.

82 Some Member States expressed their readiness to contribute to the planning process and implementation of the Decade through IOC mechanisms, and though national scientific infrastructure and activities (e.g. research cruise), including in areas of capacity development and technology exchange. The Assembly agreed to the need to engage with the scientific community in the planning process to ensure that new scientific results are feeding and updating the Decade implementation plan.

83 The Assembly recognized the need to ensure that the implementation plan to be developed under the Decade will have clear and measurable outcomes.

84 The Assembly expects IOC to take the central role of the lead UN body in ocean science in coordinating the development of the Decade and that the Executive Secretary should bring the Decade proposal to the UN General Assembly for its consideration.

85 Member States welcomed the engagement of a number of UN and intergovernmental bodies such as ISA, DOALOS, FAO, WMO, IHO, ICES and UNEP, and encouraged the Executive Secretary to pursue this effort with other potential partners.

86 The representatives of SCOR, PICES and POGO highlighted their interest in the Decade and the importance of engaging non-governmental entities in the planning process.

87 A Drafting Group initialized with Argentina, Australia, Canada, Portugal, and USA was established with a view to finalise the text of the Draft resolution proposed by Norway and the Republic of Korea.

88 The representatives of 22 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: ____________.

A Draft Resolution is proposed under this item.