To:IOC Member States  

cc:Permanent Delegates / Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States  
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States  
Chairman and Vice-Chairpersons of IOC  

Subject:5th Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands: Ensuring Survival, Preserving Life, and Improving Governance 3–7 May 2010, UNESCO, Paris  

Dear Sir/Madam,  

This circular letter is to inform you of the forthcoming Global Ocean Conference which will be held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris from 3 to 7 May 2010. The Global Oceans Conferences provide a major opportunity for all sectors of the global oceans community —governments, international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, industry, and scientific groups— to address the major policy issues affecting the oceans at global, regional, and national levels and to make progress in advancing the global oceans agenda.  

This fifth conference is organized by the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands and is co-hosted by IOC of UNESCO and the Government of France. As you are aware, 2010 is a year of major importance for the world’s oceans. It is the year when:  

• The international community will be addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by the emerging international consensus on a new climate regime (as developed through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Copenhagen, December 2009). Mitigation, adaptation, and financing issues will profoundly affect oceans, coasts, and Small Island States which are at the front line of climate changes. The Conference will also discuss innovative private sector solutions to the challenges of climate change.  

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The international community will also be considering the progress made towards the 2010 goal of “a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional, and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth” (Decision VI/26 of the 6th Conference of the Parties) and raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity during the International Year of Biodiversity.

There are three major conference themes, which are interlinked:

1. **ENSURING SURVIVAL**: Oceans, Climate and Security —Major Issues in Mitigation, Adaptation, and Financing in the Post-Copenhagen Climate Regime.

2. **PRESERVING LIFE**: Marine Biodiversity (2010 global goal), Networks of Marine Protected Areas (2012 global goal), and Celebrating the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, toward Aichi-Nagoya 2010 —tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-10).

3. **IMPROVING GOVERNANCE**: Achieving Integrated, Ecosystem-Based Ocean and Coastal Management (2010 global goal) at National and Regional Levels and in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

The conference is structured around three blocks:

(i) a technical and scientific symposium (held on 3 and 4 May);

(ii) a series of high level representatives/parliamentarians roundtables (5 May);

(iii) a policy conference (on 6 and 7 May).

Finally, as part of the 50 years IOC anniversary celebrations, a half day workshop will be organized during the Conference Symposium entitled “Fifty Years of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission: International Cooperation in Marine Sciences —Meeting the Challenges of the Next Fifty Years”. This will be held on 4th May 2010.

I would like to invite all IOC Member States and partners to take part in this important conference. Additional information about the conference can be found on the Global Forum website: [www.globaloceans.org](http://www.globaloceans.org) including a conference leaflet in all 6 UN working languages and guidance for participation ([http://www.globaloceans.org/content/goc5-2010-leaflet](http://www.globaloceans.org/content/goc5-2010-leaflet)).

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

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Executive Secretary, IOC