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UPDATE ON IOC CONTRIBUTION TO UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES (2015)

Summary. This document provides a summary of the IOC contribution to various ocean-related UN inter-agency activities: UN-Oceans, the Sustainable Development Goals process, an initiative on the Transfer of Marine Technology, the UN Small Islands Developing States Conference and the UNFCCC Paris Climate Conference (COP-21).

Introduction

IOC continues to play its role as the focal point within the UN system for ocean sciences, observations, services, data and information exchange and capacity development. As such, it contributes to a number of UN processes, responds to the needs expressed by the UN General Assembly, and play an active role in UN inter-agency mechanisms and activities.

UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system working on ocean issues.

UN-Oceans has continued to work towards the identification of possible areas for collaboration and synergies as mandated in the revised terms of reference approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/70. For this purpose, UN-Oceans completed the first step consisting of identifying relevant mandates of each UN-Oceans members. In the next step, it will further elaborate the initial inventory through a newly established electronic platform, which will be the inventory in the form of a user-friendly online searchable database detailing the mandates and the activities of each UN-Ocean member and funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The online database will be intended to facilitate identifying synergies or joint activities illustrating existing and possible areas for collaboration, and will be available on the website of UN-Oceans (www.unoceans.org).

The focal point of UN-Oceans attended the Third UN Conference on Small Islands Developing States (Samoa, 1-4 September 2014), and delivered a statement on behalf of UN-Oceans at the Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogues on Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity. The statement highlighted the role of UN-Oceans as an inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans and coastal issues, including with regard to promoting capacity-building activities to assist small island developing States (SIDS) towards the sustainable development of the oceans.

While UN-Oceans has continued its work through telephone conferences, the 14th meeting of UN-Oceans was convened and organized by the UN-Oceans Focal Point, the United Nations Legal Counsel/DOALOS on 20 March 2015 at IMO headquarters, London, UK. At the meeting, UN-Oceans members discussed items relating to the ongoing development of the inventory, the website of UN-Oceans, and contributions to the reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea as well as the topic of focus of the 16th meeting of the Informal Consultative Process. UN-Oceans members acknowledged that UN-Oceans, as coordination mechanism, contributes to the integrated consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the context of oceans and sustainable development. Also, UN-Oceans members recognized that UN-Oceans had the advantage of raising awareness of the ongoing activities of its members, which also provided the opportunity for UN-Oceans to “deliver as one” through strengthened cooperation. In this regard and with a view to providing information to States on UN-Oceans members’ activities relating to oceans and climate change, it was agreed to prepare a consolidated UN-Oceans statement to be presented at the 42nd meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and at the World Ocean Day event organised by IOC on 8 June 2015. In addition, it was agreed that proposals for a UN-Oceans side event and an exhibit on oceans and climate change as well as on ocean acidification would be put forward through appropriate channels for the UN Climate Change Conference (Paris, 30 November-11 December 2015).

With regard to cooperation in capacity development, the partnership between the IOC and DOALOS has evolved in the past two years, aiming to strengthen the capacity of States, in particular of developing countries, including SIDS, to implement the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and thus promote and facilitate the conduct of marine scientific research and effective dissemination of data, samples and research results in accordance with UNCLOS. The partnership consists of a needs-driven training project to be delivered through training courses at the regional level, in particular also in the various SIDS regions, in partnership with other interested organizations; as well as through an internet portal for marine scientific research professionals. The training will focus on the legal, technical and scientific aspects relating

to marine scientific research with a view to promoting a consistent application of the relevant provisions of UNCLOS. It is expected to lead to an improved knowledge of the marine environment, and by applying the acquired knowledge to management and decision making, this partnership will contribute to sustainable development. The IOC will be able to fully put the partnership into action when it receives the extrabudgetary support from Member States.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as follow up to the Rio+20 Conference - One of the main outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) Conference (2012) was the agreement by Member States to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the post-2015 development agenda. It was decided to establish an "inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly".

The inter-governmental Open Working Group, which was created as mandated in "The Future we want", the Rio+20 outcome document, submitted to the 68th session of the UN General Assembly a report (document A/68/970) containing a proposal for SDGs for consideration and appropriate action. In resolution 68/309, the General Assembly decided that the proposal of the Open Working Group on SDGs shall be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered, in the intergovernmental negotiation process at the 69th session of the General Assembly. The proposal of the Open Working Group includes a goal on oceans, namely Goal 14, entitled "*Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*". Under Goal 14, target 14.a indicates the need to:

"increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacities and transfer marine technology taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs".

In this respect, the IOC has played an important role in supporting the formulation of Goal 14 on the ocean, by co leading the inter-agency Task Support Team (TST), together with FAO and UNEP, and as such providing technical information to UN Member States in the form of Policy Brief as well as inputs on targets and possible indicators to support the implementation of the Ocean SDGs. Goal 14 on ocean indicates the priority that Member States are giving to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, as well as the need to build technical and scientific capacity of developing nations in meeting related international targets.

The SDGs and a high level declaration will be formally adopted in September 2015 at a UN summit on 25-27 September 2015.

Regarding development of indicators for those Goals and targets, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) has been established by the Statistical Commission at its 46th session of the General Assembly. The IAEG-SDGs aims to develop an indicator framework for the monitoring of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda at the global level, and to support its implementation. The first meeting of IAEG-SDGs took place on 1-2 June 2015 in New York to commence its work on developing a proposal for a global indicator framework for the goals and targets. It will complete its work in March 2016. A proposal for an indicator framework and a list of indicators to be developed by the IAEG-SDGs will be adopted by the Statistical Commission at its 47th session in 2016. The IOC will continue to be involved in the process, participating as an observer in their meetings to provide important technical advice and support as needed, in support of IAEG-SDGs for developing indicators, especially under Goal 14 on oceans.

Also, it is worth mentioning the on-going development of global technology facilitation mechanism. In response to paragraph 273 of the Rio+20 outcome document, the report of the Secretary-

General (A/67/348) has contained recommendations to the General Assembly regarding a technology facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, including cleaner fossil fuel technology. Then, the General Assembly resolution 68/210 of December 2013 requested the President of the General Assembly (PGA) to convene four “Structured Dialogues” in the General Assembly on “Possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies”, which were held on 29 and 30 April, 4 June and 23 July 2014. With the outcome of the four “Structured Dialogues” and through General Assembly resolution 68/310 of 19 September, the Secretary-General was invited to take into account the recommendations that emerged from the structured dialogues when preparing his synthesis report.

In the Secretary General’s synthesis report on the post-2015 development agenda, it is proposed in paragraph 125 to establish an “online, global platform, building on and complementing existing initiatives, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.” It will be designed as a consolidated “Delivery as One” tool to help address the UN system’s fragmentation, aiming to provide a common platform for accessing a full range of technology facilitation activities, services and resources in support of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

In order to support the Secretary-General’s proposal as well as follow-up to UN General Assembly resolution 68/310 on “Structured Dialogues”, an informal inter-agency working group was established by including the main actors in the UN system engaged in international initiatives aimed at facilitating the development, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies during the fourth quarter of 2014. The group comprises UNDESA and UNEP, who act as co-facilitators, as well as UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNESCO, ITU, WIPO and the World Bank. It is also open to other interested, UN system entities. The IOC will be involved in the development of the platform from the perspective of marine technology transfer, in cooperation with UNESCO.

This new sustainable development framework will provide a clear incentive for IOC to support the implementation of Goal 14 in view of its unique mandate in the UN system in relation to ocean science, capacity development and the science base for ocean management.

Initiative on Transfer of Marine Technology – Issues related to marine science, technology transfer and measures to support an effective implementation of existing instruments related to oceans and seas and the outcome of international conferences and summits on sustainable development have been a central issue of discussions in various fora, including in the context of the follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference and the 3rd UN Conference on Small Islands Developing States (2014). As recognized in the context of SDGs, in particular target 14.a under Goal 14, marine science and marine scientific research play a critical role in sustainable development as also consistently recognized by the General Assembly in its annual resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea. Research, and the tools required to conduct it, are essential for the sustainable development of the oceans and the seas and their resources, including by supporting informed decisions on the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources, and by helping to understand, predict and respond to natural disasters and climate change.

To address the above, a side event on transfer of marine technology, “*Building ocean knowledge, technology and capacity towards achieving sustainable development of the ocean and seas*” was co-organized by DOALOS and the IOC at UN headquarters on 21 April 2015 during the intergovernmental negotiation on post-2015 development. An expert panel discussed and exchanged experience on possible means to increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer of marine technology, taking into account the IOC Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology (CGTMT) in support of sustainable development, as currently framed in the proposed target 14 a for Goal 14 on the oceans. In conclusion, there was agreement that the implementation of the post 2015 agenda, including the SDG on ocean, should be based on an integrated scientific approach and grounded in the best available knowledge. It was recognized that sustained ocean observations and science were essential to better understand and assess the

role and potential value of healthy marine and coastal ecosystems. There was also recognition that our knowledge of the ocean was sparse and many developing nations still lacked the basic scientific infrastructures, human skills and technological advancement needed so that they could derive benefits from the ocean in a sustainable way. It was pointed out that global intergovernmental cooperation was a 'must' to fill knowledge gaps and to raise the capacity of developing nations, in particular LDCs and SIDS.

As generally recognized within the United Nations for its competencies in the field of Marine Scientific Research and Transfer of Marine Technology (UNCLOS Parts XIII and XIV), the IOC will continue to promote the transfer of marine technology to meet requirements expressed by international agreements and major international conferences, including those described above. In this context, extrabudgetary support provided by Member States will enable the IOC to effectively facilitate the transfer of marine technology by setting up clearinghouse mechanism in accordance with CGTMT for implementation. In doing so, the IOC will assist Member States, particularly developing States, in developing their marine scientific and technological capacity with regard to the protection and preservation of the marine environment, marine scientific research and other relevant activities in the marine environment towards achieving sustainable development.

The Third UN Conference on Small Islands Developing States was held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa under the overarching theme, "*The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*". During the Conference, the IOC, with support from Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Palau, Barbados and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), organized a side event, "*Coping with and adapting to ocean threats for resilient SIDS communities*" in Apia, Samoa on 1 September 2014.

Building on the work of the IOC and partners, the side event focused on how science and observation, the use of early warnings could help SIDS in reducing coastal vulnerability and guide the development of coastal adaptation measures. It also addressed common strategies for reducing vulnerability and identifying successful mitigation measures in protecting people whilst building ecosystem resilience.

A panel of international experts discussed and addressed the challenges of coping with and adapting to three types of ocean hazards: namely, sea-level rise, ocean acidification and tsunamis, faced by SIDS in all ocean basins. The outcomes from the side event included that: (i) in term of adapting to the impacts of sea-level rise, it was recommended that SIDS should embed climate change and coastal adaptation measures within a green economy and sustainable development framework at national level. (ii) on the topic of ocean acidification, it was recognized that ocean acidification was a threat to marine ecosystems that provided SIDS with food security, livelihoods and economic stability, resilience to extreme weather events, and cultural identity. Also, following a parallel workshop organized during the Conference, a new Ocean Acidification networks for Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and AIMS SIDS regions was fostered, which will be SIDS-focused and driven, and will promote capacity building activities and south-south cooperation, as part of the existing Global Ocean Acidification Observation Network (iii) in relation to mitigation and preparedness to tsunami, it was noted that the Pacific Ocean was still poorly covered in term of seismic observations, and therefore, there was a need to strengthen the existing observation network, particularly in the South Pacific region.

The final message identified through discussion in the side event was to look for synergies on how SIDS address the different type of ocean threats, both in terms of strategy for data and observation and in the formulation of responses in a multi-hazard framework.

Contribution to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - Paris Conference (COP 21)

IOC is providing leadership and contributing to the international debate on the importance of the ocean dimension in the new climate change regime that could emerge from the UNFCCC COP-21 process (Paris, November–December 2015). In June 2014, IOC facilitated the launch of an Ocean Climate Platform, which brings together representatives from the research community and civil society with the aim of placing the ocean at the heart of international climate change debate, as well as raising public awareness on these issues. On 8 June 2015, with the support of France, Sweden, Monaco, Flanders (Belgium), Suez Environment and the Ocean-Climate Platform, IOC organized a World Ocean Day (WOD), which was recognized as an official COP-21 event, entirely dedicated to the ocean-climate issues. The programme of the Day included four scientific workshops, three roundtables, a UNESCO Open Campus for youth, and a concluding high-level political segment in presence of HSH Prince Albert II Monaco, H.E. President Remengesau of Palau, HE. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister of Barbados, and Danny Faure, Vice-president of the Seychelles. The WOD provided an opportunity for a dialogue amongst stakeholders on the inclusion of ocean dimensions in the COP-21 process; on the contribution of ocean science to the climate system knowledge, on the human and social aspects of climate induced changes in the ocean, as well as potential solutions; and possible actions and strategies to mitigate climate change.

IOC is also contributing to the international conference, organized by France with UNESCO, on *Our common Future under Climate Change (7-10 July 2015)*. This four-day conference will be the largest forum for the scientific community to come together ahead of the 21st UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP-21). Building on the results of IPCC 5th Assessment Report (AR5), the Conference will address key issues concerning climate change in the broader context of global change. It will offer an opportunity to discuss solutions for both mitigation and adaptation issues. IOC is co-convening two sessions respectively on ocean observation and impacts on marine ecosystems. These will provide an opportunity to present the result of the 3rd international symposium on climate change in the world's oceans, organized by IOC, ICES and PICES in March 2015.

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