



**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION**  
(of UNESCO)

**A FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY REPORT FOR THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION OF UNESCO**

**SUMMARY**

This document is divided into two parts:

Part I introduces efforts by the IOC Secretariat to develop corporate communications materials and activities, and provides a status report on the implementation of the recommendations from the IOC *Communications Advisory Report* (IOC/EC-XLIX/Inf.2).

Part II discussed examples of IOC communication, including the IOC corporate website, the new United Nations World Oceans Day Online Portal, and IOC communications at major conferences.



## **PART I: Status of the Implementation of the Communications Advisory Report to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO**

1. As a starting point to the development and implementation of an IOC-wide communications strategy, the Secretariat commissioned the production of a Communications Advisory Report and Action Plan (**IOC/EC-XLIX/Inf.2**) to assist the Secretariat and Member States in achieving IOC's overall organizational objectives, engaging effectively with relevant stakeholders, and demonstrating the impact of its work. After an open request for proposals, a consultant was engaged to develop the strategy, in consultation with key IOC stakeholders including a number of Member State representatives, members of the scientific community, IOC programme leaders, the secretariat, and other UN agencies. The Advisory Report and Action Plan was released in June 2016, and communicated to the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC Executive Board. This information document will provide a status report on the implementation of the key recommendations emanating from the Communications Advisory Report.

2. Of the eleven (11) actions recommended by the Communications Advisory Report to the IOC Secretariat, three (3) have been completed, four (4) are in progress, and four (4) are pending implementation. The following paragraphs cover the actions that have been completed or are currently in progress.

### **Corporate Brochure (Complete)**

3. An **IOC corporate brochure** (IOC/BRO/2017/1) was developed on the basis of consultations and interviews with over fifty Secretariat staff members, Member State representatives, associated experts and partners, showcasing IOC's major programmes and strategic priorities. The brochure stands as the official public relations "business card" of the IOC, covering all major areas of IOC programmatic activity, and is set for distribution globally at bilateral and multilateral meetings, conferences, workshops, and other relevant events. Digital versions are stored within UNESCO's UNESDOC publications platform, and will continue to be distributed via all IOC corporate and programme websites and online portals.

4. The corporate brochure is available in English and French via the IOC website (<http://ioc.unesco.org>), as well as through the IOC Secretariat during the 29<sup>th</sup> IOC Assembly. A Spanish version is in the final editorial stages, and will be published by August 2017.

### **Corporate Videos (Complete)**

5. A **corporate animated video** entitled "**One Planet, One Ocean: Mobilizing Science to Save Our Ocean**" has been produced to promote the IOC brand and its integrated services, forming the backbone of IOC's digital public face and complementing the corporate brochure. The animation was officially launched at the UN Ocean Conference (New York, 5-9 June 2017), during a high level media event co-hosted by UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova, and the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Peter Thomson. Mr. Thomson has been extremely supportive of IOC, contributing both an exclusive interview to the corporate brochure, and the narration of the IOC corporate animation. The animation is currently available only in English, but the IOC Secretariat is studying the feasibility of producing versions of the animation for the other three official IOC languages.

6. In addition, the IOC Secretariat completed **five (5)** additional corporate videos, and **five (5)** thematic videos that help communicate the ways in which IOC benefits its Member States and other stakeholders via its programmatic activities. All videos are openly accessible via the *IOC-UNESCO Ocean Playlist* on the UNESCO Youtube Channel (<http://on.unesco.org/2rBtsOH>).

### **Brand Guidelines (Complete)**

7. A document compiling formal **IOC Brand Guidelines** was produced on February 2017 based on the innovative branding used in the corporate brochure and videos. These guidelines are available upon request to the IOC Secretariat. The IOC Secretariat has begun to systematically apply the guidelines to all new communication products such as the Global Ocean Science Report, new video material and signage for conferences and workshops. The brand guidelines nevertheless remain a “living” document, to be continuously updated to reflect new tools and *ad hoc* guidelines for specific products (i.e. redevelopment of the IOC corporate website).

### **High Profile Campaign – International Decade of Ocean Science (In Progress)**

8. IOC has successfully begun to implement one of the key recommendations of the Communications Advisory Report, “the establishment of a campaign around the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14) and capacity development.” Entitled *International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development*, this 10-year campaign hopes to place capacity development in ocean science front and center of the sustainable development agenda between 2021-2030.

9. The *Decade* seeks to connect Member States, UN Agencies, the scientific community, civil society and other major stakeholders around a framework for coordinating and consolidating the ocean observations and research needed to achieve SDG14. The *Decade* proposal was officially launched at the preparatory meeting for the UN Ocean Conference (New York, 15-16 February 2017), and will further guide IOC’s overall communication activities during the UN Ocean Conference (New York, 5-9 June 2017). The *Decade* proposal will be officially submitted to the IOC Assembly, the United Nations General Assembly and the UNESCO General Conference to ensure that the final concept is a collective initiative of Member States and all other relevant stakeholders.

### **Redevelop the IOC Websites and Information Tools (In Progress)**

10. The IOC is completely revamping its online presence, replacing two out-of-date corporate websites (<http://ioc-unesco.org> and <http://ioc.unesco.org>) with a unique, centralized portal for all IOC corporate communications and programmatic activities. An open request for proposal was conducted from December 2016 to January 2017, and a consultant has been hired to develop the website in collaboration with the IOC webdevelopers, and under the overall project coordination of the IOC Digital Communications Editor. The new corporate website is due to launch in the Fall 2017 under the URL <http://ioc.unesco.org>.

11. The new integrated corporate portal will merge the public outreach and IOC governance aspects of IOC’s online presence, creating an easy-to-use platform that includes both a public interface (news, events, publications) and an intranet (IOC governing body documentation, contact database, IOC Secretariat internal communications). The intranet will be accessible to all IOC Member States, after an easy registration process via IOC’s *OceanExpert* database. All information concerning access to the new IOC corporate website will be relayed to Member States and relevant stakeholders once the website is ready and operational.

12. In parallel to the redevelopment of its corporate website, the IOC Secretariat is also undertaking the redevelopment of key corporate information and knowledge management tools, notably a new version of the *OceanExpert* database that now will store not only IOC’s contacts, but also all corporate documents and events. As a database, *OceanExpert* will “power” the new IOC corporate website as well as all IOC programme and project websites. *OceanExpert* is also set to provide the backend data for a new IOC digital product, “Country Profiles” that will feature on the IOC corporate website national information about each Member State’s engagement with IOC and its programmatic activities. All information and knowledge management tools are being developed by IOC’s Project Office for International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE), located in Oostend, Belgium.

### **Establish a Communications Team (In Progress)**

13. The recruitment of a full-time staff member to work on digital communications ushered an informal reorganization of relevant members of the IOC staff to ensure coherence across outreach activities, digital communications, press relations and publications. IOC's Digital Communications Editor is in charge of both the IOC Secretariat's routine web editorial work and of managing the various communications projects required to implement the recommendations of the Communications Advisory Report. To that end, he must collaborate closely with the IOC Senior Management and relevant IOC Secretariat staff in the various sections and field offices.

### **Communications and Media Training for IOC Staff (In Progress)**

14. The IOC Secretariat has commissioned a half-day communications & media training for its senior and professional staff. The training will be overseen by BBC World Service Journalist and Newsreader David Eades, and is tentatively planned for September 2017, pending confirmation of participants' and venue availability. The training aims to prepare senior management and programme specialists to effectively engage mainstream and emerging media when communicating about IOC, their programmes and activities, or specific products such as the recently published Global Ocean Science Report.

15. A one-on-one personalized media training was organized in late May 2017 specifically to prepare the IOC Executive Secretary for a successful engagement of media opportunities coming out of the United Nations Ocean Conference. The training was also conducted by BBC World Service's David Eades.

### **Pending Recommendations from the Communications Advisory Report**

16. Once all of the above activities have been completed, the IOC Secretariat will turn to the four remaining recommendations from the Advisory Report: 1) development of an **IOC "Media Plan"** to systematically identify the best possible stories from IOC's programmatic activities to engage mainstream media; 2) development of a quarterly **"IOC e-newsletter"** aimed at providing ongoing value to its Member States and stakeholders through stories that show how its services are being utilized at the national level; 3) the establishment of an **"IOC Policy Brief Series"** with high profile scientists who can communicate in a highly engaging way with mainstream media and policy-makers about how to underpin ocean policy and sustainable ocean governance by the latest developments in marine science; and the development of 4) a **"Marketing Database and Annual Surveys"** to systematically monitor and evaluate IOC's communication activities vis-à-vis its stakeholders and key target audience, including national delegations.

17. Completing these remaining recommended actions will require more resources devoted to communications, and a further mobilization of relevant staff time. The financial support of IOC Member States will be crucial to equip its Secretariat with the resources necessary for carrying out the high level communications required to cement IOC's role as the unique UN body for ocean science.

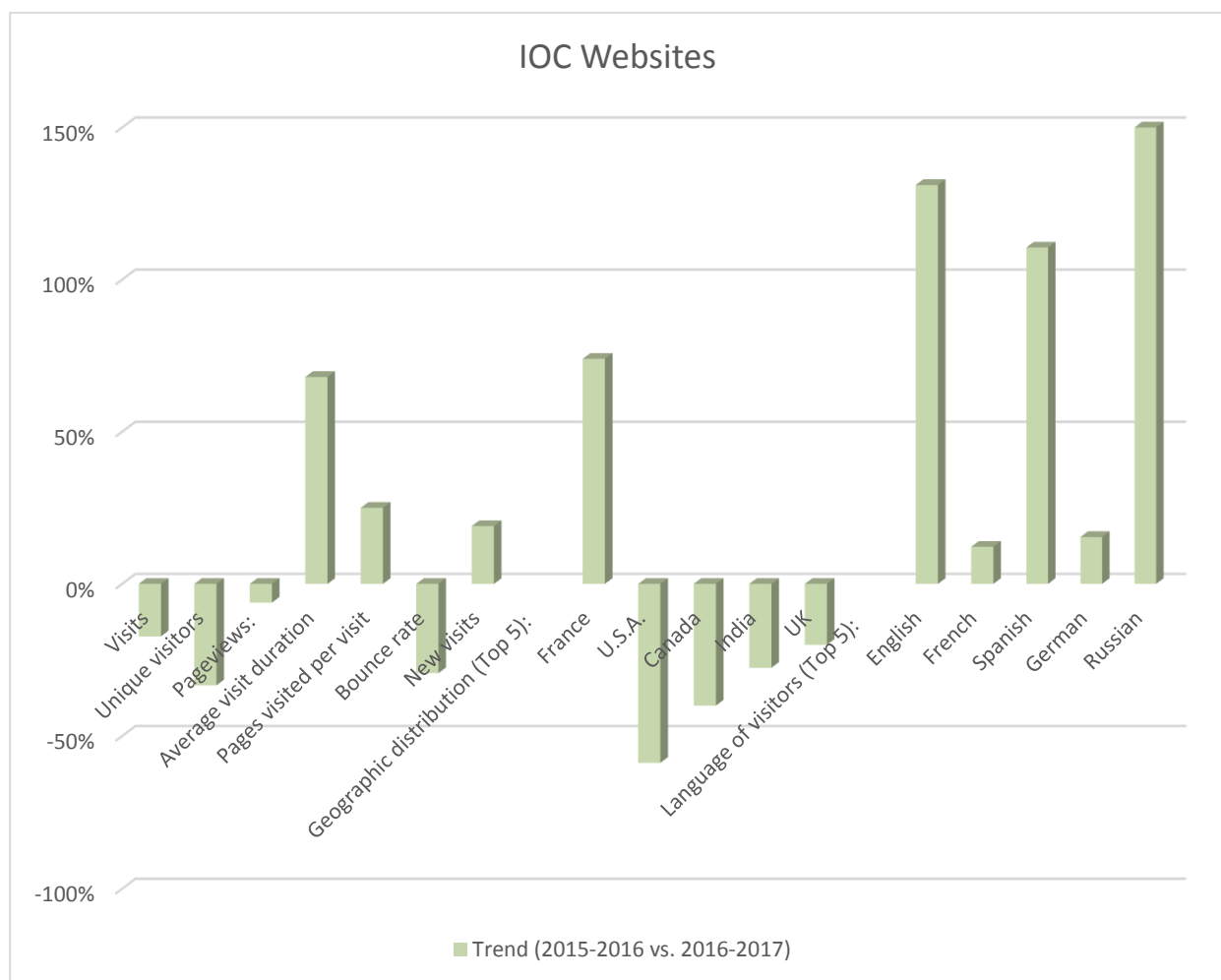
18. Member States can nevertheless also offer important in-kind contributions, such as the case of the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), which also houses the German Delegation to the IOC governing bodies. BSH printed and distributed among German decision-makers, Government agencies and scientific institutions over 850 copies of the IOC "One Planet, One Ocean" corporate brochure. Contributions such as these are key to ensuring support for IOC activities at both the intergovernmental and the national and local levels.

## PART II: IOC Communications – Concrete Examples

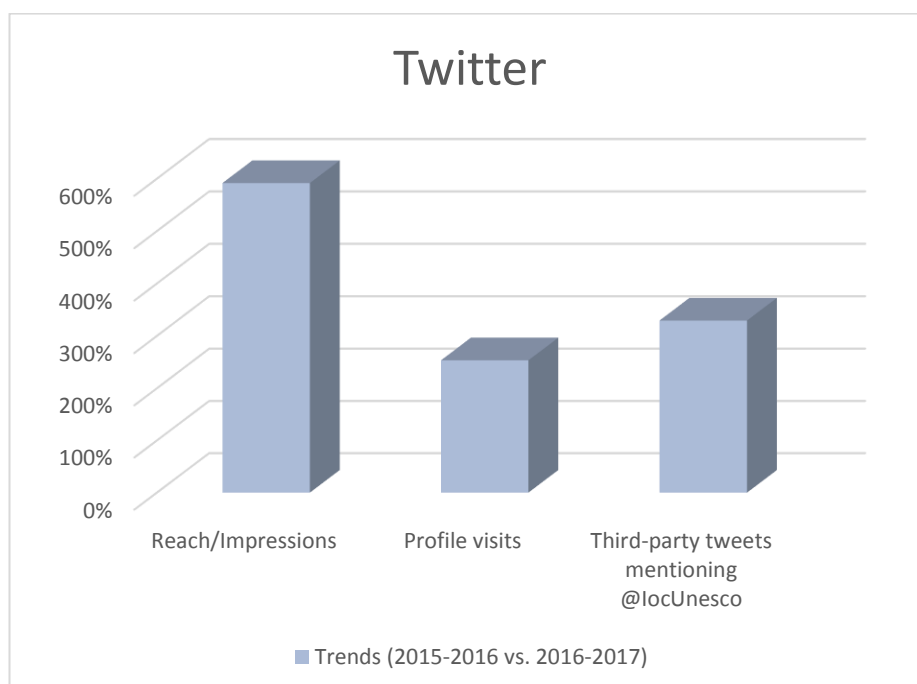
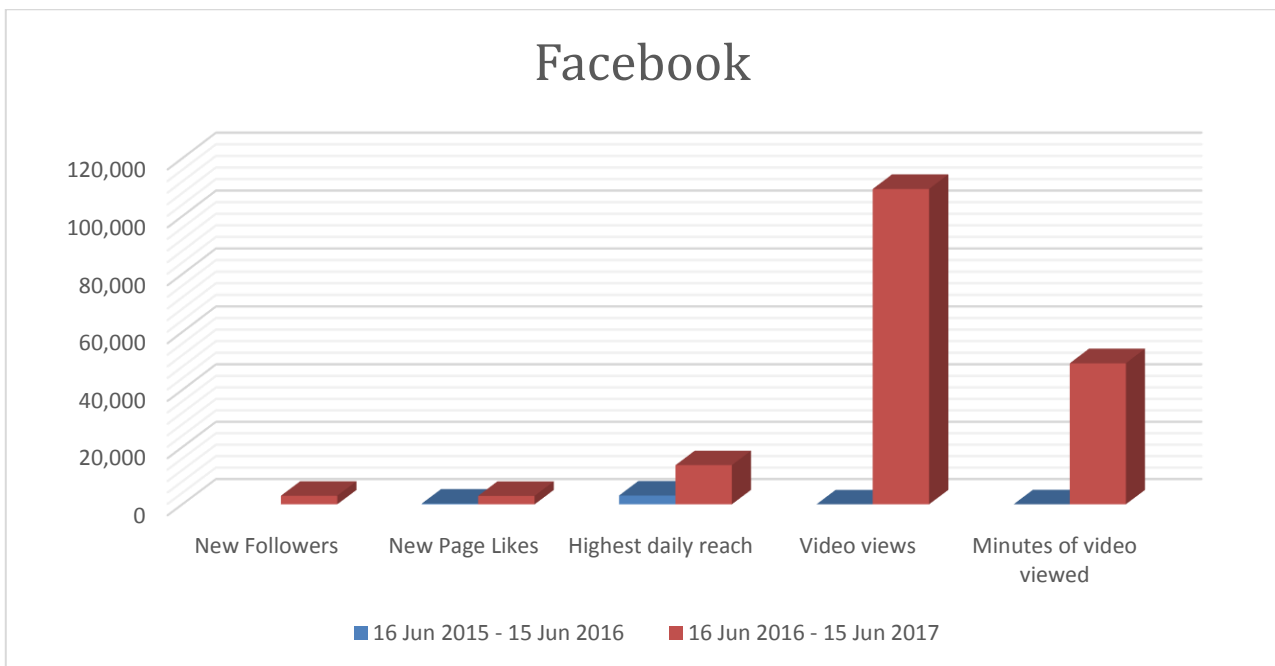
19. This second part of the information document turns to a discussion of trends in the visibility and performance of IOC communications through specific examples, from the current corporate online presence to *ad hoc* initiatives such as the World Oceans Day Online Portal, and IOC communications for three major recent conferences: the CommOCEAN Conference on Ocean Science Communications (December 2016, Bruges), the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning (March 2017, Paris), and the UN Ocean Conference (June 2017, New York). The data and discussion highlight positive developments as well as areas for continued growth.

### IOC Website and Social Media

20. IOC’s websites and social media channels are the first gateway to information about IOC for millions of people around the world. IOC’s web presence has been plagued by unengaging and poorly structured content, split between an “**external relations**” portal (<http://ioc.unesco.org>), with news, event announcements and new publications; and a lesser developed “**public intranet**” portal (<http://ioc-unesco.org>) that contains all documents pertinent to IOC’s governing bodies and other programmatic activity. The distinction is lost on the majority of web users, who are often puzzled by the existence of these two parallel corporate portals, and often mistake one for the other. The first objective of the ongoing web redevelopment initiative is to solve this “dual portal” problem by merging the two websites into a new, revitalized corporate portal that will cover the technical needs of all IOC communities – from Member State delegations to the general public.



21. The data above refers only the “external relations” portion of IOC’s online presence, including the following websites: <http://ioc.unesco.org> (English and French versions) and the thematic “One Planet, One Ocean” page in the UNESCO website, <http://en.unesco.org/themes/one-planet-one-ocean> (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic versions). The data reflect the percentage increase or decrease, from period 1 (2015-2016) to period 2 (2016-2017) along various elements of visitor engagement with the IOC websites. While more work needs to be done to recover falls in the number of visits and unique visitors to IOC websites, the data show some very positive developments: the average time visitors spend on IOC websites increased by more than 60%; visitors are, on average, visiting more pages within the IOC websites than before; and most importantly, IOC websites’ *bounce rate* – which counts what percentage of visits to the website were not intended / happened by “mistake” – has decreased by more than 30%. This means that slightly less people are coming to the IOC website, granted, but the visitors are coming purposefully (rather by mistake – *bounce rate*), spending more time navigating and finding more quality content they like.



22. On social media, IOC's global reach grew in great proportions in the last year, as the data above illustrates. The two figures again present comparative periods (again, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017) to measure changes in Facebook and Twitter performance. Much of this growth in social media visibility was driven by increased IOC mobilization around major scientific, policy and intergovernmental conferences (see "Communications at Major Conferences" section below).

### **World Oceans Day Online Portal**

23. The IOC Secretariat partnered with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UN-DOALOS) to build a UN-wide online portal to celebrate the World Oceans Day, an international day (8 June) established by the UN General Assembly in 2008 to help mobilize society toward the conservation of the ocean, its health and its resources. Together with a Steering Group of ten organizations from around the world – including the World Ocean Network, the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and civil society representatives from all five geographic regions of the United Nations – IOC and UN-DOALOS acknowledged that a unified mobilization for World Oceans Day could greatly increase the reach and impact of the celebration. The Portal was crafted as a means to mobilize the UN, its Member States, agencies and partners around World Oceans Day while also calling to action key target groups that have not traditionally been active in the day's celebrations, such as the policy and scientific community.

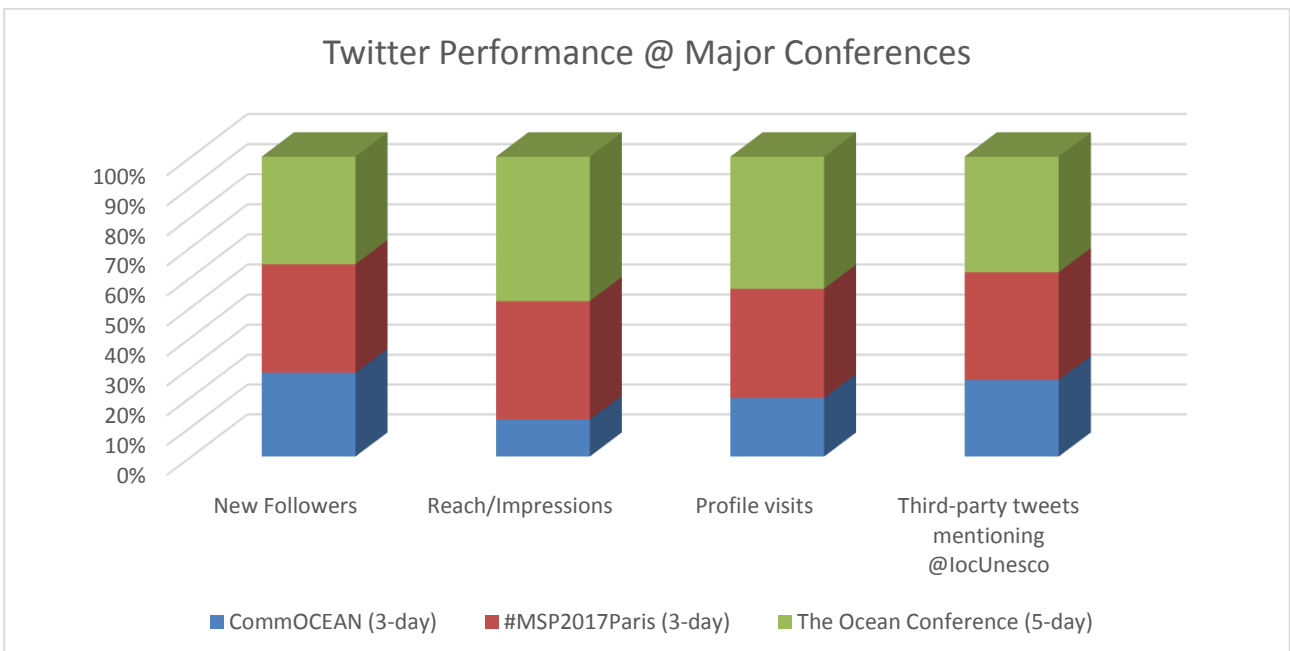
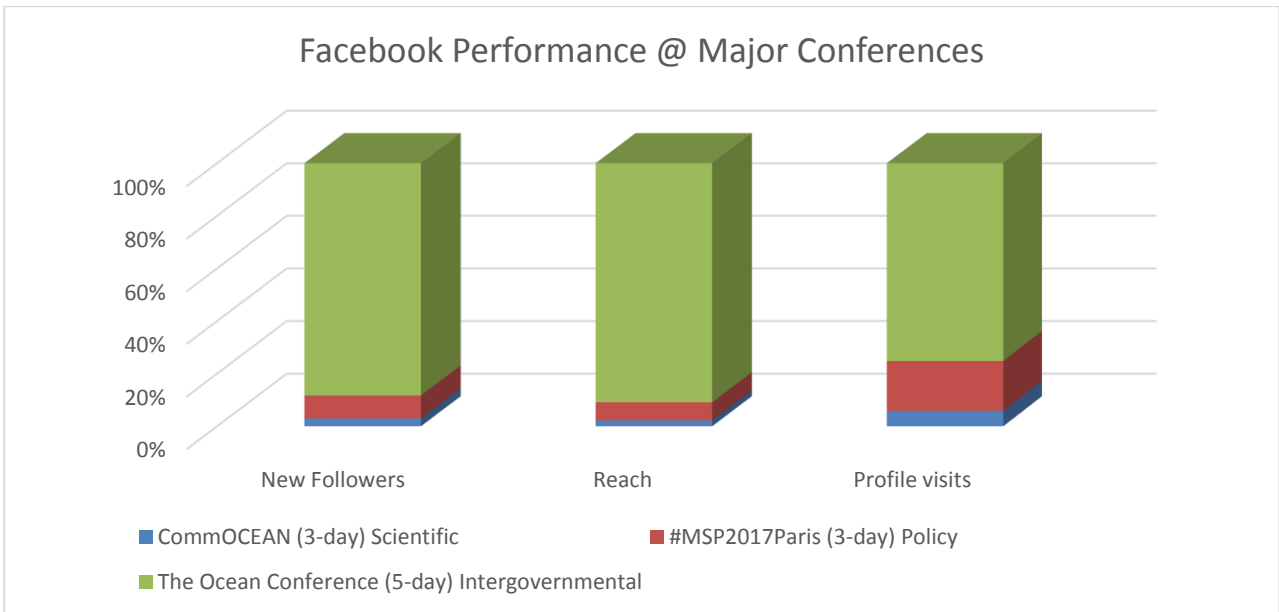
24. The World Oceans Day Online Portal is financed by the SUEZ Group, a multinational company specialized in water and environment management services, and has since 8 June been accessible via the following URL: <http://unworldoceansday.org>. The development of the Portal was first officially announced on 8 June 2016 during the World Oceans Day celebration of the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC Executive Council, and launched exactly one year after, on 8 June 2017 at the UN General Assembly's special World Oceans Day celebration in the context of the UN Ocean Conference.

25. While the goal of the first development stage was to deliver the IT tools and framework of the online portal, the next and equally important step will be to ensure it is effectively used by all target groups, and get greater buy in from UN Member States and specialized agencies – it is a tool to help them give visibility to and promote their World Oceans Day activities and messaging in a coherent way, delivering as one. By 8 June 2018, the IOC Secretariat hopes to have an online portal that is operational in three languages (English, French, Spanish), and that is well populated by World Oceans Day events and resources.

### **Communications at Major Conferences**

26. The IOC Secretariat has placed an increasingly heavier focus on mobilizing tools and communication approaches to raise the visibility of the IOC activities and branding at major conferences, whether they are scientific, policy-oriented or intergovernmental in nature. From the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to smaller high-caliber scientific conferences, the IOC brand has become more recognized, enhancing the credibility and visibility of IOC staff and IOC Member State representatives in the negotiating room as well as in media zones and, of course, in the associated online conversations. Much of the high growth in IOC social media outreach presented in the statistics above were driven by major conferences in which IOC participated or took a leading role. It is a virtuous circle: conferences help drive attention to IOC online content, and the greater online visibility in turn gives IOC more credibility within major conferences.





27. The data above illustrates the different ways in which strong participation at different types of conferences (scientific, policy-oriented, intergovernmental) can drive traffic to IOC websites and content, strengthen corporate visibility, and expand the global reach of the organization, as measured by social media. The numbers for the recent UN Ocean Conference are particularly staggering: not only was the scope of the conference truly global, but IOC also invested heavily in good and varied communication approaches to raise its visibility as the main UN body when it comes to ocean science for sustainable development.

28. The figure below gives a closer look at the overall global results of press and online media coverage of IOC's activities at the UN Ocean Conference. The key lesson: positive communication outcomes are directly and proportionately related to the degree of planning and inkind/financial investment in media relations prior to the conference. A partnership between UNESCO, IOC and Sky TV Group to organize a high level media event on the margins of the conference yielded excellent visibility and press coverage. Full details about IOC activities at The UN Ocean Conference and *The Ocean's 8 Celebration: Recognizing Global Ocean Science Champions* (high level media event) can be found at <http://en.unesco.org/ocean-conference>.

# UN Ocean Conference

## Press and Online Media (29 May-13 June)



### IOC & UNESCO

- # of articles: 59
- Key media: ANSA (Italy); El Tiempo (Spain); Le Parisien, Blog Le Monde (France); North Africa Post (Morocco); Xinhua (China); Seychelles News Agency.

### UNESCO only

- # of articles: 37
- Key media: Sky News (UK); Le Monde (France); Le Matin (Morocco); Andina.com (Peru); Telam (Argentina); Elsevier (Academic publishing)

### Global Ocean Science Report

- # of articles: 18
- Key media: Nature, Fusion Media, AllAfrica.com (Regional); Sector Maritimo (Spain); Earth News Bulletin, El Capital Financiero (Panama)

### Total # of Press/Media articles

- 113 articles / reprints