

Contribution from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO) to the report of the UN Secretary-General, on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to the Part XI of the UN General Assembly Resolution 72/73 relating to “Marine Science” and more particularly its paragraph 294.

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

Summary

At its seventy-second session, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed (Part XI of the Omnibus Resolution for Oceans and the law of the sea) the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and mandated the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC) to prepare an Implementation Plan in consultation with Member States, UN partners and other relevant stakeholders.

The IOC drafted a Roadmap that provides an initial guide for the steps and processes needed to develop this Implementation Plan. It also contains a strategy, governance arrangements for the preparatory phase of the Decade and an outline of what is required to achieve this plan by the first quarter of 2020: key milestones and consultations that will be part of the preparation of the Plan. This Roadmap was reviewed by the IOC Member States and benefited from inputs by UN partners (through UN-Oceans) and will be presented to the upcoming 51st session of the IOC Executive Council (4 July 2018). Communication activities have been initiated to inform Member States, potential partners and other stakeholders of the preparatory phase underway, with the aim of inviting contributions, as well as to communicate the purpose and expected results of the Decade. Governance arrangement for the Preparatory Phase of the Decade will be agreed during the upcoming IOC Executive Council, in July 2018.

Preparatory activities for the Decade: towards a draft Implementation Plan

The Decade Roadmap

In order to respond to the invitation of the UNGA Resolution 72/73 (paragraph 294), the IOC, working under the guidance of its lected officers, drafted a Roadmap that provides an initial guide for the steps and processes needed to develop the Implementation Plan of the Decade. It also contains the Decade strategy, governance arrangements and an outline of what is required to achieve this plan by the first quarter of 2020. This Roadmap was built in consultation with the IOC Member States and benefited from inputs by UN partners (through UN-Oceans). This Roadmap document will be presented to the upcoming 51st session of the IOC Executive Council (July 2018) as document IOC/EC-LI/2 Annex 3.

The roadmap will be widely disseminated to UN Member States, institutional partners of the Commission and other identified stakeholders. It is an evolving document that will be enriched during the whole Preparation Phase to update its contained elements during the course of the process advancements and to receive additional comments.

Engagement and communication activities

In this context, IOC also invited relevant UN bodies with a focus on ocean to contribute to the development of the implementation plan. IOC hosted the meeting of UN-Oceans, the UN inter-agency mechanism on ocean affairs, at UNESCO Headquarters on 26–28 March 2018 to discuss contributions of the UN wide-system to the Decade. UN System representatives were also invited to provide a statement during the 51st IOC Executive Council.

UN Member States will be invited to contribute to designing and supporting the Decade during the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly, under its Omnibus resolution on Ocean and the law of the sea.

Other institutional partners, the private sector and foundations were also invited to support the Decade through a wide call of expression of interest. Communication activities have been initiated to inform Member States, potential partners and other stakeholders of the preparatory phase underway, with the aim of inviting contributions, as well as to communicate the purpose and expected results of the Decade. A logo for the Decade was presented to the IOC Executive Council and will be used in all future communication materials. A small brochure has been disseminated during different events dedicated to the Decade (notably a side event during the organizational meeting for the future legally binding international instrument on the biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, in April, in NY). A more detailed brochure will be circulated during the upcoming IOC Executive Council and widely publicized during forthcoming events that represent opportunities to communicate about the Decade.

Governance arrangements

Based on the roadmap course of action, the governance arrangement for the Preparatory Phase of the Decade have been set out. The upcoming IOC Executive Council will approve, at its 51st session, the Decade Planning Group Terms of Reference, establishing this group of experts that will serve as an advisory body to the IOC governing bodies to support the development of the Implementation Plan for the Decade. A small interim group (informal planning group) was established by the IOC Chair to advise him until the establishment of this institutional group.

A Stakeholder Forum will act as a consultative body to the IOC governing bodies and aims to engage a wide range of relevant stakeholders. Regional and global consultation workshops will also represent

an essential mechanism to engage regional and local ocean stakeholders in the design of the Decade and consolidate inputs from these various consultations.

