IOC Circular Letter No. 2406

To: Member States (main national co-ordinating bodies for liaison with the IOC)

cc. Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO in IOC Member States
Officers of the IOC and Major Subsidiary Bodies

Subject: Preparation for the 2012 United Nations Conference on sustainable development (Rio +20)

Sir/Madam,


In accordance with the Resolution, I would like to inform you that the IOC Statement will be forwarded to the UNCSD Secretariat, Division for Sustainable Development, as a contribution to a compilation document which will serve as a basis for the preparation of a zero draft of the Conference outcome document. In this respect, I would like to reiterate the importance, that IOC Member States and other stakeholders, in responding to the invitation from Second Preparatory Committee (March 2011, New York), also provide their inputs and contributions highlighting ocean priorities in writing by 1 November 2011, through their UN Permanent Missions. In this regard I am also pleased to attach guidance (Annex II) received from the co-chairs of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee for the preparation of such inputs.

…/…

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TOGO
I hope that IOC Member States will actively participate in the UNCSD Rio+20 preparatory process leading to the Conference, and highlight the importance of the ocean to sustainable development and the contribution of IOC, as expressed in the *IOC Statement*, into their preparation and statements for UNCSD Rio+20.

Sincerely yours,

[signed]

Wendy Watson-Wright
Executive Secretary, IOC
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO

Attachments: (2)


Annex II: Co-Chairs’ Guidance Note Inputs For Compilation Document
Annex I

Resolution XXVI-5

PREPARATION FOR THE 2012 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/236 agreeing to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD Rio+20) in June 2012 with the objective of the conference being to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development,

Having considered the themes of the conference focusing on:

(i) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty alleviation, and

(ii) the institutional framework for sustainable development,

Considering the importance of the ocean as the life support system of Planet Earth and that therefore a healthy ocean is a key element to alleviate poverty, as well as for sustainable development and for the environment,

Recalling that, according to the Statutes, one of IOC’s functions is to respond, as a competent international organization, to the requirements deriving from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in particular Agenda 21, Chapter 17, and other international instruments relevant to marine scientific research, related services and capacity-building,

Welcoming the accreditation of IOC as an official observer to the UNCSD Rio+20 Preparatory Committee,

Adopts the IOC Statement as annexed to this resolution;

Requests the Executive Secretary to:

(i) forward the IOC Statement to the UNCSD Rio+20 Preparatory Committee consideration in the lead-up to the UNCSD Rio+20 Conference;

(ii) transmit the IOC Statement to IOC Member States and relevant UN agencies and international organizations;

(iii) continue to play an advocating role for oceans at the UNCSD Rio+20 preparatory process;

(iv) report to the 36th General Conference of UNESCO and inform other organizations cooperating with IOC on its work regarding the preparation of UNCSD Rio+20; and

(v) disseminate the IOC Statement widely, including to non-governmental organizations and civil society partners;

Encourages IOC Member States to actively participate in the UNCSD Rio+20 preparatory process leading to the Conference;

Invites IOC Member States to integrate, as far as possible, the importance of the oceans to sustainable development and the contribution of IOC, as expressed in the IOC Statement, into their preparation and statements for UNCSD Rio+20;

Calls upon the Director-General of UNESCO to assist the IOC in its efforts to raise the awareness of the importance of the ocean, and to further assist in promoting the IOC Statement through the UNCSD Rio+20 process, and invites the Executive Heads of organizations that are part of UN-OCEANS to assist in these endeavours.
Annex to Resolution XXVI-5

**IOC’s Special Contribution to Sustainable Development**

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO is the sole UN organization specializing in ocean related science, services and capacity development. It has been carrying out these responsibilities for fifty years. This role has supported the objectives of UNCED and WSSD, notably in developing and coordinating for societal use, a global ocean observing system to forecast coastal and marine hazards, assess ocean change and conditions, and in building national and local capacity in marine science and sustainable management of oceans uses and their resources.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO’s role in contributing to sound scientific research, systematic observations, and reliable services for effective management of human activities in marine and coastal areas is a key factor of sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

The IOC invites the Rio+20 preparatory process’ consideration of the following actions:

(i) **Prevent and reduce the impacts of natural hazards** by further improving warning systems, as well as developing natural disaster preparedness strategies for marine threats.

(ii) **Contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and variability** through improved scientific understanding, building resilience of vulnerable coastal communities, and sustaining ecosystem services and resources.

(iii) **Safeguard the health of ocean ecosystems** by strengthening global scientific efforts to fully comprehend and protect coastal and marine environmental health, as well as conserve biological diversity through ecosystem-based approaches, and mitigate the impact of emerging ocean threats such as ocean acidification.

(iv) **Promote effective management procedures and policies leading to the sustainability of coastal and ocean environment and resources**, by encouraging and assisting nations developing ecosystem-based coastal and ocean strategies, and strengthening existing intergovernmental mechanisms to plan and apply ocean management strategies.

To underpin the above, IOC reiterates the need expressed in paragraph 36 of Johannesburg Plan of Action (World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002) to expand observation of the global ocean and coastal seas and, furthermore, to find mechanisms for sustaining those observations, as well as maintaining the required level of scientific research and knowledge.

The IOC recognizes that capacity development and transfer of technology are keys for effective ocean management and governance. The IOC will continue promoting such capacity development and voluntary transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms to its Member States, particularly, Africa, LDCs and SIDS, to empower them with the knowledge and skills to benefit and manage oceans and coasts in an equitable and sustainable way.
Annex II

CO-CHAIRS’ GUIDANCE NOTE INPUTS FOR COMPILATION DOCUMENT

**Purpose:** The objective of this note is to provide guidance to Member States and other stakeholders in responding to the invitation from Second Preparatory Committee “to provide their inputs and contributions in writing by 1 November 2011 for inclusion in a compilation document to serve as basis for the preparation of zero draft of the outcome document”. The above request was transmitted by the Co-Chairs of the UNCSD Bureau in a letter dated 14 March 2011.

**Background:** The guidance note has been prepared in the light of paragraph 20 (e) of GA Resolution 64/236: “It is important that there be efficient and effective preparations at the local, national, regional and international levels by Governments and the United Nations system so as to ensure high-quality inputs without placing undue strain on Member States”.

**Principles:** Three principles underlie the guidance note. First, it is meant to facilitate the preparation of inputs, and is not intended to be binding in any way; Member States, Major Groups and UN system organizations are invited to use this guidance note as appropriate. Second, all submissions will be posted in full as submitted on the UNCSD website (http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/). Third, the guidance provided here pertains exclusively to the provision of inputs for the compilation document, and should not be construed in any way as prejudging the structure or content of the zero draft of the outcome document.

**Guidance:** The following four points could be considered while providing inputs and contributions

1. **Deadline:** All submissions are due by 5 pm Eastern Standard Time (close of business in New York) on 1 November 2011. Submissions can be sent electronically by e-mail to the UNCSD secretariat (dsd@un.org), with copies to Ms. Tonya Vaturi (e-mail: vaturi@un.org) and Mr. Arthur de la Cruz (e-mail: delacruza@un.org) or by fax: + 1 212 963 1257. While e-mail or faxes are the preferred methods, submissions can also be sent by regular mail, addressed to: Ms. Tonya Vaturi, UNCSD Secretariat, Division for Sustainable Development, UN-DESA, DC2-2212, 2 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.

2. **Length:** Para 20 (b) of Res.64/236 states that the Conference will result in a “focused political document”. Therefore, focused inputs are highly desirable.

3. **General Content:** Contributions should endeavor to address the following questions:
   a. What are the expectations for the outcome of Rio+20, and what are the concrete proposals in this regard, including views on a possible structure of the Outcome document?
   b. What are the comments, if any, on existing proposals: e.g., a green economy roadmap, framework for action, sustainable development goals, a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, or others?
   c. What are the views on implementation and on how to close the implementation gap, which relevant actors are envisaged as being involved (Governments, specific Major Groups, UN system, IFIs, etc.);
   d. What specific cooperation mechanisms, partnership arrangements or other implementation tools are envisaged and what is the relevant time frame for the proposed decisions to be reached and actions to be implemented?

4. **Specific Elements:**
   a. **Objective of the Conference:** To secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges.
Contributions could include possible sectoral priorities (e.g., energy, food security and sustainable agriculture, technology transfer, water, oceans, sustainable urbanization, sustainable consumption and production, natural disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation, biodiversity, etc.) and sectoral initiatives that contribute to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development could be launched and endorsed at Rio+20.

b. **Green economy** in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication: views regarding how green economy can be a means to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions, and poverty eradication; what is its potential added value; experience to date, including what has worked and how to build upon success, what are the challenges and opportunities and how to address the challenges and seize opportunities, and possible elements of an agreement in outcome document on a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

c. **Institutional framework** for sustainable development: Priorities and proposals for strengthening individual pillars of sustainable development, as well as those for strengthening integration of the three pillars, at multiple levels – local, national, regional and international.

d. **Any proposals** for refinement of the two themes. Recall that Resolution 64/236 describes the focus of the Conference: “The focus of the Conference will include the following themes to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development”.