IOC Circular Letter No. 2424
(English only)

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: Call for Experts – UN Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects

Sir/Madam,

The UN General Assembly has decided in 2010 to launch the first cycle of the Regular Process (2010–2014) which will result in the first integrated global marine assessment of the world’s oceans and seas, including socio-economic aspects. To this end, the UN General Assembly has established an Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, which meets at UN Headquarters in New York. These meetings are open to Member States and Observers of the United Nations, relevant Intergovernmental organisations and relevant scientific institutions and major groups identified in Agenda 21.

A Group of Experts of the Regular Process has been set up to carry out the assessments within the framework of the Regular Process. It contains up to 25 members drawn equally from, and appointed through, the five regional groups of the United Nations. The members cover a wide range of expertise, scientific, economic and social, relevant to carrying out the assessments.

In addition, a much larger pool of experts will need to be established to assist the Group of Experts in conducting the assessments and to provide effective peer-review to ensure the high quality of the outputs. These experts will be appointed by Member States of the United Nations, through the regional groups, reflecting the principles of adherence to equitable geographical representation and having due regard to a desirable balance between genders.

.../...
The Group of Experts of the Regular Process has estimated that between 1500 and 2000 experts will be needed to conduct the assessment and the subsequent peer review properly. The legitimacy, relevance and credibility of the Regular Process will ultimately depend on the involvement of scientists and experts from all relevant disciplines from all over the world.

A set of criteria for the appointment of experts to the pool of experts and the panel of peer reviewers has been defined and is attached to this circular letter. These will be appointed by Member States, through the regional groups, to support the work of the Group of Experts in the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment and to review and comment on the draft, respectively.

The regional groups have been requested to initiate consultations with Member States with a view to finalizing the appointment process for the pool of experts and communicating all the appointments to the UN Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (DOALOS) by 16 March 2012.

Experts with appropriate qualifications are urged to become engaged in this ongoing process. Individuals wishing to be appointed to the pool of experts or the panel of peer reviewers should contact their Governments in order to obtain the necessary nomination, in accordance with the abovementioned Criteria.

For further information on the Criteria for the appointment of experts and to obtain a copy of the personal history form for the nomination of individual experts, please visit: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm

With the assurances of my highest consideration, I remain,

[signed]

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

Enclosures (2):

Regular Process Brochure
Criteria for appointment of Experts
The Group of Experts of the Regular Process has estimated that between 1500 and 2000 experts will be needed to conduct the assessment and the subsequent peer review properly. The legitimacy, relevance and credibility of the Regular Process will ultimately depend on the involvement of scientists and experts from all relevant disciplines from all over the world.

The Criteria for the appointment of experts to the pool of experts and the panel of peer reviewers is available as Annex I, in A/66/189 at http://ods.un.org/ . Paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Criteria provide that the pool of experts and the panel of peer reviewers will be appointed by Member States, through the regional groups, to support the work of the Group of Experts in the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment and to review and comment on the draft, respectively. Paragraph 6 of the Criteria provides that appointments to the pool of experts and the panel of peer reviewers and the allocation of tasks to the members of the pool of experts should reflect the principle of adherence to equitable geographical representation in all activities of the Regular Process, and have due regard to a desirable balance between genders.

The regional groups have been requested to initiate consultations with Member States with a view to finalizing the appointment process for the pool of experts and communicating all the appointments to the Division by 16 March 2012. Experts with appropriate qualifications are urged to become engaged in this ongoing process. Individuals wishing to be appointed to the pool of experts or the panel of peer reviewers should contact their Governments in order to obtain the necessary nomination, in accordance with the above-mentioned Criteria.

For further information on the Criteria for the appointment of experts and to obtain a copy of the personal history form for the nomination of individual experts, see http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/global_reporting.htm.
The United Nations General Assembly plays an essential role in ocean governance and policy development. In this role, it has long recognized the need for better scientific understanding to inform and improve decisions on how to manage human pressures on the oceans.

Following a recommendation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly decided to establish a regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects (the “Regular Process”) to help meet this need. The legal framework for the Regular Process is the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which establishes an international legal regime for the world’s oceans and seas.

The General Assembly has decided that the task of the first cycle of the Regular Process (2010 to 2014) will be to produce the first integrated global marine assessment of the world’s oceans and seas, including socio-economic aspects. It will coincide with the next review by the Commission on Sustainable Development of the theme “Oceans and seas”.

To this end, the General Assembly has created an Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole, which meets at UN Headquarters in New York. These meetings are open to Member States and Observers of the United Nations, relevant intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations and relevant scientific institutions and major groups identified in Agenda 21.

The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations has been designated as the secretariat of the Regular Process. Technical and scientific support is being provided by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization and other United Nations specialised agencies.

A Group of Experts of the Regular Process has been set up to carry out the assessments within the framework of the Regular Process. It contains up to 25 members drawn equally from, and appointed through, the five regional groups of the United Nations. The members cover a wide range of expertise, scientific, economic and social, relevant to carrying out the assessments.

In addition, a much larger pool of experts will need to be established to assist the Group of Experts in conducting the assessments and to provide effective peer-review to ensure the high quality of the outputs. These experts will be appointed by Member States of the United Nations, through the regional groups, reflecting the principle of adherence to equitable geographical representation and having due regard to a desirable balance between genders.

**WHAT WILL THE REGULAR PROCESS DELIVER?**

Regional marine environmental assessments have lacked the context of a global overview of the state of the oceans, and have not always assessed either the full range of human activities that impact, or depend on, ocean resources, or changes in the provision of ocean ecosystem goods and services. The availability of data and information in different regions has also been highly variable.

The first integrated global marine assessment will look at both the current state of the marine environment and foreseeable developments, building on existing regional assessments. More specifically, the first integrated global marine assessment will:

- Provide decision-makers with accurate and timely information at the global level on the state of all aspects of the marine environment, based on the latest available scientific findings;
- Develop techniques for integrated assessment of ocean processes, sectors of human activities and marine species and habitats, including the identification of trends;
Criteria for the appointment of experts

1. A pool of experts will be appointed by States, through the regional groups, to support the work of the Group of Experts in the preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment.

2. Where the Group of Experts does not designate one of its own members to draft a working paper or draft chapter for the assessment, it will invite selected members of the pool of experts to contribute to drafting working papers and draft chapters. Other members of the pool of experts with relevant expertise will be invited to comment on the drafts and may be invited to participate in the drafting.

3. When the draft of the first global integrated marine assessment is submitted for review, a panel of peer reviewers will be appointed by States, through the regional groups, to review and comment on the draft. The members of the panel of peer reviewers should not previously have been involved in the preparation of working papers or draft chapters. The panel of peer reviewers will work in parallel with the review of the draft by States and intergovernmental organizations.

4. The following criteria should apply to all individuals nominated by States to the Group of Experts, the pool of experts or the panel of peer reviewers:
   (a) Internationally recognized expertise, to be demonstrated by one or more of the following:
      (i) A record of scientific publications on the relevant issues, preferably in peer-reviewed publications;
      (ii) Experience at a high level in global, regional or national assessments relating to the marine environment and other relevant areas, including socioeconomic aspects;
      (iii) Experience at a high level in the design and management of other major global, regional or national initiatives in marine science, assessment, environmental protection, maritime transport, coastal management, fisheries management, or other similar functions related to the marine environment and other relevant areas, including socio-economic aspects;
      (iv) For experts from regions where there is as yet a relative paucity of scientific observation and monitoring data, a recognized status in traditional knowledge of, or in observing, the marine environment of their area;
   (b) Demonstrated effective participation in international processes relevant to the marine environment or integrated assessment and other relevant areas, including socio-economic aspects; and
   (c) The ability to serve in an independent, individual capacity.

5. In the allocation of members of the pool of experts to the various tasks, the following will be considered:
   (a) Those invited to contribute to drafting a working paper or draft chapter should have a demonstrated ability to write clearly and concisely on their subject;
(b) Material from those invited to contribute to drafting a working paper or draft chapter should be submitted in one of the official languages of the United Nations.

In addition, members of the panel of peer reviewers will be responsible for working according to the needs of the Group of Experts.

6. The appointments to the pool of experts and the panel of peer reviewers and the allocation of tasks to members of the pool of experts should reflect the principle of adherence to equitable geographical representation in all activities of the Regular Process, and have due regard to a desirable balance between the genders.

7. The selection of members of the pool of experts to draft, or to comment on, an issue should ensure that all disciplines relevant to an integrated assessment of that issue are included.

8. Experts should be given sufficient time to make the contributions to the Regular Process that their roles will require.