IOC Circular Letter No 2261

(English only)

IOC/PB/SB/pbo
Paris, 24 April 2008

To. : Official National Coordinating Body for liaison with the IOC Member States
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States

Cc : IOC Officers
Official National Coordinating Body for liaison with the IOC Member States
Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States
Officers and Secretaries of the IOC Regional Sub-Commissions and Committees

Subject : Regional Consultations with National Commissions for UNESCO on the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2010–2011 (Draft 35 C/5)

The 34th General Conference of UNESCO (Paris, 16 October–3 November 2007) adopted its Medium-Term Strategy 2008–2013 (34 C/4) as the strategic and programmatic framework for UNESCO for 2008–2013. Consultations with Member States and five regional consultative meetings with National Commissions for UNESCO have now been scheduled between May and June* for the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget 2010–2011 (Draft 35 C/5), which is intended to contribute to the overarching and strategic programme objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy.

Through Resolution XXIV-2, the IOC Assembly at its 24th Session, adopted the IOC Medium-Term Strategy 2008–2013, based on four High-Level Objectives:

1. Prevention and reduction of the impacts of natural hazards
2. Mitigation of the impacts and adaptation to climate change and variability
3. Safeguarding the health of ocean ecosystems

4. Management procedures and policies leading to the sustainability of coastal and ocean environment and resources

In the UNESCO Programme and Budget 2008–2009 (34 C/5) these high-level objectives have been incorporated into two Main Lines of Action:

- **Main Line of Action 2 - Oceans and coastal zones: improving governance and fostering intergovernmental cooperation through ocean sciences and services**, entirely devoted to IOC.

- **Main Line of Action 3 - Promoting science, knowledge and education for disaster preparedness and mitigation, and enhancing national and regional coping capacities, including through support for the development of risk reduction networks and monitoring and assessment measures, such as tsunami early warning systems**, where IOC contribution is represented by the Tsunami Programme.

The First Session of the Working Group on the Future of IOC (Paris, 19–20 February 2008) confirmed that the current IOC mandate is appropriate and agreed that the future of IOC should be based on the premise that the IOC will remain, and should be reinforced, within UNESCO. The IOC should look for an enhanced role within UNESCO in terms of intersectoral cooperation, based on its strong technical expertise on ocean sciences, ocean services and capacity development. On financial matters, the Working Group agreed that IOC should seek a clear identification of IOC’s budget in the corresponding appropriation resolution of the UNESCO General Conference and in full recognition of the governance expressed by the IOC Assembly, explore the possibility of obtaining from the General Conference the IOC budget as a “financial allocation”.

In the light of the decisions and resolutions of the IOC Assembly, the preliminary results of the Working Group on the Future of IOC, and the preparation of the Draft IOC Programme and Budget 2010–2011 at the upcoming 41st IOC Executive Council (24 June–1 July 2008), I wish to draw your attention on need to ensure:

(i) An adequate representation of marine-related interests and expertise in the national and regional consultations

(ii) The maintenance of a specific main line of action in the UNESCO Sciences Programme dealing with oceans and coastal zones

(iii) Scope for articulating the comparative advantages offered by IOC to UNESCO in natural sciences and technologies

(iv) The maintenance of IOC overall allocation at the same levels of 2008–2009 ($9,026,200) and, if resources are available, the reinforcement of IOC in both programme allocation and staff, with a view to enhance its contribution to the Organization’s goals through interdisciplinary and intersectoral cooperation

The upcoming national and regional consultations represent a fundamental opportunity for designing the future of the Commission and IOC Member States are invited to advocate, through appropriate mechanisms and instruments, the IOC work within the UNESCO Programme and Budget priorities for 2010–2011.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

[signed]

Patricio Bernal
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO
Executive Secretary, IO