

## Information Note on the proposed United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development

20 October 2017

### 1. Defining the goals, objectives and outcomes for the Decade

The main motivation for the proposed UN Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development is to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and create improved conditions for sustainable development of the ocean, seas and coasts. Both of these critically important goals are very science intensive. This is why a Decade of ocean science for Sustainable Development (hereafter – the Decade) can become a true catalyst to put our ocean on a course of sustainability by 2030.

By stimulating a global partnership on the marine science requirements needed to support implementation of Agenda 2030, the proposed United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development could provide Member States with a framework for coordinating and consolidating the observations and marine research needed to achieve SDG14, and also other SDGs that have an ocean dimension (for example SDG 2 on food security, SDG 8 on economic growth, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption, or SDG 13 on climate, amongst others). Given that marine science is an essential underpinning of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Decade would also be instrumental in supporting Member States and relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention.

The Document IOC/INF-1341 Rev.Prov<sup>1</sup> presented at the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOC Assembly in June 2017, provides a starting point for setting out the goals and objectives of the Decade. It was initially prepared based on a concept note written by IOC elected officers<sup>2</sup>, which was subsequently circulated to IOC Member States to discuss possible objectives, outcomes and activities of the proposed Decade. The Document was then reviewed by Member States and inputs were received in April-May 2017. It was further reviewed by the IOC Assembly and provided the basis for IOC Resolution XXIX.1 endorsing the Decade.

The document IOC/INF-1341 Rev. Prov is aimed at (i) facilitating initial consultations and exchange of views on the concept of the Decade, (ii) suggesting a set of *preliminary* goals, activities, themes, end-results/outcomes, and (iii) stimulating further elaboration of the Decade

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com\\_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=19559](http://ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=19559)

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the IOC Statutes, every 2 years, the IOC Assembly elects a chairperson and five vice-chairpersons (each representing one of the five IOC regional electoral groups). These constitute the Officers of the Commission.

proposal through a more formal process. This formal process is described in more detail under section 5, and will for example include the preparation of a science plan to define key scientific questions to be addressed by the Decade. Throughout this process, best practices in scientific peer-reviewing as well as extensive consultations with Member States will ensure the scientific robustness and policy relevance of the activities to be proposed.

The initial discussions of the Decade objectives and outcomes focused on the issues that are close to the core mandate of IOC and its Member States, as the UN body primarily responsible for coordinating ocean research, services and related capacity building. The formulation of these objectives is therefore aligned with priorities in ocean science that have been identified in the course of many decades of work amongst the oceanographic community. IOC will proactively and openly engage Members and other stakeholders in further elaborating and improving these objectives and outcomes, making them all-inclusive. The preliminary objectives are interdisciplinary and universal by nature, reflecting the crosscutting nature of ocean science.

The following consolidated but still *preliminary interpretation* of objectives and outcomes of the Decade is offered for the GA consultations.

### **Broad Objectives/Outcomes**

With the above caveat, the Decade will pursue the following preliminary objectives:

- (i) Elucidating impacts of *cumulative* stressors on the ocean, its seas, ecosystems and resources, filling identified gaps in knowledge, also seeking interdisciplinary solutions to support the reverse of ocean health degradation;
- (ii) Completing the science base and developing an interdisciplinary adaptive management approach towards ecosystem-based management and stimulating ocean economy for sustainable development;
- (iii) Reducing vulnerability to ocean-related hazards for coastal communities and people at sea through research and development of multi-hazard early warning systems, community preparedness and awareness;
- (iv) Implementation of capacity development through, inter alia, transfer of marine technology, education and training through research leading to significantly enhanced economic benefits from marine resources and technology, especially for SIDS and LDCs;
- (v) Increased ocean literacy, training and education about the ocean and its seas, including in schools and among decision-makers;
- (vi) Enhanced cooperation, coordination, and communication between stakeholders in marine affairs, including ocean research and observations, with faster and more effective delivery of new and existing knowledge to policy and decision-makers.

The implementation of the Decade may entail a number of outputs including:

- (i) Oceanographic research and technological development guided by the identified needs of sustainable development and supported by governments and private sector, civil society and the broad public;
- (ii) Consolidation of the ocean science communities through communication, dialogue, and regular exchanges between governments and their agencies, other users of the marine environment and its resources, the public, and the different science communities, e.g. natural, social, economy, human health;
- (iii) A new generation of observing technologies for the ocean and its seas emanating from efforts of technologically developed and developing countries introduced into the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) for sustained observations, expanded to include more biochemical, biological, biodiversity and ecosystem related parameters, in support of ecosystem-based management;
- (iv) Use of the new generation of inter-compared coupled modelling tools for prediction of ocean conditions, including biological and biochemical parameters such as oxygen and pH, going beyond the existing abilities to describe the physical state of the ocean;
- (v) Complete mapping of the ocean conditions and resources, the bathymetry, subduction zones and hot vents;
- (vi) Strengthened and directed capacity building activities linked to technology transfer, including new technologies, and sustained observations with related training through research;
- (vii) An information portal responding to the new role of science in communication and use of scientific results, regularly providing and updating information on the state of the ocean to all stakeholders, hence supporting the UN Regular Process and its World Ocean Assessment, through available new communication and data assimilation technologies;
- (viii) A partnership amongst likeminded institutions, agencies, working at national, regional and international level, with strong cooperation, coordination; both within and outside the UN system.

## 2. Policy-relevance of the Decade for national governments

The Decade directly responds to a number of global policy-enabling frameworks that have been endorsed by UN Member States over the last 4 years, namely the 2030 Agenda, but also the Sendai Framework for Risk Reduction (2015), the SAMOA Pathway for SIDS (2014), the UNFCCC Paris Agreement (2015), together with previous intergovernmental agreements. All these frameworks have in common the recognition of ocean scientific knowledge as a key element required to inform the effective formulation of national policies in field of sustainable development and disaster risk reduction.

Scientific activities that will be developed under the Decade will have a clear focus on scientific applications and solutions-oriented approach. As an example, new collaborative research activities will be initiated through the Decade, building on existing ocean data-collection platforms, such as tide gauges and ocean buoys. The ocean data gathered through such platforms may be processed into 'products' such as ocean temperature forecasts which might, for example, indicate likely fish migration patterns, or highlight potential for coral reef bleaching.

Policymakers can use these ocean ‘products’ to guide decisions on development and marine management. Policymakers need such information — including on chlorophyll concentrations, harmful algal blooms, tracking of large marine vertebrates, dissolved organic chemicals, and nitrous oxide — to guide urgent decisions, especially on managing marine ecosystems and their services. The nature of the activities to be undertaken before and during the Decade will be of technical and scientific nature, with a focus on generating knowledge to inform the formulation of sustainable development policies. As such, the Decade will not foresee activities of a policy prescriptive nature.

The type of ocean management activities that will benefit from enhanced knowledge and related capacity development may, for example, include:

- Coastal Zone Management;
- Coastal adaptation strategies;
- Marine Spatial Planning;
- Establishment of Marine Protected Areas;
- Fishery regulations;
- Nationally Determined Contributions to UNFCCC;
- Development of national ocean policies;
- Development of national marine research and development strategies; and
- Regional and national capacity development planning.

Further information on the trans-disciplinarity and socio-economic/policy dimension of ocean research can be found in documents in footnote<sup>3</sup> of this page.

### **3. Linkages with other global processes such as UN Regular Process, UNCLOS and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development**

The Decade will support and reinforce the science base of a number of UN processes. A few examples are provided below:

#### **World Ocean Assessment under the UN Regular Process for reporting and assessing the State of the Marine Environment, including socio-economic aspects (“Regular Process”)**

With regards to the World Ocean Assessment, it is worth recalling that IOC is actively engaged in providing scientific and technical support to the UN Regular Process and its Group of Experts. This support is framed within the provisions of UNGA resolution 71/257 that *inter alia* invited IOC as well as other UN bodies, to assist in the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process with regard to the following activities: awareness-raising, the identification of experts for the Pool of Experts, technical and scientific support to the Bureau and the Group of Experts, hosting workshops and meetings of the writing teams, capacity-building and the scoping process for the assessment(s) of the second cycle.

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<sup>3</sup> OECD 2016 Ocean Economy 2016 <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/deliver/9216021e.pdf?itemId=/content/book/9789264251724-en&mimeType=application/pdf>  
Rudd, M.A. 2014. Scientists’ perspectives on global ocean research priorities. Mar. Sci., <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2014.00036>

The 1<sup>st</sup> integrated ocean assessment published in 2016 identified many scientific knowledge gaps and concludes that “major disparities exist in the capacities around the world to undertake the marine scientific research necessary for proper management of human activities that can affect the marine environment. The chapters of this Assessment (WOA-I) demonstrate how these disparities constrain the tasks of managing these human impacts (...)” (WOA1, Chapter 30 on MSR). Throughout the WOA-I report and chapters, several gaps are identified, particularly in the following areas: physical structure of the ocean, oceanic circulations including sea temperature (both at surface and at depth), sea-level rise, salinity distribution, carbon dioxide absorption, nutrient distribution and cycling, biota of the ocean and human interactions with the ocean. The first provisional objective of the Decade, namely the one on multi-stressors, directly responds to this key conclusion of the WOA-I.

These conclusions will be particularly useful for guiding the formulation of underpinning scientific questions and themes of the Decade. They should be revisited during the preparation of the Decade Implementation plan, possibly through a set of regional scientific workshops to be conducted in 2018-2019, aimed at preparing the science plan and implementation strategy of the Decade [see question 4 on consultation process]. The Second cycle of the WOA (WOA-II) was initiated in 2016 and should conclude by 2020. Again, it is expected that knowledge gaps will continue to be identified and should be included in the WOA assessment outputs. These should in turn be considered in the planning process of the Decade. Close interaction with the Regular Process Group of Experts will be pursued so as to ensure that these are integrated in the Decade planning.

In conclusion, the activities to be developed in the framework of Decade should be seen as complementary and supportive to the Regular Process. The Decade will not conduct assessment *per se* but will provide a coordinated framework for formulating research questions, conducting collaborative research, collecting and disseminating data according to international standards, and building technical capacity. All of these elements are essential and provide building blocks to the conduct of robust integrated marine assessments. In particular key outputs of the decade will support future cycles of the Regular Process.

Similarly, the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a changing climate (SROCC) established under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will be finalized in 2019 and will further contribute to the assessment of knowledge gaps on the ocean-climate nexus to be considered under the Ocean Science Decade.

## UNCLOS

As noted by the United Nations Legal Counsel in his remarks at the IOC side event held on 25 September on the margins of the informal consultations on the draft resolution on oceans and the law of the sea:

“Marine science and the Convention are closely intertwined. The Convention provides the enabling framework for the conduct of marine scientific research, which it addresses in Part XIII and for the development and transfer of marine technology, which it addresses in its Part XIV. Marine science is an essential underpinning of the implementation of the Convention and

achievement of its objectives, namely the equitable and efficient utilization of the resources of the ocean and seas, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment. The Decade would not only help fill some of the identified knowledge gaps, it would also contribute to the strengthening in a number of ways the implementation of the Convention which is key to achieving all SDG 14 targets. The Convention requires States and competent international organizations to promote and facilitate the development and conduct of marine scientific research as well as to promote international cooperation in marine scientific research. It also requires the publication and dissemination of information on proposed major programmes and their objectives as well as knowledge resulting from marine scientific research. Under the Convention, all States are also to cooperate, in accordance with their capabilities, to promote actively the development and transfer of marine sciences and technology on fair and reasonable terms and conditions in order to help developing countries. A UN Decade would contribute to implementing those obligations by stimulating international cooperation in marine scientific research and sharing of knowledge. By helping understand the impacts of cumulative stressors and promoting interdisciplinary research, it could also contribute to the development of an integrated approach to the management of ocean-related activities. It could further improve the capacity of States, in particular developing States (especially SIDS and LDCs), to acquire the required knowledge to sustainably manage human activities in the ocean and to realize the benefits of sustainable and effective development of marine resources and uses of the oceans.”

## **2030 Agenda and SDG 14**

Achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” requires novel science-based solutions and their systematic transformation into informed policies and decisions. The Decade will directly support the target 14.a that calls for “Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.” Target 14.a is a cross-cutting target which underpins other SDG 14 targets, such as those related to marine pollution, ocean acidification, ecosystem based management, fisheries management, marine protected areas, or blue economy. Beyond SDG 14, there are several other SDGs that would also benefit from improved knowledge of the ocean through its relationship to other global goals such as food security (SDG 2), Climate action (SDG 13) learning opportunities (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), or human health (SDG 3).

The Decade proposal was registered as a voluntary commitment to the UN Ocean conference (#OceanAction15527) by IOC. Out of the 1400 SDG commitments registered by international stakeholders, about 500 relate to actions for advancing target 14.a on marine scientific knowledge. This highlights the priority that governments, UN bodies, and NGOs, amongst others, give to the need to improve scientific collaboration with a view to improve knowledge. The Decade could harness these commitments and provide a framework for advancing research and capacity development in a more concerted and coordinated manner. Beyond 2020, the Decade through its coordination mechanism, would contribute to the regular review

of SDGs conducted in the framework of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) as well as in the context of the Global Sustainable Development Report produced every four years.

#### **4. Financial implications, including for States, resulting from the implementation of the draft plan of implementation/work program proposed to support the achievement of the intended objectives and outcomes of the Decade**

As with all international decades, Member States may contribute to the activities and implementation of the Decade on a voluntary basis. These contributions will be of different nature and may include national in-kind contributions in terms of activities (for e.g. organization of scientific meetings, research cruises, technical training, access to data, etc.), contribution to the coordination of the Decade (for e.g. hosting of project office, secondment/loan of staff to IOC), or direct financial contributions to a dedicated Decade Fund that may support both coordination and activities *per se*. The financial support for the Decade activities will also be obtained by researchers making proposals to existing funding organizations, many of which will be encouraging the Decade-related work with specific solicitations. Thus, the research activities will mainly be approved and funded through national mechanisms, as well as through regional and international funding bodies.

In the preparation phase of the Decade, it is anticipated that resources will be needed in order to facilitate the coordination of the preparatory activities (e.g. awareness raising with Member States and partners, consultations through regional and global workshops for developing the Science Plan and Implementation strategy, communication and outreach materials). As part of the implementation plan to be prepared during 2018-2020, a guide for resource mobilization will be developed and new partnerships will be sought to support the core activities foreseen under the Decade.

Beyond 2019 and pending on responsibilities assigned to IOC as the potential coordinating agency, IOC will seek support to the Decade through its regular programme and extra-budgetary resources such as voluntary contributions, staff secondment and loans, in-kind support, hosting of national/regional facilities to support the Decade.

As part of its strategy, the IOC encourages the championing of its programmes by its Member States through direct support. For example, many of the IOC programmes and units outside HQ benefit from such Member State support (e.g. International Ocean Data Exchange Programme Office hosted by Belgium, ICG/IOTWMS Secretariat and Perth Programme Office hosted by Australia, IOC Harmful Algal Bloom Centre hosted by Denmark, IOCARIBE Secretariat hosted by Colombia, or the IOC-WESTPAC Secretariat hosted by Thailand). A similar model will be pursued to support for the implementation of the Decade.

The IOC Assembly Resolution XXIX.1 on the Decade invited IOC Member States to contribute resources to the IOC Special Account and/or through in-kind contributions. As of today, three Member States have expressed interest to support the Decade activities through voluntary donations and/or in-kind support. One of them has provided voluntary contributions to the level of about 100,000 USD in 2017 and committed a similar amount for 2018. These will top

up the IOC core funding to facilitate the development of the Decade implementation plan. Additional arrangements may be further considered by IOC Governing bodies in the context of Article 10.4 of the IOC Statutes.

The coordination mechanism of the Decade hosted by IOC will be operated through a flexible, non-permanent structure, building on best practices in running international science project offices.

#### **5. Consultations with Member States with regard to the development of the draft plan of implementation/work program**

To address the process of Member States consultation, it is first important to specify what elements will constitute the Implementation Plan to be finalized by 2020, and how these will be developed. In accordance with UN practices, a draft programme of action or implementation plan with clearly defined objectives and activities to be carried out at the international, regional and national levels should be formulated to support the implementation of any international decade under the auspices of UN. Given that the Decade's main objective is to build new scientific knowledge to inform sustainable development, it will be necessary to build the Decade Implementation Plan on the basis on a concerted science plan that specifies key science questions and gaps that will be addressed. It is therefore anticipated that the Implementation Plan will include the following elements:

- An **international science plan** that will define a number of key issues, priority scientific questions of high relevance to sustainable development (the 2030 Agenda), and will propose a number of scientific themes and outcomes that will structure the implementation of the Decade. The Science plan will be built upon a number of consultations with the scientific community (through global and regional workshops) to be undertaken in 2018-2019. The Science Plan should also define the modalities for synthesizing the results of research activities undertaken during the Decade;
- An **implementation strategy** providing a guide rather than detailed operational procedures that will also include governance arrangements in terms of structure and functions of coordinating structures (for e.g. steering committee, international project office(s), working groups to be established from 2021);
- **Procedure for the development of a Capacity Development plan** with a view to facilitate improved scientific knowledge transfer to wider segments of society and regional/national governments, and to enable educational and capacity development opportunities in support of early career scientists;
- Identification of **financial mechanisms** to be established;
- **Procedures for monitoring implementation/reporting** on the Decade implementation;
- **Guidelines for development of partnerships** under the Decade;
- Elements of the **communication strategy**;
- A **framework for coordinating Decade activities** of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other related organizations, as well as those of other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned;

- **Guidelines for the establishment at the national level of mechanisms** to mobilize public support and engage national institutions in the conduct of Decade activities.

In early 2018, it is anticipated that, first on an interim basis in order to start work as soon as possible, a **Planning Group** will be established to oversee the development of the Implementation Plan of the Decade, to be completed by 2020. The terms of reference of the Planning Group, modalities of work, and membership will be reviewed by IOC Member States and considered by its IOC Executive Council at its 50th session in early July 2018.

It is anticipated that the Planning Group would be composed of:

- Representatives of international science bodies/unions;
- Representatives of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other related organizations;
- Representatives of IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies and/or regional intergovernmental science-focused organizations.

IOC will provide Secretariat support to the work of the Planning Group during the preparation phase of the Decade.

The role of the Planning Group should be to:

- gather, summarize and make widely available information on existing ideas for the Decade, serving as a clearinghouse for ideas and inputs from diverse scientific communities, and stakeholders,
- stimulate, encourage and organize the outcomes and possible content of the Decade amongst a wide range of interested parties,
- formulate a set of outputs,
- develop an initial high-level Science Plan for the Decade, which engages early career scientists throughout the planning process, and on the basis of regional inputs,
- develop a specific set of objectives targeted at capacity development as well as the general public,
- develop a proposed framework for the design, development, guidance, and oversight of the Decade,
- present a draft plan to the IOC Governing bodies and finalize the plan upon inputs from Member States and other stakeholders, and for its final consideration by the UNGA.

A dedicated web portal will be developed to share information on all developments related to the Decade preparation phase in a transparent and efficient way.

### **Consultations with and Reporting to Member States**

Consultations with Member States will be essential throughout the preparation phase (2018-2020) to guide the development of the Decade's activities and to ensure that its outcomes respond to national interests and needs, in accordance with existing ocean management frameworks. Regular reporting to Member States on the preparation of the Implementation Plan will also be essential to keep national stakeholders informed of progress.

As highlighted in the diagram below, **consultations with and reporting to Member States** are expected to occur at several stages and levels of the process, and in particular:

- During the informal consultations on the Omnibus ocean resolution (on-going) potentially leading to the proclamation of the Decade in September-November 2017;
- Through a survey, IOC and UN Member States will be invited to provide inputs on key scientific questions they would like the Decade to address, to support national efforts in achieving Agenda 2030 (1<sup>st</sup> half of 2018);
- United Nations, its specialized agencies and other related organizations interested in participating in the activities of the Decade will be invited to consult with their respective membership (1<sup>st</sup> half of 2018) and to provide feedback to the Planning Group;
- IOC Member States will be invited to approve terms of reference of the Planning Group (July 2018);
- IOC Member States may nominate scientific experts to participate in the regional/regional workshops (July 2018-June 2019);
- IOC as coordinator could be mandated to report every year or bi-annually on the Decade preparations, for example, by providing an input for the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea to the UNGA (73<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> sessions) and/or by providing information to the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, in the context of its agenda item on “Inter-agency cooperation and coordination”
- IOC Member States will consider an interim report of the Planning Group in June 2019;
- A review phase between January and April 2020 whereby all Member States (both IOC and UN Member States) will be invited to provide comments on the draft implementation plan;
- The IOC Executive Council at its 52<sup>nd</sup> session (June 2020) will be invited to take note of the Implementation plan prior to its final consideration by the UNGA in the second part of 2020.



Proposed timeline for establishment of International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

Finally, it is worth recalling in this context that the Membership in IOC is 'open to any Member State of any one of the organizations of the United Nations system' (Article 4.A.1 of the IOC Statutes).

## 6. Engaging UN and non-UN partners in the development and implementation of the Decade

IOC will engage with relevant United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies on a bilateral basis as well as through UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordinating mechanism on ocean-related matters. IOC will also develop collaboration with non-UN partners and invite inputs on the preparation and implementation of the Decade.

Currently, several agencies have responded favourably to the IOC invitation (Correspondence from IOC Executive Secretary to Heads of specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes, and ISA, May 2017) to work jointly on the development of the Decade. These included FAO, IMO, WMO, UN Environment, OLA/DOALOS, ISA, CBD, UNDP, amongst others. An inter-agency meeting is scheduled in early 2018 to receive inputs and work out contributions from these agencies (back to back with the next physical meeting of UN-Oceans to be held at IOC/UNESCO in Paris).

Depending on the outcome of the on-going UNGA review of the UN-Oceans Terms of Reference, UN-Oceans could play a significant role in engaging and coordinating its members in the preparation and implementation of the Decade.

In addition, intergovernmental organizations with a marine science focus will also be invited to collaborate. These include for example,

- the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO),
- the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES),
- the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES),
- the Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans)
- The Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS),
- The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP),
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),
- The Pacific Islands Forum, amongst others.

Several of these institutions have already formally expressed their interest to partner in the Decade.

The scientific community associated with a number of scientific unions and committees are also invited to contribute. These include the

- International Council for Science (ICSU);
- The Scientific Committee on Oceanographic Research (SCOR);
- Future Earth.

Educational institutions with an international or regional focus on marine science capacity development will also be invited to contribute, particularly to the development of a capacity development plan.

## **7. Consideration of the Decade proposal by the UNGA**

### **Stand-alone vs Omnibus resolution**

To inform the GA consultations, the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has kindly provided an analysis of the practice of the General Assembly in proclaiming international decades from 2010 to 2016 as presented in Annex 1.

The main findings are :

1. The General Assembly has proclaimed seven international decades since 2010. It may be noted that the practices of the General Assembly in proclaiming these international decades have been variable.
2. Four international decades were proclaimed by stand-alone resolutions, while three were proclaimed in recurrent resolutions on thematic agenda items.
3. Three international decades were proclaimed with a certain form of implementation plan in place at the time of proclamation, while the others were proclaimed without such implementation plans. It may, however, be further noted that, of the international decades which were proclaimed in the absence of implementation plans, most were proclaimed as a follow-up to international decades or international years previously proclaimed by the General Assembly with the same or related themes, and their implementation was suggested to be built upon the activities of the preceding international decades or international years. Since 2010, the "Decade of Action for Road Safety", proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 64/255, has been the only case of an international decade which was proclaimed with neither implementation plan in place nor preceding proclamation of an international year or decade. It has also

been the only case which in name is neither a "United Nations" decade nor an "International" decade.

4. As to the two sets of guidelines developed by the Economic and Social Council, namely the "Guidelines for future international years" annexed to its resolution 1980/67, and "Guidelines for international decades in economic and social fields" annexed to its resolution 1989/84, it may be noted that the General Assembly has not been consistently following these guidelines in proclaiming international decades. Among the seven General Assembly resolutions proclaiming international decades since 2010, only three made reference to these guidelines. Resolution 67/215 only referred to ECOSOC resolution 1980/67 in its operative part, while resolution 70/259 only referred to ECOSOC resolution 1989/84 in its preamble. However, a reference to these guidelines was included in the most recent proclamation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development" in resolution 71/222, which referred to ECOSOC resolution 1989/84 in both its preamble and operative part and also referred to resolution 1980/67 in its preamble.
5. Despite the inconsistency, proclamation of an international decade is normally accompanied by a general guidance on financial arrangements for its implementation as well as arrangements on the reporting and review of the implementation.
6. Also, the commencement of the proclaimed decades has always been within 2 years starting from the proclamation.

Whilst it is the prerogative of Member States to decide which procedure to apply in this case, the IOC believes that a proclamation in 2017 through the Omnibus resolution would be sufficient and would establish the enabling working framework within which it would be able to mobilise the scientific community, governments, UN bodies and other relevant stakeholders, and initiate the preparation of a sound implementation plan in a timely and efficient way.

### **Possible actions to consider in this year's Omnibus resolution**

With the approach defined above in mind, Member States may wish to consider the following actions for possible inclusion in this year Omnibus resolution:

- Decide to proclaim the Decade as of 1 January 2021 for a ten year period within existing structures and available resources;
- Invite IOC/UNESCO to lead the implementation of the Decade and start the preparation of the Implementation Plan in consultation with Member States, the specialized agencies, funds, programmes and other entities of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders;
- Invite the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly about the implementation of the UN Decade, by mandating IOC to report annually or bi-annually on the Decade preparations by providing an input to the Secretary-General's Report on Oceans and Law of the Sea. IOC could also be requested to provide information to the Informal Consultative Process (ICP) in the context of its agenda item on "Inter-agency cooperation and coordination" at its next meeting in 2018 and thereafter provided that the ICP mandate is renewed;
- In addition, Member States may also wish to make use of the annual meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of

the Sea, for consultations on the Decade. A first consultation could be organised during the 2018 meeting with the aim to receive inputs on priority areas UN Member States would like to see addressed as part of the Decade plan. A second consultation could be organised at the 2020 ICP meeting (in the event the mandate of the ICP is renewed) with a view to review the draft implementation plan;

- Request DOALOS, to work in close collaboration with IOC, with a view to facilitate the collection of inputs on key scientific questions UN Member States would like the Decade to address, to support national efforts in achieving Agenda 2030 [*This is in reference to the survey to be conducted in early 2018- see section 5*];
- Invite UN-Oceans and its members to collaborate with IOC on the Decade;
- Invite UN Member States to actively contribute to development of the implementation plan.

ANNEX 1: Practice of the General Assembly in proclaiming international decades from 2010 to 2016 (provide by UN DOALOS)

UNGA Res	Year	Decades Proclaimed	Time	Preceding Proclamation	Reference to "Guidelines"	Action programme or implementation plan
71/222	2016	International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development"  <u>(Standalone res)</u>	2018-2028	International Decade for Action, "Water for Life"  (2005-2015)	Reference to ECOSOC res <b>1989/84</b> on guidelines for international decades in <b>PP4, OP11, and OP13</b> .  Reference to ECOSOC res <b>1980/67</b> on international years and anniversaries, and UNGA res <b>53/199</b> and <b>61/185</b> on proclamation of international years in <b>PP4</b> .	<p><b>No action programme or implementation plan was in place at the time of proclamation.</b> SG's report A/71/260 reviewed activities during the preceding decade of 2005-2015, provided general recommendations on way forward and stressed that "while a large amount of work remains to be done, it is clear that much can be accomplished by building on the steps taken during the Decade".</p> <p>UNGA , in res 71/222, invited the Secretary-General, with the support of UN-Water, to take appropriate steps, within existing resources, to plan and organize the activities of the Decade at the global, regional and country levels, taking into account the outcomes of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005–2015, and the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and other relevant United Nations structures, as well as the High-level Panel on Water.</p>

70/259	2016	United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition <b>(Standalone res)</b>	2016-2025	No	Reference to ECOSOC res <b>1989/84</b> on guidelines for international decades in <b>PP3</b> .	<p><b>Proclamation based on the Rome Declaration on Nutrition as well as the Framework of Action</b> adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Nutrition, which was jointly organized by FAO and WHO in 2014.</p> <p>UNGA, in res 70/259, called upon FAO and WHO to lead the implementation, and in collaboration with WFP, IFAD and UNICEF, to “identify and develop a work programme based on the Rome Declaration and its Framework of Action, along with its means of implementation for 2016-2025...”</p>
68/237	2013	International Decade for People of African Descent <b>(Standalone res)</b>	2015-2024	International Year for People of African Descent (2011) and three Decades to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination	<b>No reference</b> to ECOSOC “guidelines” or relevant UNGA res on proclamation of international years	<p><b>A draft programme of action was developed by an expert mechanism of the Human Rights Council before proclamation.</b></p> <p>Prior to proclamation, UNGA first, in its resolution 66/144, encouraged the expert mechanism to develop a programme of action. In 2012, the Human Rights Council submitted the draft programme to UNGA for its adoption. GA then, in its resolution 67/155, requested the PGA to launch an informal consultative preparatory process for the proclamation, with a view to proclaiming the decade in 2013.</p> <p>UNGA, in res 68/237, requested the PGA, through the facilitator, to continue consultation with States and other stakeholders, with a view to elaborating an implementation programme, with a draft programme developed by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as its basis.</p>

67/215	2012	<p>United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All</p> <p><b>(NOT standalone, proclamation by a recurring res on “promotion of new and renewable sources of energy”)</b></p>	2014-2024	International Year of Sustainable Energy for All (2012)	Reference to ECOSOC res <b>1980/67</b> on international years and anniversaries in <b>OP2</b> .	<p><b>Proclamation largely based on relevant recommendations contained in Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Rio+20 outcome document, but no specific implementation plan for the decade was in place at the time of proclamation.</b> SG’s report A/67/314 reviewed activities during the preceding international year and recommended the designation of an International Decade. During the preceding International Year, a Global Action Agenda was produced by the SG’s High-Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, which has since been guiding efforts under the Sustainable Energy for All initiative.</p> <p>UNGA, in res 67/215, requested the SG to submit a report on the Decade at the 68<sup>th</sup> session and a report on the implementation of res 67/215 at the 69<sup>th</sup> session. SG’s report A/69/395 provided suggestions concerning the plan of action for the Decade, including suggested broad outline of activities and focus areas.</p>
65/161	2010	<p>United Nations Decade on Biodiversity</p> <p><b>(NOT standalone, proclamation by a recurring res on “Convention on Biological Diversity”)</b></p>	2011-2020	International Year on Biodiversity (2010)	<b>No reference</b> to ECOSOC “guidelines” or relevant UNGA res on proclamation of international years	<p><b>Implementation plan was in place at the time of proclamation.</b> COP 10 of BOD adopted the updated and revised Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (decision X/2) and invited the UNGA to consider declaring 2011-2020 UN Decade on Biodiversity (decision X/10).</p> <p>UNGA, in res 65/161, declared the decade, “with a view to contributing to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020”.</p>

65/119	2010	Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism <b>(Standalone res)</b>	2011-2020	two International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism	<b>No reference</b> to ECOSOC “guidelines” or relevant UNGA res on proclamation of international years	Proclamation based on the recommendation submitted by the Committee of 24. <b>No implementation plan for the third Decade was in place at the time of proclamation.</b> However, in res 65/119, UNGA called upon States to continue to implement the plan of action for the second Decade and to cooperate with the Committee of 24 “in updating it as necessary, with a view to using it as the basis for a plan of action for the Third International Decade”.
64/255	2010	Decade of Action for Road Safety <b>(NOT standalone, proclamation by a recurring res on “improving global road safety”)</b>	2011-2020	NO	<b>No reference</b> to ECOSOC “guidelines” or relevant UNGA res on proclamation of international years	Proclamation based on the recommendation contained in a report prepared by the WHO in consultation with the regional commissions and other partners of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. <b>No action programme or implementation plan was in place at the time of proclamation.</b> UNGA, in res 64/255, requested the WHO and UN regional commissions, in cooperation with other partners in the UN Road Safety Collaboration and other stakeholders, to prepare a plan of action of the Decade.