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**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
(Of UNESCO)**

**Seventeenth Intergovernmental Session of the  
UNESCO-IOC Sub-commission for the Caribbean and  
Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE) –  
(May 9 – 11, 2023)**

**UN OCEAN DECADE: GLOBAL UPDATE**

The Ocean Decade is now in its third year of implementation under the leadership and coordination of IOC/UNESCO. Via the four Calls for Decade Actions that have been launched, the portfolio of Decade Actions is continuing to grow rapidly with close 47 Decade programmes, 230 Decade projects and 79 Decade contributions now endorsed. The fifth Call for Decade Actions is currently open until 31 August 2023 and is soliciting programmes contributing to the Challenge 1 - Marine Pollution, with a focus on plastic pollution and nutrient pollution, and on Challenge 2 – Ecosystem Restoration and Management, with a focus on area based management tools, restoration and multiple ocean stressors. While the portfolio of Decade Actions exhibits strong thematic diversity, there are still important gaps in leadership from partners in SIDS and LDCs. Only 6% of Decade Actions are self-reporting as working in SIDS, and of these, less than half are led by partners from SIDS countries. Future Calls for Decade Actions will increasingly target strategic geographic and thematic gaps in the overall ecosystem of Decade Actions.

There is a growing network of decentralised coordination structures including six Decade Collaborative Centres, three Decade Coordination Offices and nine Decade Implementing Partners that are essential partners to coordinate and support existing Decade Actions, analyse gaps and future priorities, and catalyse new Decade Actions in response to future Calls for Decade Actions. Numerous partner institutions are providing essential support for these decentralised coordination structures, but gaps in the network remain in priority thematic areas and geographies. The proposed establishment of an IOCARIBE Decade Coordination Office will be discussed in this session under Agenda Item 5.3 but will require resources to become fully operational.

The Decade Advisory Board met four times over the last 12 months and played an important role in making recommendations on Decade programme endorsement, as well as providing advice on strategic issues including related to the engagement of SIDS and LDCs in the Decade, measures to enhance the engagement of Indigenous and local knowledge holders, and resource mobilisation. The term of the current membership of the Decade Advisory Board will come to an end in December 2023 and a new call for nominations will be launched in Q3 of 2023.

34 National Decade Committees have been established and are operational but there is uneven geographic distribution of these Committees with very few Committees in SIDS or LDCs. A recent analysis of experiences of National Decade Committees indicated the

importance of National Decade Committees to convene diverse stakeholders to identify national ocean science and capacity development priorities, and the important role that Committees can play in aligning national resource allocation decisions with Decade priorities. Member States are encouraged to develop new National Decade Committees and the Decade Coordination Unit and existing group of National Decade Committees can provide mentoring and support to this process.

IOC is contributing to the Decade via several Decade programmes and projects, the work of the central Decade Coordination Unit, and three established Decade Coordination Offices, with an additional three Decade Coordination Offices currently being scoped. There is a strong potential for IOC led Decade Actions and coordination structures to contribute to the strengthening and strategic expansion of IOC programmes and Regional Subsidiary Bodies, but significant resource constraints persist and contributions from Member States will be important to alleviate the current financing obstacles to the full implementation of IOC-led Actions. The majority of UN-led Decade Actions are led by IOC but a recent analysis identifies priority actions for increased engagement of other UN agencies in the Decade that will be implemented via UN Oceans over the next 12 to 24 months.

Priorities for the Ocean Decade over the next 12 to 18 months will include increased focus on engagement of African countries and SIDS, including exploration of mechanisms for dedicated streams of funding for Decade Actions led by partners in these countries. The imminent operationalisation of the Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility will focus on delivering demand-driven capacity development to Decade partners, with a focus on LDCs, SIDS and Early Career Ocean Professionals. The work of the Foundations Dialogue and the Ocean Decade Alliance continues to support resource mobilisation, both for direct support to Ocean Decade initiatives and to raise awareness of the importance of investing in ocean science.

The 2024 Ocean Decade Conference will be generously hosted by Spain in Barcelona in April 2024 and will be a critical moment in the implementation of the Decade. This Conference will provide an opportunity to take stock of achievements of the Decade to date, and to set a collective vision for the way forward. The results of the 'Vision 2030' process that is currently being implemented will be a central element of the Conference and will allow the refinement and measurement of progress towards the Ocean Decade Challenges. It will be important to ensure a strong articulation of the outcomes of the Conference with the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference to be co-hosted by France and Costa Rica and with the Fourth International SIDS Conference (2024). Other important international events and conferences in the lead up to the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference will be used to raise awareness of the Ocean Decade and incite enthusiasm for participation in the Conference in April 2024.