**Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission**

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**Thirty-second Session   
of the Assembly**

21–30 June 2023

**UNESCO**

3.4.3 Harmful Algal Blooms: 16th Session of IPHAB, 27–29 March 2023

Mr Joe Silke, past Chair of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), presented the main outputs of the Sixteenth Session of the Panel (IPHAB-XVI), which was held at FAO Headquarters on 27–29 March 2023. He highlighted that that this was the first session with FAO back as cosponsor of IPHAB as set out in IOC Assembly Resolution XVI-4.

The Panel reviewed the actions completed during the intersessional period, noted the progress made and that several of the UN Ocean Decade challenges are being addressed. The Panel concluded that the Decisions and Recommendations of the Fifteenth session (March 2021) had been implemented highly satisfactorily within the available resources.

The Panel took 11 decisions and endorsed two recommendations for the consideration of the IOC Assembly at its thirty-second session, and of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). The decisions concern: (i) Regional HAB Programme Development taking into account the difference of support for the various groups and networks depending on whether they are affiliated to a regional IOC subsidiary body or not; (ii) the continuation of the Task Team on the Early Detection, Warning and Forecasting of HAB Events; with new terms of reference; (iii) the continuation of the Task Team on the development of the Harmful Algal Information System and a periodic Global Harmful Algal Bloom Status Report with new terms of reference; (iv) the continuation of the Task Team on a Global Ciguatera Strategy for Improved Research and Management with new terms of reference with updated terms of references; (v) the continuation of the Task Team on Harmful Algae and Desalination of Seawater to formulate a proposal for a joint FAO/WHO water safety risk assessment for drinking water coming from desalination plants; (vi) the continuation of the Task Team on Biotoxin Monitoring, Management and Regulations with new terms of reference; (vii) the continuation of the Task Team on Algal Taxonomy with new terms of reference; (viii) the continuation of the Task Team on Fish Killing Microalgae and Ecosystem Effects with new terms of reference; (ix) establishment of a Task Team on HAB Communication; (x) IOC-SCOR GlobalHAB beyond 2025; and (xi) the development of HAB Solutions (HAB-S) an UN Ocean Decade Programme Proposal.

In addition to the above, the Intergovernmental Panel submitted to the Assembly its planned intersessional activities in the form of a workplan and budget for the IOC HAB Programme 2024–2025 and recommended to it the continuation of IPHAB as a major technical subsidiary body with unchanged terms of reference.

The past Chair of IPHAB informed the Assembly that the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO, IAEA, IOC and WHO on Ciguatera Poisoning, presented to the 30th session of the Assembly as IOC-XXX/Inf.4, and subsequently approved by the UNESCO’s Executive Board, had not been signed by WHO and therefore remains on hold. He also informed the Assembly that a MoU with FAO on IPHAB was being considered by all parties or as part of a wider agreement with UNESCO, as a follow-up to IOC Assembly Resolution XVI-4.

The Assembly was informed that Dr Philipp Hess (France) was elected as Chair and Dr Maggie Broadwater (USA) was elected as Vice-Chair.

The representatives of seven Member States took the floor.

The Assembly warmly welcomed FAO back as a partner in IPHAB.

The Assembly highlighted the importance of further development predictive modelling of HAB events and recognised how changes in the ocean-climate nexus and the interaction between multiple ocean stressors, including ocean acidification, eutrophication and deoxygenation, are closely linked with changes in HAB event occurrences and their impacts on coastal ecosystems and the services of these to society. The Assembly welcomed the initiative by IPHAB to frame societal priority HAB challenges in the UN Decade HAB-Solutions Programme and thereby broaden partnerships and strengthen co-design for better mitigation of HAB impacts on marine ecosystem services (including aquaculture, seafood safety/public health, recreation & tourism, drinking water, biodiversity). The Assembly confirmed the focus of the Decade HAB-Solutions Programme on novel and transformational technologies, on demands for sharing of HAB data, and on strategies for safe seafood, drinking water and healthy coastal ecosystems.

The following Member States chose to provide records of their plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: Chile, Colombia, France, Japan, and USA.

The Assembly adopted Decision A-32/3.4.3.

The Assembly,

Having considered the Executive Summary Report of the 16th session (Rome, Italy, 27–29 March 2023) of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB),

Endorses the Executive Summary Report of IPHAB-XVI and the recommendations contained therein (IOC-FAO/IPHAB-XVI/3s);

Notes that the regular budget for these activities will be identified as part of the overall Resolution on Governance, Programming and Budgeting matters of the Commission.