



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

**EIGHTH SESSION OF THE IOC SUB-COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AND ADJACENT
ISLAND STATES**
Mombasa, Kenya
07-09 May 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 48.3, the IOCAFRICA, as a primary Subsidiary Body of IOC, is reporting to the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session, which will examine relevant draft Decision A-33/3.4.2 in document IOC/A-33/AP Rev.

For ease of reference of the Assembly and its Financial Committee, the proposed IOCAFRICA workplan for 2026–2027 is available in Annex I. Other decisions and recommendations of the IOCAFRICA-VIII at its 8th session are available online.

Annexes to this document remain in English only.

1. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA) held its Eighth Session at the Pridelnn Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, from 7 to 9 May 2025. The Session brought together 67 participants representing 13 IOCAFRICA Member States and 16 regional and international organizations, including two High Commissions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.
2. The Session was officially opened by the Chairperson of IOCAFRICA, Professor Kouadio Affian, who welcomed participants and expressed appreciation to the Government of Kenya for hosting the Session. He highlighted the strategic importance of IOCAFRICA in supporting the implementation of initiatives related to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) in Africa.
3. Dr. James Mwaluma, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), emphasized Kenya's leadership in regional marine science, citing KMFRI's foundational work on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and advocating for greater African participation in IOC expert groups. Professor Amr Zakaria Hamouda, IOC Vice-Chairperson for Group V, underscored the urgency of leveraging ocean science for sustainable development, calling the Session a "call to action" for Africa's blue future. Ms.

Lucy Obungu, speaking on behalf of Ms. Betsy Muthoni Njagi, Principal Secretary for the State Department for Blue Economy and Fisheries, reaffirmed Kenya's strong commitment to IOCAFRICA and highlighted the role of science in addressing the triple planetary crisis. She called for investments in innovation, observation infrastructure, and inclusive participation.

4. The IOC Executive Secretary, Mr. Vidar Helgesen, thanked IOCAFRICA Member States for their continued support, acknowledged the work of the Secretariat, and called for deeper collaboration to ensure that Africa's voice is embedded in global ocean science and policy processes.
5. Recognizing the importance of accurate and timely reporting, and in view of Kenya's role as host country, the Sub-Commission invited the Kenyan delegation to nominate a Rapporteur for the Session. Ms. Daina Mathai, was summarily nominated.
6. In accordance with IOC Rules of Procedure and reflecting IOCAFRICA's strategic thematic priorities, the Sub-Commission established four sessional working groups to support deliberations on key programmatic areas: (i) the Sessional Working Group on Ocean Observations and Monitoring, chaired by Prof. Suzan Elgharabawy; (ii) the Sessional Working Group on Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments, chaired by Prof. Zacharie Sohau; (iii) the Sessional Working Group on Ocean Data and Information Management, chaired by Ms. Candida Sete; and (iv) the Sessional Working Group on Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, chaired by Mr. Justin Ahanhanzo.
7. The Session's highlights included:
 - i. A strong acknowledgement was made of the significant progress achieved by the IOCAFRICA Secretariat over the intersessional period, despite operating with limited staff capacity. Progress was particularly notable in enhancing the Africa Ocean Data and Information, facilitating regional coordination for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) hereafter (Ocean Decade) through the SEAWARD Africa programme, improving ocean observation and monitoring systems through GOOS-AFRICA collaboration, expanding early warning and hazard preparedness, advancing capacity development initiatives for institutions and professionals across Member States, supporting Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) to engage in training, research, and international collaboration, promoting initiatives on ocean science and climate change, strengthening ocean literacy through targeted outreach and education, and advancing cross-sectoral partnerships to promote ocean sustainability and the blue economy in Africa, and promoting science-policy integration through high-level dialogues.
 - ii. The IOC Executive Secretary, Mr. Vidar Helgesen, shared progress on the 42 C/5 Programme of Work (2022–2024), noting Africa's recognition as a strategic priority. He highlighted the structural vulnerabilities in IOC's funding model, especially the implications of a potential U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO. He emphasized the need for greater Member State engagement in the IOC Assembly, improved financial transparency, and continued use of the Results-Based Management framework. Mr. Helgesen also drew attention to the upcoming IOC Scientific Report as a key advocacy tool and encouraged African contributions to ensure regional priorities are reflected. Importantly, the Sub-Commission called for African interests to be fully considered in the "IOC and the Future of the Ocean" consultations and the next IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), while supporting mechanisms for equitable budget allocation and complementary contributions to sustain key programmes.
 - iii. A key development was the launch of the consultation process on "IOC and the Future of the Ocean." Member States were briefed on the structure and scope of the consultations, including the first phase involving a global survey, key informant

interviews, and regional workshops, one of which was held in parallel with this session. IOCAFRICA Member States were strongly encouraged to actively participate to ensure that African priorities are fully reflected in the formulation of the next IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029). The Sub-Commission called for a clear reflection of regional perspectives and requested that feedback from the consultation process guide the alignment and implementation of IOCAFRICA's priority actions.

- iv. The consultation process on "IOC and the Future of the Ocean" was also a key highlight. Organised as a dedicated workshop within the Session and introduced by Ms. Alison Clausen, the process, mandated by IOC Resolution EC-57/2, was described as a three-phase consultation aligned with the IOC governing body calendar. The first phase (2024–2025) focuses on identifying unmet needs in ocean knowledge and action. African Member States raised a range of priorities, including sustainable ocean planning, climate resilience, marine spatial planning, early warning systems, pollution control, and capacity building.
- v. Progress is already being made regarding the IOC Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM), which was developed through an inclusive consultative process that included global surveys, written submissions, and multiple consultation meetings. Member States were informed about the draft IOC Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management, as well as the establishment of a dedicated Working Group to finalise the Strategy and develop a supporting Implementation Plan. The Sub-Commission acknowledged the significant contributions of African experts and supported the continued role of the Working Group during the 2025–2030 period. The Sub-Commission also endorsed the use of the IOC-SOPM Strategy as a guiding framework for IOCAFRICA's work on ocean governance and called for greater regional alignment to enhance impact and coherence.
- vi. The Session also highlighted the progress and future plans under the MSPGlobal Programme. Two regional training sessions for Africa were announced for 2026 under MSPGlobal 3.0: (i) Biodiversity-inclusive and Climate-smart Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), and (ii) Ocean Observation and Data Management for MSP. Member States were also informed of forthcoming global guidance documents on biodiversity, climate integration, data systems, and offshore wind energy, expected by mid-2025. The Sub-Commission welcomed the update, commended IOC's leadership in advancing national and regional MSP in Africa, and endorsed the establishment of a joint MSP Technical Expert Group for Western Africa under IOCAFRICA and the Abidjan Convention Secretariat. The Sub-Commission also supported continued MSP training and the expanded use of the MSPglobal Rapid Assessment Methodology (RAM) across African countries from 2025 to 2027.
- vii. The Session also featured an important update on the development of the Third Global Ocean Science Report (GOSR III), presented by Dr. Kwame Koranteng. Scheduled for release in 2026 under the theme "Investing in Sustainable Ocean Solutions," the report will provide a mid-term review of the state of ocean science globally, with a focus on investment, infrastructure, human resources, and policy integration. Dr. Koranteng emphasised Africa's underrepresentation in past editions and called on IOCAFRICA to mobilise Member States to ensure full participation in the data collection process. He highlighted the need for coordination among national focal points, scientific institutions, and UNESCO National Commissions and encouraged participation in the upcoming GOSR III information session to enhance data quality and regional visibility.

- viii. The Session emphasized the need to revitalize National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs) in Africa, based on recommendations from the 28th Session of the IODE Committee. It was noted that many African NODCs suffer from limited institutional ownership, weak integration with national observation systems, and a lack of downstream services that meet end-user needs. A full value-chain approach was recommended—starting from product and service demand and working backward to determine observation and data requirements. Findings from the NODC Health Check assessments revealed the urgency of restoring functionality to previously active centres under ODINAFRICA as part of a broader effort to strengthen Africa’s ocean data and service infrastructure.
- ix. For the first time in an IOCAFRICA Session, a dedicated agenda item was introduced to foster structured dialogue with key partners working on ocean science, governance, and blue economy initiatives across the continent based on the results of the preceding back to back Scientific Conference on Advancing the Blue Economy in Africa (Mombasa, Kenya, 05-06 May 2025). This agenda item provided a platform for development agencies, research institutions, regional bodies, and international organizations to share updates on their activities, identify opportunities for collaboration, and explore areas where IOCAFRICA can add value through technical coordination, policy alignment, data sharing, and joint capacity development. The Sub-Commission welcomed the broad range of partner interventions and encouraged the Secretariat to pursue formal cooperation frameworks, co-develop training programmes, and strengthen regional engagement in global initiatives. It also requested the Secretariat to circulate a summary of contributions and opportunities identified through this pioneering exchange.
- x. The Session also recognized the successful organization and outcomes of the first-ever IOCAFRICA Scientific Conference on Advancing the Blue Economy in Africa, held immediately before the Session on 5–6 May 2025. Convened under the theme “Science, Innovation, and Partnerships for a Sustainable Blue Economy in Africa,” and hosted by KMFRI in Mombasa, jointly organised with GOOS-AFRICA, the Conference brought together stakeholders from academia, government, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector, and development partners. The Sub-Commission welcomed the outcomes and recommended that the Secretariat finalize the Conference report, facilitate follow-up consultations, and align outputs with UNOC 2025 preparations and long-term blue economy strategies.
- xi. The Session reaffirmed the importance of strengthening GOOS-AFRICA as an inclusive and functional regional alliance, and African contribution to the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), aligned with African priorities and working in synergy with IOCAFRICA. Member States welcomed the establishment of the GOOS-AFRICA Secretariat at the Centre Universitaire de Recherche et d'Application en Télédétection (CURAT), Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire, recognizing it as a step forward in enhancing institutional capacity and coordination.
- xii. The Session welcomed the achievements of the First African Ocean Decade Taskforce (2022–2024), which played a central role in advancing the implementation of the UN Ocean Decade in Africa. These included the development and launch of SEAWARD Africa as a continental coordination mechanism, enhanced regional and global visibility. Member States were encouraged to strengthen linkages with National Decade Committees and maintain balanced regional representation to ensure the effective operationalization of the DCO and the continuity of Africa’s leadership in the Ocean Decade.

- xiii. The Session endorsed the establishment and revitalization of several strategic initiatives and coordination mechanisms. These included the creation of the IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group to strengthen regional contributions to global climate policy frameworks; the revitalization of the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) to improve early warning systems and build technical capacity; and the endorsement of a proposal for the Ocean Early Warning System for Africa Programme. The Session further supported IOCAFRICA's proposal to host the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) African Community of Practice, offering a platform to strengthen Africa's leadership in ocean-climate finance and ecosystem accounting. In addition, Member States welcomed initiatives aimed at fostering the development of national ocean science plans and strategies and the creation of a rolling plan for ocean capacity development in Africa, ensuring more coherent, inclusive, and forward-looking programming across the continent.
 - xiv. The Session also addressed IOCAFRICA inadequate staffing (staff complement), recognizing the critical need to enhance the Secretariat's human resource capacity. Member States acknowledged the Secretariat's commendable performance despite limited staffing and emphasised the urgency of reinforcing the team to sustain programme delivery and institutional continuity. The unsustainable and growing reliance on extra-budgetary funding for staffing across the Commission was raised by delegates, who encouraged the IOC Executive Secretary to consider long-term sustainability in the IOC staffing plan. They also invited Member States to explore secondments for any permissible duration to the Secretariat, whether in-person or in-kind, to support the IOCAFRICA Secretariat's expanding mandates and regional responsibilities.
 - xv. The Sub-Commission elected HE Amb. Hellen Gichuhi (Kenya) as Chairperson for the 2025–2027 period, and three Co-Chairs: Dr. Bope Bope Lapwong (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Group A), Dr. Gilbert Siko (South Africa, Group B), and Dr. Massata Ndao (Senegal, Group C).
8. The Sub-Commission reviewed and agreed upon the work plan for IOCAFRICA programmes and activities for 2026–2027, ensuring alignment with the six (6) functional areas of IOC and strategic regional priorities.
 9. The Sub-Commission adopted the IOCAFRICA Work Plan and budget for the period 2026–2027, based on an assumed UNESCO Regular Programme allocation (Zero Nominal Growth scenario) of USD 985,000 ((with USD 120,000 for staffing) aligned with the 2024–2025 regular programme allocation. The Secretariat clarified that the proposed budget remains indicative, pending the outcome of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2025, where a 25% reduction under a Zero Real Growth (ZRG) scenario remains possible. In addition to the Regular Programme allocation, the Sub-Commission reviewed a complementary extra-budgetary resource mobilization target of USD 3.01 million, intended to support essential and high-impact regional initiatives. Detailed financial requirements were outlined in Annex I to Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2. Member States expressed strong appreciation for the extrabudgetary support mobilized during the 2024–2025 biennium and commended the contributions from the Governments of Flanders (Belgium), and Norway. The Sub-Commission emphasized the need for sustained resource mobilization efforts and endorsed the integrated financial strategy for the upcoming biennium.
 10. Relevant observations, decisions and recommendations made by the Sub-Commission on the Agenda Items can be summarized as follows:
 11. **Agenda Item 3.2: Report of the Technical Secretary on the Work Accomplished since the Seventh Session of the Sub-Commission:** The Sub-Commission called on the IOC Executive Secretary, Member States and Partners to explore and support concrete

measures to strengthen the Secretariat's staffing capacity, including through regular budget allocations, secondments, or in-kind contributions, to ensure sustained delivery of the Sub-Commission's growing mandate.

12. **Agenda Item 3.3.1: Report of the Executive Secretary on the Implementation of 42 C/5 Programme of Work (2022–2024):** The Sub-Commission welcomed the report of the Executive Secretary, acknowledged the continued prioritization of Africa within the IOC system, and took note of the potential financial risks posed by a possible USA withdrawal from UNESCO. It encouraged Member States to plan proactively for such impacts through adjusted budgetary strategies, and requested that regular programme resources be allocated in ways that minimize adverse effects on IOCAFRICA Member States.
13. **Agenda Item 3.3.2: IOC and the Future of the Ocean: Consultation Process:** The Sub-Commission requested the IOC Secretariat to clearly outline the priority activities of IOCAFRICA for the current biennium, and to ensure that feedback received through the consultation process informs the alignment and implementation of ongoing regional actions.
14. **Agenda Item 3.3.4.1: International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme (IODE):** The Sub-Commission supported the recommendation by the IODE Secretariat to revitalize African National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs) through a value-chain-based approach that begins with identifying end-user needs and links them to observation systems and data infrastructure.
15. **Agenda Item 3.3.2.5: Marine Spatial Planning Global Initiative (MSPGlobal):** The Sub-Commission welcomes the invitation extended to the IOC Secretariat to undertake a technical visit to, amongst other Member States, South Africa to engage with national stakeholders and learn from the country's ongoing MSP processes, including lessons learned, implementation challenges, and innovations that may inform regional guidance and cooperation.
16. **Agenda Item 3.4.2 Partners Report on Ocean Science, Management and Blue Economy:** The Sub-Commission instructed the Secretariat to work with partners to co-develop targeted training programmes, including ocean-climate action courses, ocean modelling and forecasting workshops, and digital literacy tools, leveraging established platforms such as the AGNES Climate Policy Center, the CwO Platform, and South Africa's Environmental Observation Network's (SAEON) Ocean Modelling Hub, the network of Centers of High Performance Computing in Africa, Regional meteorological institutions, academic and research departments, etc.
17. **Agenda Item 3.4.3 Scientific Conference on Advancing the Blue Economy in Africa Report:** The Sub-Commission welcomed the intention of the Government of South Africa to engage further upon dissemination of the final report, and encouraged other Member States to provide input to guide follow-up actions.
18. **Agenda Item 4.1: IOCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2023-2030:** The Sub-Commission requested that the Secretariat may engage the services of a Consultant Consultancy or to complete the Strategic Plan in a timely manner, given the intensive consultative process that occurs during the establishment of a meaningful Strategic Plan.
19. **Agenda Item 4.2: Strategic Plan for the Ocean Data And Information Network for Africa (IOCAFRICA-ODIN) 2022–2030:** The Sub-Commission endorsed the Strategic Plan and its focus on: supporting Member States in aligning with the ODIS architecture; strengthening and reactivating NODCs and OBIS nodes across Africa; operationalizing the African Coastal and Marine Atlases (ACMA); and advancing the development of a Digital Twin Ocean for Africa. The Sub-Commission further requested the Secretariat, in cooperation with the IODE Project Office and OIH partners, to provide, where possible,

technical guidance and mobilize resources for the phased implementation of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan.

20. **Agenda Item 4.3: Report on the Implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Roadmap for Africa (2021–2030):** The Sub-Commission reaffirmed its support for the operationalization of the Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for Africa hosted within IOCAFRICA Secretariat and called upon IOC Secretariat, Member States and partners to provide the necessary political, financial, and technical support for its full establishment and functioning. It further encouraged Member States to give information on their activities and initiatives towards the Ocean Decade.
21. **Agenda Item 4.4: Report on Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS-AFRICA):** The Sub-Commission welcomed the establishment of the GOOS-AFRICA Secretariat at CURAT, as a concrete step towards strengthening institutional capacity and operational coordination. It encouraged the Secretariat to serve as a hub for technical collaboration, communication, and knowledge exchange across the continent. Additionally, it also recommended updating national focal points, conducting a continental gap analysis of ocean observing infrastructure, and ensuring that public information on the IOC website on GOOS-AFRICA is updated. In furtherance, the Sub-Commission requested the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in close coordination with the GOOS Office, GOOS-AFRICA Secretariat, and relevant stakeholders, to convene a consultation with the GOOS-AFRICA Coordinating Committee, Advisory Board, and Member States to review the existing governance structure, Terms of Reference, and coordination mechanisms, including clear communication channels and defined timelines for action.
22. **Agenda Item 4.5 Establishment of the AFRICA Ocean Data and Information Working Group:** The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.5, and the Terms of Reference.

[...]

Decides to:

1. **Establish the AFRICA Ocean Data and Information Working Group** (IOCAFRICA-ODIN Working Group) as the strategic oversight body to guide the development, implementation, and governance of the AFRICA-Ocean Data and Information Network;
2. **Adopt the Terms of Reference** to set up the Working Group;
3. **Request the Secretariat**, in collaboration with the IODE Project Office and relevant partners, to:
 - Facilitate the nomination and appointment of members to the Working Group;
 - Organize the inaugural meeting of the Working Group to define its operational priorities, roadmap, and deliverables;
 - Provide technical support to the Working Group and coordinate its integration with other regional and global ocean data initiatives, including the Digital Twin Ocean (DTO) developments;
4. **Encourage Member States** to actively participate in the Working Group by nominating qualified representatives from their National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs), academic institutions, and relevant agencies;
5. **Invite development partners and regional organizations** to support the activities of the Working Group through technical and financial contributions, including in areas such as digital transformation, capacity building, cloud-based infrastructure, and secure data exchange platforms;
6. **Mandate the Working Group** to report on its progress, achievements, and challenges at each session of IOCAFRICA, and to submit an annual update to the IOCAFRICA Officers and the IOC Secretariat for review and alignment with the

broader IOC and Ocean Decade strategic frameworks, and dissemination to Member States and relevant stakeholders.

23. **Agenda Item 4.6: Establishment of the IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group:** The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.6, and the Terms of Reference (See below)

[...]

Noting the importance of strengthening Africa's voice and leadership in global ocean-climate forums, enhancing access to climate finance, and supporting science-based policy and planning;

The Sub-Commission:

1. **Adopts** the establishment of the IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group for an initial term of two years (2025–2027);
2. **Requests** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to invite experts to serve as members of the Working Group based on their demonstrated expertise in ocean-climate science and policy, ensuring geographical, gender, and generational balance;
3. **Further requests** the Secretariat to provide the necessary logistical and technical support for the Working Group and to facilitate its participation in relevant regional and global processes;
4. **Encourages** Member States and partners to support the work of the Working Group through financial contributions, technical collaboration, and dissemination of its findings;
5. **Requests** the Secretariat to present a comprehensive progress report on the activities of the Working Group to the Ninth Session of IOCAFRICA.

24. **Agenda Item 4.7: Revitalisation of the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms:** The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.7, and the Revised Terms of Reference (See below)

[...]

Further acknowledging the need for a multidisciplinary regional mechanism to provide technical guidance, foster scientific collaboration, and build institutional capacity in the detection, monitoring, and mitigation of HABs;

Decides to:

1. **Re-establish the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)** as a formal advisory and coordination mechanism under IOCAFRICA to strengthen regional HAB preparedness, response, and knowledge exchange;
2. **Adopt the updated Terms of Reference** of the Group of Experts on HABs as outlined in document IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.7.Inf.1, defining its objectives, structure, composition, and reporting obligations;
3. **Request the IOCAFRICA Secretariat** to initiate a process to nominate and appoint up to 15 qualified experts to the Group, ensuring balanced representation across regions, disciplines, genders, and generations;
4. **Encourage Member States** to designate national HAB focal points and actively contribute to regional and global HAB data platforms including HAEDAT, OBIS, and the IOC Global HAB Status Report;
5. **Invite collaboration** with IOC-IPHAB, the HANA network, IAEA, regional fisheries organizations, Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) programmes, and other strategic

partners in support of training, data sharing, joint research, and coordinated early warning systems;

6. **Request the revitalised Group** to deliver an annual update to IOCAFRICA Officers and a comprehensive bi-annual progress report to the Sub-Commission, outlining achievements, lessons learned, and forward-looking priorities.

25. **Agenda item 4.8: Proposal for Ocean Early Warning System for Africa Programme:**
The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.8

[...]

Reaffirming the coordinating role of IOCAFRICA in strengthening early warning systems and facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships;

Decides to:

1. **Endorse** the development of the Ocean Early Warning System for Africa (OEWS-Africa) as a regional flagship initiative under IOCAFRICA;
2. **Request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to collaborate with the African Union Commission, UNDRR, WMO, UNEP, national agencies, and relevant partners to co-develop a full programme proposal, including implementation modalities and resource requirements;
3. Requests the IOC Secretariat to reinforce the IOCAFRICA Secretariat with human capacity and/or financial capacity to undertake these added initiatives and activities;
4. **Invite** Member States to actively support the design and implementation of the OEWS-Africa programme, including through in-kind contributions, data sharing, and policy alignment;
5. **Encourage** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to initiate resource mobilization efforts, including partnerships with development banks, philanthropic organizations, and climate finance mechanisms;
6. **Request** the Secretariat to report on progress, partnerships established, and lessons learned at its next Session and to ensure alignment with other UN Decade programmes and regional climate resilience efforts.

26. **Agenda Item 4.9: Proposal for Hosting the Global Ocean Accounts African Community of Practice:** The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.9, and the GOAP Africa CoP Vision Strategy (2024–2026) Vision Strategy (2024–2026) (See document [IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.9.Inf1](#))

[...]

Taking note of the need to strengthen the technical, institutional, and policy capacities of African Member States to develop and utilize integrated ocean accounts,

Recalling further the commitment of IOCAFRICA to support the harmonization of marine data and knowledge systems for effective policy-making, in line with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029) and Africa's Blue Economy Strategy,

Decides to:

1. **Endorse** the proposal for hosting the GOAP African Community of Practice (Africa CoP) under the auspices of IOCAFRICA, in coordination with the GOAP Secretariat and relevant partners;

2. **Designate** IOCAFRICA as the Secretariat for GOAP Africa CoP, facilitating technical engagement, membership expansion, capacity building, and regional alignment with IOC and UN Ocean Decade frameworks;
3. **Request** the Secretariat to formalize collaboration with the GOAP Secretariat, including through a Memorandum of Understanding or equivalent arrangement, defining roles, responsibilities, and co-hosting modalities;
4. **Encourage** Member States to actively participate in the Africa CoP by:
 - Nominating national focal points on ocean accounting;
 - Supporting the development of national ocean accounts aligned with national development plans and SDG indicators;
 - Integrating ocean accounting into marine spatial planning, integrated coastal management, and marine protected area planning;
5. **Support** the development and implementation of the GOAP Africa CoP Vision Strategy (2024–2026), particularly its milestones for:
 - [...]
6. **Request the Secretariat to collaborate with African regional organizations** (such as the African Union, UNECA, Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, and AfDB, etc) to ensure coherence and policy relevance of ocean accounting efforts across the continent;
7. **Further request the Secretariat** to report on the progress of the Africa CoP and the implementation of the GOAP Africa Vision Strategy at the Ninth Session of IOCAFRICA;
8. **Invite partners and donors** to provide technical and financial support for the operationalization of the Community of Practice, including capacity development, data systems enhancement, and peer learning exchanges.

27. **Agenda Item 4.10: Fostering the Development of Ocean Science Plans and Strategies in Member States:** The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.10

[...]

Noting the continued gap between rapid ocean development and the scientific capacity to support it in many African coastal and island states, as highlighted in the *Global Ocean Science Report 2024*;

Recognizing the role of IOCAFRICA in coordinating and facilitating regional capacity development in ocean science and governance;

Decides to:

1. **Endorse** the launch of a regionally coordinated initiative under IOCAFRICA to support the development and implementation of National Ocean Science Plans and Strategies (NOSPSs) by Member States;
2. **Request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in consultation with Member States and partners, to finalize and disseminate a NOSPSs guidance toolkit, and to initiate targeted technical assistance, including capacity development, peer learning, and pilot programmes;
- 3.
4. **Invite** Member States to designate national focal institutions to lead NOSPS processes and ensure inclusive, science-informed coordination and policy integration;
5. **Urge** regional and global partners, including the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, UNEP, UNDP, FAO, and development financing institutions, to support the initiative through technical assistance and financial contributions;

6. **Request** the Secretariat to report on progress and lessons learned at the Ninth Session of the Sub-Commission and to ensure alignment of this initiative with other regional and international programmes under the UN Ocean Decade.

28. **Agenda Item 4.11: Developing a Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa:** The Sub-Commission adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.11

[...]

Acknowledging that not all Member States are at the same level, and that a number of countries face widening capacity gaps that hinder effective participation in ocean governance, scientific research, and blue economy development;

Noting that the Rolling Plan offers a flexible, demand-driven, and regionally anchored model for operationalizing the IOC Capacity Development Strategy and complementing the forthcoming global implementation plan;

Highlighting the importance of institutional leadership, inclusive participation, and regional collaboration as enablers of sustainable ocean capacity ecosystems;

Decides to:

1. **Endorse** the development and phased implementation of the Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa as IOCAFRICA's guiding framework for 2025–2030;
2. **Request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to coordinate a consultative process with Member States and partners to define priority themes, operational modalities, and monitoring indicators;
3. **Invite** Member States to designate national focal institutions and nominate technical experts to contribute to the design, piloting, and review of the Rolling Plan;
4. **Encourage** development partners, regional institutions, and philanthropic organizations to align support with the Rolling Plan and engage through the IOCAFRICA Capacity Development Forum;
5. **Request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat and the IODE office to ensure that lessons learned from the African experience inform the global implementation of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy;
6. **Request** the Secretariat to report on the progress of the Rolling Plan and propose scale-up actions at the Ninth Session of the Sub-Commission.

29. **Agenda Item 5.1 Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5, First Biennium 2026–2027):** The Sub-Commission instructed the IOCAFRICA Chair to bring to the attention of the 33rd Session of the IOC Assembly, the importance of sustained regional engagement and the need to ensure that IOCAFRICA's budget is safeguarded against potential reductions linked to a Zero Real Growth (ZRG) scenario. Called on Member States to use the Flanders-UNESCO Trust Fund for Science as an example of an effective and flexible way to provide financial assistance, inviting them to establish similar mechanisms with the IOC to support IOCAFRICA's activities and programmes. Member States can assist IOCAFRICA either by seconding national experts, hosting and co-sponsoring events at national venues or elsewhere. The Sub-Commission adopted Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.1

[...]

Concerned by the persistent underfunding of Secretariat staffing needs, particularly the absence of General Service and Professional posts in the Regular Programme budget and the operational dependency on seconded and shared positions,

Appreciating the Secretariat's strategic focus on delivery, partnerships, and lean operations, including the allocation of approximately USD 120,000 (13%) of the ZRG budget to staff-related costs, with the majority of resources directed toward programme execution and regional engagement,

Noting the potential decision of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2025 which may result in a 25% budget reduction under a Zero Real Growth (ZRG) scenario,

Recommends:

1. That Member States and partners to support implementation through voluntary contributions, in-kind support, secondment of staff (either at the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in Nairobi, Kenya or from their usual place of work) in order to strengthen the IOCAFRICA Secretariat., and co-financing of specific programme components;
2. That the IOCAFRICA Chair reaffirm to the attention of the 33rd Session of the IOC Assembly, the importance of sustained regional engagement and the need to ensure that IOCAFRICA's budget is safeguarded against potential reductions linked to a Zero Real Growth (ZRG) scenario.

30. **Agenda Item 5.2.1 Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Observations and Monitoring):** The Draft Work Plan on Ocean Observations and Monitoring for 2026–2027 was endorsed as a strategic framework to enhance Africa's operational oceanography. Partners, including GMES & Africa, GEBCO, WIOMSA, Ocean Prediction DCC, Ocean-Climate DCC, and academic institutions, among others, to collaborate with IOCAFRICA on the implementation of the Work Plan through joint programming, co-financing, and technical support. The Commission adopted Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.2.

[...]

Acknowledging the urgent need to upgrade observing systems, expand geographic coverage, and strengthen institutional capacities for marine data acquisition and utilization,

Welcoming the integration of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and digital analytics into ocean observing infrastructure,

Recommends:

To **endorse** the Work Plan for 2026–2027 on Ocean Observations and Monitoring as presented by the sessional working group, structured around infrastructure development, capacity building, digital innovation, and stakeholder engagement;

To **support** the implementation of the following key activities:

Infrastructure and Equipment Procurement:

- Develop a regional procurement plan to support acquisition and maintenance of observing tools including tide gauges, ADCPs, gliders, buoys, and multi-parameter sensors;
 - Facilitate pooled procurement and conduct a regional inventory and gap analysis to guide investments;
 - Identify standards for observation systems to ensure GOOS interoperability;
- Capacity Development and Training:

- Organize regional workshops on ocean observation platforms and remote sensing;
- Deliver training on operational oceanography and linkages to disaster risk reduction (DRR);

Pilot Projects and Research:

- Launch a pilot on community-based ocean observing along West, Central, South Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian Ocean coasts around Africa;
- Support the GOOS-AFRICA Cruises Around Africa Programmes under the leadership of South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana;

- Initiate research on sea-level variability, pollution, and coastal vulnerability;
Tools and Products:
- Integrate satellite earth observation with in-situ data platforms;
- Deploy AI-based tools for marine forecasting and anomaly detection;
- Advance the development of a coastal and open-ocean forecasting toolkit and interactive marine dashboard;
Outreach and Education:
- Create educational materials and literacy campaigns linked to citizen science;
Policy Support and Reports:
- Prepare a regional status report on observing systems and recommend sustained investment mechanisms;

To **request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in collaboration with GOOS-AFRICA, GOOS Global Office and relevant partners, to facilitate implementation, oversight, and reporting of the Work Plan activities;

To **encourage** Member States to designate or strengthen national ocean observing institutions and mobilize national resources to sustain data collection and system maintenance;

To **invite** development partners, scientific organizations, and private sector actors to co-finance and provide technical assistance for deployment and innovation in ocean observation;

To **emphasize** that all activities under this Work Plan must deliver practical, policy-relevant benefits for disaster preparedness, environmental stewardship, and socioeconomic development in Africa;

To **include** a dedicated line in the IOCAFRICA Programme Budget 2026–2027 to support Work Plan implementation, with provisions for monitoring and evaluation.

31. Agenda Item 5.2.2 Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments): The Draft Work Plan on Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments for 2026–2027 as a strategic instrument to enhance ecosystem-based approaches to marine governance, conservation, and sustainable use of Africa's ocean and coastal biodiversity. Development partners and scientific institutions were invited to collaborate with IOCAFRICA in operationalizing the Work Plan, ensuring that ocean science efforts produce tangible, feasible, and impactful outcomes that enhance ecological health, climate resilience, and the well-being of African coastal communities. The Commission adopted Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.2

[...]

Recognizing the urgent need for scientific assessments, policy support, and cross-sectoral integration to protect Africa's marine ecosystems and sustainably manage its biodiversity,

Acknowledging the strategic guidance provided by the sessional working

Recalling the role of biodiversity monitoring and marine pollution assessment in advancing the objectives of the Ocean Decade, the SDG 14 targets, and the African Union's Blue Economy Strategy,

Recommends:

To **endorse** the 2026–2027 Work Plan on Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments, and to prioritise:

- The design and implementation of a comprehensive regional survey on marine pollution, ecosystem health, and drivers of degradation;

- The establishment of long-term ecological monitoring sites and the development of a harmonized database of coastal and marine biodiversity in Africa;
- The implementation of a biannual “African State of the Ocean” report, with harmonized methodology and national inputs;

To **support** capacity development activities, including:

- Training on ecosystem assessment methods, development of indicators, and SDG 14.5/14. A reporting;
- Technical workshops on blue carbon mapping, valuation, and management;
- Capacity-building on science-based inputs to the BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) negotiations and treaty implementation;

To **request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to facilitate:

- The development of regional guidance for mainstreaming biodiversity in coastal development and marine spatial planning;
- The production of science-policy briefs on harmful algal blooms, invasive species, and ecosystem tipping points;
- The integration of marine biodiversity and underwater cultural heritage into school curricula and public awareness campaigns;

To **promote** digital innovation and participatory science through:

- The development of a digital atlas of African Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs), with linked biodiversity indicators;
- The promotion of citizen science platforms for habitat monitoring and biodiversity observation;

To **launch** and scale pilot actions, such as:

- A regional project for the restoration of degraded blue carbon ecosystems (e.g., mangrove rehabilitation);
- Country-led initiatives contributing to integrated biodiversity assessments and sustainable coastal planning;

To **encourage** Member States, where applicable, to establish or strengthen cross-ministerial coordination mechanisms to ensure coherent implementation of biodiversity frameworks across the environment, fisheries, culture, education, and maritime sectors;

To **invite** partners and donors to support implementation of the above priorities through co-investment, technical cooperation, and joint monitoring initiatives, and to work with IOCAFRICA and its Member States in delivering impact at scale.

To **include** a dedicated funding line in the IOCAFRICA Programme Budget 2026–2027 for implementation of the Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments, with clear provisions for monitoring progress and reporting to the Sub-Commission.

32. **Agenda Item 5.2.3 Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Data and Information Management):** The Draft Work Plan on Ocean Data and Information Management for 2026–2027 was endorsed as a regional blueprint to advance open access, digital innovation, and institutional connectivity across Africa’s marine data ecosystem. Development partners and scientific institutions were invited to collaborate with IOCAFRICA in operationalizing the Work Plan, ensuring that ocean data and information management efforts produce tangible, feasible, and impactful outcomes that enhance ecological health, climate resilience, and the well-being of African coastal communities. The Commission adopted Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.3

[...]

Recognizing the foundational role of ocean data and information management in advancing Africa's ocean science, blue economy, disaster risk reduction, and climate resilience agendas,

Welcoming the renewed strategic ambition of IOCAFRICA to modernize data infrastructure, accelerate digital innovation, and promote the ethical, inclusive, and policy-relevant use of marine data,

Recommends:

To **endorse** the Work Plan for 2026–2027 on Ocean Data and Information Management as presented by the sessional working group, structured around five strategic pillars: infrastructure and systems, capacity building, digital innovation, policy and governance, and outreach and communication;

To support the implementation of the following key activities:

Infrastructure and Systems:

- Upgrade and interconnect National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs) with global systems including ODIS and OBIS;
- Establish and maintain national OBIS/AFROBIS nodes;
- Deploy cloud-based regional data storage and access systems;

Capacity Building and Training:

- Organize regional training workshops on FAIR principles, metadata standards, and digital archiving;
- Establish mentorship programmes for ocean data professionals and institutional managers;
- Conduct workshops on ethical data sharing, sovereignty, and open science;

Tools and Digital Innovation:

- Establish a regional AI lab or innovation hub for ocean data solutions in marine management, pollution tracking, and predictive modeling;
- Develop blockchain-based traceability and validation systems to secure data provenance and integrity;
- Build big data analytics pipelines for processing high-resolution oceanographic data;
- Develop a regional marine data dashboard for decision-makers and researchers;
- Work with relevant partners to pilot digital ocean twin applications in selected coastal areas;
- Explore AI-based tools for marine data visualization and interpretation;

Policy and Governance:

- Draft a model regional policy framework on marine data governance, standards, and interoperability;
- Promote inclusion of marine data in national climate resilience, DRR, and ocean governance strategies;

Outreach and Communication:

- Design educational and public outreach content using real-time marine data (e.g., visualizations and infographics);
- Promote ocean literacy through partnerships with media, digital platforms, and schools;

To **request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in collaboration with IODE Office and relevant partners, to coordinate the reactivation and operationalization of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN as the primary implementation mechanism for the Work Plan, including oversight of national and regional data initiatives;

To **encourage** Member States to designate or strengthen national focal institutions for marine data, and to mobilize domestic resources and partnerships to support infrastructure upgrades and open data services;

To **invite** development partners, research institutions, and private sector actors to co-finance and technically support the implementation of the digital transformation activities identified in the Work Plan, particularly in AI, blockchain, and regional cloud infrastructure;

To **emphasize** that all ocean data initiatives supported under this Work Plan should deliver practical benefits for ecosystem stewardship, public services, and economic opportunity, particularly for vulnerable coastal communities;

To **include** a dedicated funding line in the IOCAFRICA Programme Budget 2026–2027 for implementation of the Ocean Data and Information Management Work Plan, with clear provisions for monitoring progress and reporting to the Sub-Commission.

33. **Agenda Item 5.2.4 Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Data and Information Management):** The Draft Work Plan on Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization for 2026–2027 was endorsed as a foundational framework to strengthen Africa’s institutional capabilities, technical workforce, and financing mechanisms for sustainable ocean governance. Development partners and scientific institutions were invited to collaborate with IOCAFRICA in operationalizing the Work Plan, ensuring that Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization efforts produce tangible, feasible, and impactful outcomes that enhance ecological health, climate resilience, and the well-being of African coastal communities. The Commission adopted Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.4

[...]

Recognizing capacity development as a foundational enabler of effective ocean governance, scientific advancement, and the sustainable use of marine resources in Africa,

Recalling the alignment of the proposed Work Plan with the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030), the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and the African Union’s Agenda 2063,

Recalling the outcomes of the Partner Roundtable under Agenda Item 3.3.2, and appreciating the expressions of interest and commitments made by institutional partners to align and scale their engagement in support of IOCAFRICA’s programmes and strategic capacity-building priorities,

Stressing the importance of partnerships as a mechanism for joint planning and implementation of programmes, transfer of technology and exchange and sharing of resources,

Acknowledging the significant financial and institutional constraints faced by many African coastal and island States in delivering sustained ocean science, services, and education,

Emphasizing the urgent need for strategic and coordinated resource mobilization to overcome these challenges and ensure the long-term viability of regional ocean capacity development efforts,

Welcoming the proposal to develop and adopt a Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa as a flagship activity under the Work Plan,

Decides:

To **endorse** the Work Plan for 2026–2027 on Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, structured around five strategic pillars: (i) Capacity building and training, (ii) Institutional support, (iii) Partnerships and networks, (iv) Resource mobilization, and (v) Outreach, culture, and education

To **support** the implementation of the following priority activities:

- Develop modular training curricula on ocean governance, climate adaptation, and ocean literacy;
- Launch multi-cohort regional training programmes on ocean modeling, GIS, and artificial intelligence (AI);
- Establish a pan-African mentorship programme for early-career ocean professionals (ECOPs);
- Provide institutional support to national ocean agencies and training institutes through infrastructure upgrades, twinning programmes, and regional hubs of excellence;
- Establish an African Ocean Science and Innovation Alliance to promote collaboration and South-South cooperation;
- Organize a regional ocean investment forum and develop investment cases to leverage resources from global climate and biodiversity finance mechanisms;
- Promote digital and creative outreach methods including mobile platforms, gamification, and youth-led storytelling initiatives;
- Integrate indigenous knowledge and underwater cultural heritage into public awareness campaigns and education systems;

To **request** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in collaboration with Member States and partners, to lead the development of the Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa as the principal coordination and implementation framework for regional capacity development efforts;

To **encourage** enhanced partnerships with universities, regional training institutions, and marine research centers to deliver joint education, research, and outreach programmes;

To **invite** collaboration with IOC Sub-Commission for the Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) and relevant regional organizations to share best practices, co-develop regional learning pathways, and align technical cooperation across the broader Indian Ocean region;

To **call** upon Member States to mainstream capacity development in their national ocean policies and budgets, and actively support the implementation of the Work Plan through institutional participation, knowledge sharing, and domestic resource mobilization;

To **request** the Secretariat to explore the formalization of collaboration with partners through appropriate instruments such as memoranda of understanding or aide-memoires;

To **request** the IOCAFRICA Officers and Secretariat to:

(i) Follow up with organizations and partners on strengthening collaboration to improve ocean capacity development, science, and services in Africa; (ii) Focus on developing and strengthening collaboration with other organizations/programmes as well as resource mobilization during the intersessional period; (iii) Report on progress made in these areas during the 9th Session of the IOC's Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States;

To **invite** development partners, international agencies, and private sector actors to co-finance and technically support the delivery of the capacity development activities, with emphasis on equity, innovation, and long-term sustainability;

To **include** a dedicated funding line in the IOCAFRICA Programme Budget 2026–2027 to support the implementation of the Capacity Development, Partnerships, and Resource Mobilization Work Plan.

IOCAFRICA workplan and budget for the intersessional period 2026-2027

34. Having considered the comprehensive, cross-cutting, and action-oriented contributions of the four Sessional Working Groups, which provided a strong foundation for defining high-impact outputs, deliverables, and implementation strategies across the following priority areas: Ocean Observations and Monitoring, Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments, Ocean Data and Information Management, and Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, The IOCAFRICA workplan for the intersessional

period 2026-2027 The Sub-Commission adopted [Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2](#) , and its Annex (see Annex 1 below)

[...]

Acknowledging the critical importance of aligning IOCAFRICA's strategic priorities with UNESCO's Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2029 (43 C/5), the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), and global ocean initiatives including the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development,

Emphasizing the need for enhanced coordination with African Union frameworks, notably the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, the African Union Agenda 2063, the African Strategy on Climate Change, and the African Regional Framework for the Implementation of the UN Ocean Decade, as well as stronger alignment with regional economic communities and key partners,

Reaffirming IOCAFRICA's unique role as the regional coordination mechanism for ocean science, observations, data and information management, and capacity development in Africa and the Adjacent Island States,

Further recognizing that the next session of IOCAFRICA will be convened in early 2027, and that the current work planning period shall therefore cover January 2026 through December 2027,

Highlighting the importance of advancing a programmatic approach that promotes synergy across IOCAFRICA's six (6) functional areas, strengthens science-policy interfaces, and accelerates delivery on national and regional commitments related to sustainable ocean governance,

Recommends:

1. **Adopt** the IOCAFRICA Work Plan and Budget for the period January 2026 to December 2027 as outlined in the Annex to this Recommendation.
2. **Request** the Secretariat to synthesize these outcomes into a consolidated, costed draft Work Plan and Budget for 2026–2027, ensuring alignment with IOCAFRICA's six functional pillars, and reflecting contributions from Member States, technical partners, and key African and global frameworks;
3. **Call upon** Member States, development agencies, foundations, and private sector actors to support the implementation of the 2026–2027 Work Plan through voluntary financial contributions, in-kind support, capacity development, and joint programming initiatives;
4. **Encourage** the Secretariat to engage with the African Union Commission, UNECA, AMCEN, regional economic communities, and other pan-African bodies to foster policy coherence, mutual reinforcement, and resource mobilization in support of IOCAFRICA's programme goals;
5. **Request** the IOCAFRICA Chair to present the finalized 2026–2027 Work Plan and Budget to the 33rd Session of the IOC Assembly for information, and to facilitate intersessional consultations with Member States and partners to track progress, strengthen implementation partnerships, and ensure responsiveness to emerging regional priorities;
6. **Request** the Secretariat to develop a robust implementation framework and a results-based monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the 2026–2027 Work Plan, based on the IOC result framework for the implementation of the IOC-Medium Term Strategy, with clearly defined milestones, performance indicators, reporting responsibilities, and feedback loops to support evidence-based decision-making and accountability;

7. **Request** the IOC Executive Secretary to: (i) Explore opportunities for additional regular programme budget and extra-budgetary resources for the implementation of these activities, in line with the Global Priority status of Africa; (ii) Strengthen the IOCAFRICA Secretariat through the provision of additional staff;
 8. **Urge** Member States to continue and increase their support to IOCAFRICA and its Secretariat through financial and in-kind contributions, including the secondment of staff;
 9. **Emphasize** the importance of Member States from the region providing support in cash and in-kind for implementation of regional activities.
35. **Agenda Item 5.3.1: Elections of the Chairperson for the Sub-Commission:** The Sub-Commission elected Amb. Hellen Gichuhi (Kenya) as Chairperson of IOCAFRICA for the next inter-sessional period.
 36. **Agenda Item 5.3.2: Elections of the Vice-Chairpersons for the Sub Commission:** The Sub-Commission elected the following:
 - Group A: Dr. Bope Bope Lapwong (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
 - Group B: Dr. Gilbert Siko (South Africa)
 - Group C: Dr. Massata Ndao (Senegal)
 37. **Agenda 5.4: Place of the 9th Session of the Sub-Commission:** The Sub-Commission welcome the expressions of interest from Benin and Cameroon to host the next sessions of IOCAFRICA. The Secretariat was urged to provide the necessary information and support to interested Member States to facilitate the submission and evaluation of hosting proposals. Additionally, the Secretariat is requested to ensure that the dates of the eighth session do not overlap with those of the UNESCO governing bodies and other relevant meetings.
 38. **Agenda Item 5.5: Any Other Business:** Member State were encouraged Member to designate national focal points and ensure timely and high-quality submission of data and information to the GOSR III and requested the Secretariat to coordinate regional contributions and convene technical briefings in collaboration with the IOC Secretariat in Paris. The Sub-Commission encouraged further participation by African Member States in the ongoing phases of the IOC Future of the Ocean Consultation process, including the online survey and follow-up discussions. The Sub-Commission adopted Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.5

[...]

1. **Calls upon** Member States to actively engage in the GOSR III process by designating and activating national focal points, responding to the IOC Circular Letter 3005, and ensuring timely and comprehensive national data submissions in coordination with relevant institutions.
2. **Instructs** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to coordinate with the IOC Secretariat in Paris and organize an information session for African Member States on GOSR III, to ensure visibility of African priorities and increase regional contributions to the report.
3. **Encourages** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to support Member States in the preparation and visibility of their contributions to the 2025 UN Ocean Conference (UNOC), including participation in side events organized by Egypt and its international partners.
4. **Requests** the Secretariat, where appropriate, to identify and contract professional consultants for the preparation of complex strategic documents such as the IOCAFRICA Strategic Plan, ensuring broad consultation, regional ownership, and technical excellence.
5. **Urges** Member States to actively participate in the phases of the IOC and the Future of the Ocean consultation process, including the online survey and follow-up discussions.
6. **Invites** the Secretariat to explore potential collaboration with entities such as PanAfricarbon Impact Investments Ltd and others interested in developing bankable

blue carbon projects, in alignment with IOCAFRICA's strategic priorities and the needs of African coastal communities, and with a view to exploring joint initiatives and co-financing opportunities for nature-based solutions and blue carbon certification.

7. **Requests** Member States to continue providing both financial and technical support to the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to strengthen its delivery of the Work Plan 2026–2027.

39. **Agenda 5.6: Adoption of the IOCAFRICA Workplan and Budget for 2026–2027:** The Sub-Commission adopted the IOCAFRICA workplan and budget for 2026-2027. The Sub Commission requested the Secretariat and the IOCAFRICA Officers to focus on building partnerships and resource mobilization as the funds available from the Regular Programme budget will be limited.

40. Agenda Item 5.7: Adoption of Decisions/Recommendations and Modalities for the Finalisation of the Summary Report:

The Sub-Commission adopted 7 Decisions:

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.5: Establishment of the IOCAFRICA Ocean Data and Information Working Group

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4: Establishment of the IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.7: Revitalisation of the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms:

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.8: Proposal for Ocean Early Warning System for Africa Programme

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.9: Proposal for Hosting the Global Ocean Accounts African Community of Practice

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.10 Fostering the Development of Ocean Science Plans and Strategies in Member States

Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.11 Developing a Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa

41. The Committee adopted 7 recommendations:

Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.1: Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5, First Biennium 2026–2027)

Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.1: Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Observations and Monitoring)

Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.2: Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments)

Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.3: Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Ocean Data and Information Management)

Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.4: Development of IOCAFRICA Work Plan For 2026–2027 (Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization)

Recommendation IOCAFRICS-VIII/5.2: IOCAFRICA workplan and budget for the intersessional period 2026-2027

Recommendation IOCAFRICS-VIII/5.5: Any Other Business

ANNEX I to Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2

RP: UNESCO regular programme; EB other: funding through other extra-budgetary funding sources; EB req: extra-budgetary funding to request (donor(s) not identified)

Component Area	Proposed Activities	RP: UNESCO Regular Programme (\$)	EB: Other Sources (\$)	EB Req: To Be Mobilized (\$)
1. Ocean Observations and Monitoring	Activity 1.1: Develop an inventory of current ocean observing tools, identify gaps, and assess regional and national capacities.			20,000
	Activity 1.2: Implement pilot project to collect oceanographic data using existing buoys, gliders, and remote sensing technologies in partnership with private sector companies.	30,000		
	Activity 1.3: Training programme on operational oceanography and integration with DRR			50,000
	Activity 1.4: Develop and integrate an interactive ocean observation dashboard into national platforms			20,000
	Activity 1.5: Develop a technical brief/working paper with policy recommendations for sustained ocean observing systems			20,000
	Activity 1.6: Procurement and installation of ocean observing tools (e.g., tide gauges, ADCPs, gliders, coastal buoys, sensors)	80,000		100,000
	Activity 1.7: Procurement and installation of low-cost sensors for community-based ocean observation and data collection in the Gulf of Guinea, WIO, and Mediterranean	50,000		40,000
	Activity 1.8: Pilot research on sea-level variability, marine pollution, and coastal vulnerability			\$30,000

	Activity 1.9: Initiate pilot activity to integrate satellite with in-situ platforms for composite marine monitoring			40,000
	Activity 1.10: Initiate pilot activity to deploy AI-enabled tools for ocean forecasting and ecosystem analysis			40,000
	Activity 1.11: Develop a coastal and open-ocean forecasting toolkit			30,000
	Activity 1.12: Develop educational materials and visual aids on ocean monitoring			30,000
	Activity 1.13: Implement awareness campaigns on ocean monitoring and citizen science			20,000
Sub-Total		160,000	0	\$440,000
2. Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments	Activity 2.1: Implement a Pilot Project for Establishing Long-Term Ecological Monitoring Sites in Key Marine Habitats			200,000
	Activity 2.2: Develop a user-friendly mobile app for collecting coastal and marine biodiversity data, engaging local communities and ensuring effective integration with existing databases to enhance conservation efforts.	40,000		200,000
	Activity 2.3: Organize training on ecosystem assessment methodologies, indicator development, and SDG 14 reporting			45,000
	Activity 2.4: Organise technical workshops on blue carbon mapping and valuation	50,000		
	Activity 2.5: Training programme on BBNJ treaty science and implications for African countries			50,000
	Activity 2.6: Develop regional guidance for mainstreaming biodiversity and climate change into coastal development and spatial planning	30,000		
	Activity 2.7: Produce technical briefs for decision-makers on HABs, invasive species, and ecosystem tipping points			25,000

	Activity 2.8: Develop a digital atlas of African MPAs and OECMs with biodiversity and climate change indicators			40,000
	Activity 2.9: Promote citizen science for biodiversity observation and habitat monitoring	15,000		
	Activity 2.10: Integrate marine biodiversity and underwater cultural heritage in school curricula and awareness campaigns			25,000
	Activity 2.11: Launch a pilot project on restoring degraded blue carbon ecosystems (e.g., mangrove rehabilitation)			100,000
	Activity 2.12: Develop a comprehensive regional “State of the Ocean report” with harmonized methodology and national inputs			80,000
Sub-Total		135,000	0	765,000
3. Ocean Data and Information Management	Activity 3.1: Develop backend data infrastructure, upgrade and connect NODCs with regional and global platforms (e.g., ODIS, OBIS)	40,000		
	Activity 3.2: Deploy cloud-based regional data storage and access systems			100,000
	Activity 3.3: Organize regional training on FAIR data principles, metadata, and digital archiving			50,000
	Activity 3.4: Establish a mentorship programme for ocean data scientists and information managers	30,000		
	Activity 3.5: Conduct workshops on ethical data sharing, sovereignty, and open science			45,000
	Activity 3.6: Support the establishment of a regional AI lab or innovation hub focused on ocean data	50,000		35,000
	Activity 3.7: Develop blockchain-based traceability and validation systems for African ocean data			50,000
	Activity 3.8: Build Africa big data analytics pipelines for oceanographic data			50,000

	Activity 3.9: Pilot digital ocean twin applications in selected coastal areas			100,000
	Activity 3.10: Organise a training workshop to explore AI-based tools for marine data visualization			45,000
	Activity 3.11: Draft a model regional policy framework on marine data governance			30,000
	Activity 3.12: Development of the Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa	30,000		
	Activity 3.13: Organize national dialogues to promote the inclusion of ocean data in national strategies for climate resilience			20,000
	Activity 3.14: Design outreach content using real-time ocean data			20,000
	Activity 3.15: Ocean literacy campaign in collaboration with the media to highlight ocean data.			20,000
Sub-total		150,000	0	565,000
4. Capacity Development, Partnerships, and Resource Mobilization	Activity 4.1: Develop a modular online course on ocean governance, blue economy, and climate adaptation	30,000		50,000
	Activity 4.2: Organize a multi-cohort regional training programme on marine science tools and digital technologies (e.g., ocean modelling, GIS, AI).	70,000		150,000
	Activity 4.3: Launch a Pan-African mentorship and fellowship scheme for early-career ocean professionals	60,000		100,000
	Activity 4.4: Support national ocean institutions to develop strategic capacity for multi-hazard Early Warning Systems	30,000		70,000
	Activity 4.5: Organize a regional training workshop on incorporating advanced technologies, including drones, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), and underwater cameras, to enhance ocean research and monitoring efforts.	50,000		

	Activity 4.6: Training courses and workshops, using regional and national training centres (Ocean Teacher Global Academy RTCs, UNESCO Chairs and Centres of Excellence) on priority topics identified by IOCAFRICA and the respective Member states	50,000		
	Activity 4.7: Organise activities towards the establishment of an African Ocean Science and Innovation Alliance			50,000
	Activity 4.8: Facilitate partnership dialogues with the private sector, donors, academia, and universities on			50,000
	Activity 4.9: Organize a regional ocean investment forum	50,000		100,000
	Activity 4.10: Support Member States to develop investment cases and bankable proposals for capacity initiatives and sustainable ocean planning			40,000
	Activity 4.11: Map financing opportunities from global funding instruments for the sustainable ocean economy in Africa			25,000
	Activity 4.12: Support for the integration of ocean literacy and cultural heritage in curricula	40,000		
	Activity 4.13: Pilot project and organize training on biological assessments, water quality testing, and the mapping of underwater habitats.			200,000
	Support for youth-led digital campaigns, hackathons, and national ocean festivals			50,000
Sub-total		380,000		885,000
5.Governance, Planning & Coordination	Activity 5.1: Organization of the 9th session of IOCAFRICA	80,000		50,000
	Activity 5.2: Maintenance and hosting of IOCAFRICA information sharing channels (website, social media platforms, databases)	20,000		40,000
	Activity 5.3: Staff Salary and Travel	120,000		300,000
Sub-total		220,000	0	390,000

Total		985,000	0	3,040,000
--------------	--	----------------	----------	------------------