

**DRAFT RESOLUTION A-33/DR.[3.3.1]**

Submitted by: Kenya, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo

**STRENGTHENING THE IOCAFRICA SECRETARIAT: A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE FOR  
ADVANCING OCEAN SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA AND SMALL ISLAND STATES**

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

1. **Recalling** the General Conference Resolution 41 C/56, Executive Board Decision 216 EX/44, and IOC Resolution A-32/4,
2. **Recognizing** the strategic importance of Africa's ocean and coastal regions to the mandate of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the African population and the world,
3. **Also recalling** that UNESCO's designation of Africa as a Global Priority, and the continued commitment through the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, provides a framework that aligns closely with IOC's goals for equitable and inclusive scientific cooperation,
4. **Further recalling** Resolutions IOC-XXIX/2 and IOC-XXXI/2, which established IOCAFRICA as the regional subsidiary body responsible for coordinating marine science, services, and capacity development in Africa and the Adjacent Island States,
5. **Also recognizing** IOCAFRICA's critical role in advancing the implementation of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), the African Union's Blue Economy Strategy, Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030),
6. **Reaffirming** that Africa's and the Adjacent Island States marine and coastal zones are vital for global biodiversity, food security, livelihoods, and economic development, yet remain underrepresented in ocean research, data systems, and governance structures,
7. **Recalling** that IOCAFRICA has become a cornerstone of Africa's and the Adjacent Island States implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and has served as the primary mechanism for delivering IOC's mandate across the African continent and Adjacent Island States,

8. **Emphasizing** the need for the IOC to strengthen programmatic support, institutional capacity, and representation for African and the Adjacent Island Member States, to ensure full and active participation in shaping global ocean policy and science agendas,
9. **Underscoring** that an adequately resourced and strategically positioned IOCAFRICA Secretariat is indispensable to ensuring Africa and Adjacent Island States equitable participation and leadership in global ocean governance, scientific cooperation, and policy dialogue,
10. **Acknowledging with appreciation** the increasing volume of African and Adjacent Island States-led projects, regional partnerships, and international collaborations facilitated through IOCAFRICA, which demonstrate both the relevance and efficiency of its Secretariat,
11. **Noting** the increased responsibilities of IOCAFRICA in coordinating the implementation of IOC/2022/ODS/36 Rev.2 'Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap', regional Early Warning Systems, ocean data and information infrastructure, and capacity development initiatives across more than 35 African coastal and Island States,
12. **Further recognizing**, that the IOCAFRICA Secretariat concurrently serves as the OceanDecade Coordination Office for Africa and the Adjacent Island States, thereby assuming dual responsibilities that extend well beyond capacity development to include strategic coordination, programme execution, technical backstopping, and continental stakeholder engagement,
13. **Further noting** that the need to maintain Africa as a budgetary priority within IOC programming has been emphasized by Member States during discussions at the IOC Assembly and Executive Council, IOCAFRICA Sessions, meetings of the Open-ended Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (IFAG), and the IOC Financial Committee, where similar concerns regarding under-resourcing of IOC regional subsidiary bodies have been raised,
14. **Appreciating** that a second professional post will be operational from July 2025 funded under the Regular Programme **and noting** that no General Service or other critically needed positions are covered by regular budget allocations,
15. **Acknowledging** that administrative and operational support has been sustained through in-kind secondment by the Government of Kenya and shared arrangements with the Africa Ocean Decade Coordination Office,
16. **Noting** with great concern the temporary freeze of IOCAFRICA budget allocations and activities under UNESCO's current Responsible Management Actions, and **recognizing** the negative impact of such measures on programme continuity and regional support,
17. **Noting** the need to strengthen the staffing of the IOCAFRICA Secretariat through the consolidation of a suitably qualified and appropriately senior team to ensure effective capacity for technical

programme implementation, resource mobilisation and donor management, outreach and engagement, as well as a range of operational and administrative functions,

18. **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to develop a costed analysis of different scenarios for optimal future staffing of Regional Sub-Commission Secretariats, to ensure effective programme delivery in line with IOC/INF-1412 'IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029)' and its Global Priority Africa and Priority Group SIDS, and taking into account the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ocean Decade and the results of the 'IOC and Future of the Ocean' consultation process and to present this analysis to the Executive Council at its 59<sup>th</sup> Session;
19. **Also requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to explore options for:
  - (i) formal integration of General Service staff positions within the regular budget for the IOCAFRICA Secretariat;
  - (ii) mobilizing additional resources, including extra-budgetary funding and co-financing arrangements, as well as human resources partnerships to support essential staff positions;
  - (iii) providing optimal funding for operationalization of the office and programme activities; and
  - (iv) ensuring prioritization of IOCAFRICA Secretariat's operational budget across all budget scenarios, in keeping with Africa's status as a UNESCO Global Priority;
20. **Urges** IOC Member States, especially IOCAFRICA Member States, to increase their voluntary and in-kind support to IOCAFRICA, including the secondment and loan of technical and administrative staff, and financial contributions earmarked for Secretariat strengthening;
21. **Encourages** strengthened collaboration with strategic partners, regional economic communities, and development agencies to establish jointly funded technical and programmatic support positions;
22. **Recognizing** the importance of a stable funding base to allow IOCAFRICA to effectively fulfil its dual mandate as the IOC's regional coordination mechanism and the Africa Ocean Decade Coordination Office,
23. **Further requests** the IOC Executive Secretary, in consultation with IOCAFRICA Officers, to explore:
  - (i) a proposal for a dedicated IOCAFRICA Support Fund under the IOC Special Account to be presented to the IOC Executive Council at its 59<sup>th</sup> session; and
  - (ii) the opportunities offered by Article 10.4 of the Statutes of the Commission such as establishing special purpose financial mechanisms or cost-sharing arrangements with donor Member States and to present a proposal to the IOC Assembly at its 34<sup>th</sup> Session;

24. **Calls upon** UNESCO Field Offices and Category 2 Centres in Africa to align their technical cooperation frameworks with the priorities and staffing needs of IOCAFRICA, enabling pooled technical assistance where feasible;
25. **Recalling** Africa's designation as a Global Priority and the decision by Member States at the 216<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO Executive Board, endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference in the 42 C/5 Appropriation Resolution, that the IOC's share of the available overall UNESCO regular budget remains at no less than 3%,
26. **Urges** the Director-General of UNESCO, to take management actions without delay to release the funds necessary to complete the implementation of IOCAFRICA's approved activities for the remainder of the 2024–2025 biennium.