

DRAFT RESOLUTION A-33/DR.[5.4]

Submitted by Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Grenada, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Togo, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Agenda item **5.4**

GOVERNANCE, PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETING MATTERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

1. Having examined documents:

- (i) IOC/A-33/3.2.Doc(2) – Report on 2024–2025 (42 C/5) budget implementation as at 31 December 2024,
- (ii) IOC/A-33/3.2.Doc(3) – Financial situation of the IOC Special Account as at year end 2024 and forecast for 2025,
- (iii) IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(1) – Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5), first biennium of the 2026-2029 quadrennium,
- (iv) IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(2) – Report of the Chairperson of the IOC Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (2024-2025)
- (v) IOC/A-33/5.2.Doc(1) – Assessment of IOC's governance and management processes and related Member State input to the IOC Intersessional Financial Advisory Group;
- (vi) IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(1) – IOC and the Future of the Ocean Consultation Process: Summary of Phase 1,
- (vii) IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(2) – Action Plan in response to the IOC Evaluation of the IOC Strategic Positioning: Update on implementation,

I.

**Report on 2024–2025 (42 C/5) budget implementation as at 31 December 2024
and Financial situation of the IOC Special Account as at year end 2024
and forecast for 2025**

- 2. Confirms** that the IOC budget for 2024–2025, as reported in IOC/A-33/3.2.Doc(2), has been executed as at 31 December 2024 in accordance with the Approved Programme and Budget 2024–2025 (42 C/5), including the adjusted budgetary appropriations for the IOC Special Account

as approved by the IOC Assembly at its 32nd session through IOC Resolution A-32/4 and further reviewed by the IOC Executive Council at its 57th session through IOC Resolution EC-57/2;

3. **Acknowledges** the information on the financial situation of the IOC Special Account as at year end 2024 and forecast for 2025 provided in IOC/A-33/3.2.Doc(3);
4. **Approves** the revised budgetary allocations for 2024–2025 for the IOC Special Account as proposed in Table 1 of IOC/A-33/3.2.Doc(3);
5. **Thanks** Member States and partners who have provided voluntary contributions for the 2024–2025 programme implementation;
6. **Encourages** all Member States to provide voluntary contributions to ensure full achievement of the Commission's programmatic targets for 2024–2025 for all IOC Functions, preferably with non-earmarked contributions to the IOC Special Account;
7. **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to intensify proactive efforts to obtain further voluntary contributions, including from private sector donors and other partners, and to achieve full implementation of the Commission's programmatic targets for 2024–2025, and explore options to facilitate processes for funding partnerships, including the establishment of additional financial arrangements as foreseen in the IOC Statutes;
8. **Notes with concern** that the IOC Assembly's decisions through IOC Resolution A-32/4 to '*give priority to stabilizing the functions of the IOC, including human resources*', have not been fully achieved, including as a result of not being able to fill established posts, even in the most critically vulnerable and understaffed functions of the Commission, slowing execution of the IOC programme and with implications for existing staff;
9. **Also notes with concern** that the execution of IOC's programme for 2025 is severely impacted by the disproportionate reduction of the 2025 regular budget allotment for the IOC, as a result of UNESCO's management actions to safeguard against the risk of a potential loss of income for the regular programme and budget (42 C/5);
10. **Requests** the Director-General of UNESCO to take management actions without delay to ensure compliance with the decision by Member States at the 216th 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%;

II.
Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5),
first biennium of the 2026–2029 quadrennium

11. **Recalls** the decision of the UNESCO Executive Board at its 216th session to recommend that the UNESCO General Conference at its 42nd session agree to *‘an increase in the IOC’s share of the UNESCO regular budget of [1%], not to be decreased by transfers of funds to other parts of the budget and ‘that a baseline be identified and agreed for the IOC’s share of UNESCO’s regular budget under document 42 C/5 and future C/5 documents and that no reduction to this baseline be made in the future unless agreed by the General Conference’;*
12. **Notes with appreciation** that the three scenarios proposed for the Draft 43 C/5 respect this decision in allocating 3% of the overall UNESCO regular budget to the IOC;
13. **Acknowledges** the presentation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5), first biennium of the 2026–2029 quadrennium contained in IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(1), prepared as an integral part of the UNESCO Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2029 (Draft 43 C/5), submitted by the Director-General of UNESCO to the UNESCO Executive Board at its 221st session;
14. **Welcomes** the UNESCO Executive Board decision 221 EX/Dec.20 that *‘bearing in mind that the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is established as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO, with the IOC Assembly being the principal organ under the IOC Statutes, invites the Executive Secretary of the IOC to submit the sections relating to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in Volumes I and II of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2029 (43 C/5) to the IOC Assembly at its 33rd session and to forward the recommendations of the IOC Assembly to the General Conference at its 43rd session’;*
15. **Thanks** the Chairperson of the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group (IFAG) and the IOC Executive Secretary and his team for engaging Member States in regular online sessions and thus keeping them apprised of and involved with all relevant developments on this and other items covered by this Resolution, in line with the IOC Executive Council decision reflected in IOC Resolution EC-57/2;
16. **Also welcomes** the effort put in the development of the new Draft IOC Results Framework 2026–2027, aligned with the IOC Medium Term Strategy 2022–2029, as presented in Part II of IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(1);

17. **Considers** that the programmatic choices of the Secretariat in developing the Draft Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 follow Member States' strategic guidance, in line with the priority areas of the 42 C/5 and the spirit of maintaining the achievements related to the high-level principles of the IOC Resolutions A-32/4 and EC-57/2;
18. **Also acknowledges** that the working assumptions of the proposed budgetary scenarios for 2026–2027 may change in light of the potential loss of funding for the regular budget and voluntary contributions, adversely impacting the allocations to the IOC, while some of the Commission's critically vulnerable areas are still understaffed and under-resourced;
19. **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary, in consultation with IFAG, to explore options to maintain and optimise the 43 C/5, with the number and level of positions foreseen in the 42 C/5 as the minimal baseline, in finalising the IOC proposal for the 43 C/5 budgetary scenario(s) to be presented to the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference;
20. **Endorses** the IOC approach to the preliminary proposals for the Programme and Budget for 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5), including the new IOC Results Framework as presented in Part II of IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(1);
21. **Also requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to ensure the transmission of this resolution to the 43rd session of UNESCO General Conference;
22. **Highlights** the critical importance of continuing and strengthening a clear and comprehensive consultation process with IOC Member States on governance, programming and budgetary matters of the Commission;
23. **Welcomes**, in this context, the IOC Executive Secretary's proposal to better align the schedules of IOC subsidiary bodies meetings with those of primary IOC Governing Bodies and the entire UNESCO programming and budgeting cycle;
24. **Further requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to continue bringing all relevant developments on this and other important matters pertaining to IOC governance, programming and budgeting to regular and timely online meetings of IFAG;

III.
Assessment of Governance and Management Processes

25. **Recalls** that the IOC Executive Council in its Resolution EC-57/2 requested the IOC Executive Secretary, *'in consultation with the Officers of the Commission, to launch an external assessment of IOC's governance and management processes, with a view to streamlining operations and optimising the use of resources so as to be truly fit for purpose in response to the fast-evolving ocean agenda and increasing demands of Member States and multilateral processes'*;
26. **Takes note** of the analysis, findings and recommendations from interviews contained in document IOC/A-33/5.2.Doc(1), acknowledging that all of those ideas do not reflect the points of view of all IOC Member States;
27. **Welcomes** the significant material input by Member States to the process and in particular as background to the IFAG discussions as reflected in IOC/A-33/5.1.Doc(2);
28. **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Officers and IFAG, to review the working methods of the IOC Governing Bodies, in order to ensure greater effectiveness, efficiency and inclusiveness in the governance of the Commission, and to present to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session concrete recommendations that could be implemented at the 34th session of the IOC Assembly;
29. **Highlights** the wide mandate and responsibilities of the IOC in the face of accelerating ocean changes and the increasing needs and demands on the Commission, and **noting** the concerns repeatedly raised by IOC Governing Bodies that some functional areas are critically vulnerable;
30. **Emphasizes** its commitment to making IOC fit for purpose by ensuring efficient and effective governance and management processes through a clearly defined accountability framework compliant with the IOC Statutes;
31. **Stresses** the IOC's statutory purpose as a vehicle for Member States as well as multilateral collaboration and coordination in ocean research, services, management and capacity development, and that a core strength of the IOC lies in its close operational relationship with Member State institutions and with relevant United Nations ocean frameworks and processes to which it contributes;

32. **Asserts** that the IOC, as a '*competent international organization*' (Article 3.1 of the IOC Statutes) and a '*body with functional autonomy within UNESCO*' (Article 1.1 of the IOC Statutes) shall henceforth operate as such and in accordance with the provisions of its Statutes;
33. **Recalls** that under the IOC Statutes, the UNESCO General Conference appropriates the IOC regular budget and correspondingly the IOC Assembly reports directly to the UNESCO General Conference on the execution of the budget;
34. **Also recalls** that within the framework of the budget the IOC defines and implements its programme;
35. **Also emphasizes** that all IOC Member States, whether or not they are Member States of UNESCO, have an equal right to exercise governance over the IOC and hold its Secretariat and Executive Secretary to account with respect to the IOC Statutes;
36. **Further emphasizes** that, under the IOC Statutes, the Assembly is the principal organ of the IOC and '*shall perform all functions of the Commission, unless otherwise regulated by these Statutes or delegated by the Assembly to other organs of the Commission*' (Article 6.2 of the IOC Statutes);
37. **Also asserts** that the regular budget of the IOC as appropriated by the UNESCO General Conference, should be dedicated to the implementation of the IOC programme;
38. **Further asserts** that, the IOC Executive Secretary, who is the equivalent of the level of Assistant Director-General (ADG) and acts with the instructions provided by the IOC Assembly and the Executive Council shall, without prejudice to other tasks that may have been or may be delegated to them, be accountable for:
 - (i) executing IOC's approved programme and available budget, including any voluntary contribution, and reporting on that execution to the IOC Executive Council and Assembly, as well as drafting the report to be presented by the Assembly to the UNESCO General Conference;
 - (ii) drafting the proposals for the IOC Medium-Term Strategy and the IOC programme and budget to be submitted to the IOC Assembly;
 - (iii) defining the staffing requirements according to Article 8 of the IOC Statutes and Rule 14(b) of the IOC Rules of Procedures;

- (iv) the management of, in keeping with the IOC Statutes, collaboration with and representation to multilateral and Member State institutions and processes, including the IOC's own accreditation to intergovernmental institutions and processes; and
 - (v) disseminating and promoting the recognition and use of the results of the IOC and co-sponsored programmes, including by means of reinstating and consistently using the distinct visual identity of the IOC in communications and publications;
39. **Emphasizes** the importance of ensuring the recruitment of technically competent staff suited for interaction with expert communities in Member States for IOC programmatic execution;
40. **Urges** the Director-General of UNESCO to delegate the authority to the IOC Executive Secretary to manage recruitments and select staff for IOC;
41. **Invites** the Director-General of UNESCO to contribute to the full implementation of the Commission's functions as established in its Statutes as well as the above-mentioned tasks assigned to the IOC Secretariat, including by the delegation of authority to the IOC Executive Secretary, when applicable;
42. **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to seek an agreement with UNESCO on the recovery of management costs charged to voluntary contributions to the IOC and include IOC's direct costs in project proposals, as appropriate;
43. **Also requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to keep IFAG updated on progress in fully aligning IOC governance and management processes with the IOC Statutes and to report on implementation to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session and to the IOC Assembly at its 34th session;

IV. IOC and the Future of the Ocean Consultation Process

44. **Recalls** that IOC Decision A-32/5 agreed to '*initiate a consultation on how IOC could on the basis of its purpose as defined in its Statutes optimally facilitate activities of Member States and other stakeholders in science-based sustainable ocean planning, ocean science support to implementation of UN environmental conventions and frameworks, and development of a sustainable ocean economy*';

45. **Also recalls** the decision of the IOC Executive Council in IOC Resolution EC-57/2 that:
- the IOC and the Future of the Ocean consultation shall *'allow for a three-year process synchronized with the calendar of IOC governing body sessions'* and that *'the consultation will first focus on an overall inventory of activities relevant to the role of IOC in assisting Member States and other stakeholders, including identifying what gaps and needs exist when it comes to delivering existing IOC programmes, in order to optimally facilitate current and emerging activities in science-based sustainable ocean planning, ocean science support to implementation of relevant UN conventions and frameworks, and support the development of a sustainable ocean economy'*;
 - *'the gap assessment will be carried out by the IOC Secretariat in consultation with IOC programmes, IOC Regional Subsidiary Bodies, IOC Member States including through the Intersessional Financial Advisory Group and other relevant IOC intersessional working groups, in particular the IOC working group on sustainable ocean planning and management, and other relevant stakeholders as necessary, and that the assessment will draw on the Action Plan in response to the IOS Evaluation of the IOC strategic positioning, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), and other relevant resources as necessary'*;
46. **Takes note** of the summary of Phase 1 of the consultation process presented in IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(1);
47. **Further recalls** that the IOC Assembly, at its 32nd session, requested the Secretariat to move forward with the implementation of the Action Plan *'considering the IOC's evolving situation, including the resources available, proposing adjustments accordingly and reporting on progress both to IOC and UNESCO Governing Bodies'*;
48. **Acknowledges** the update on implementation contained in IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(2);
49. **Requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to continue implementing the remaining recommendations as proposed in IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(2) and submit the report to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session;
50. **Also requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to proceed with Phase 2 of the consultation, as outlined in IOC/A-33/5.3.Doc(1), to analyse the effectiveness of supply to meet the needs of

Member States and partners as identified in Phase 1 of the consultation, including via multilateral ocean frameworks and other relevant processes;

51. **Decides** that Phase 2 of the consultation be undertaken with IOC programmes, Regional Subsidiary Bodies, Member States, including through IFAG, other relevant intersessional working groups, and other relevant stakeholders as necessary, and drawing on the Action Plan in response to the IOS Evaluation of the IOC strategic positioning, the management response to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ocean Decade, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), and other relevant resources as necessary;
52. **Further requests** the IOC Executive Secretary to report on the results of Phase 2 of the consultation to the IOC Executive Council at its 59th session.