



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
COMMISSION OCÉANOGRAPHIQUE INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE
COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات

政府间海洋学委员会

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IOC/VR/HE/ss
16 November 2020

To: Members of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB)
Official National Coordinating Bodies for liaison with the IOC

Cc: Permanent Delegations/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions of UNESCO in IOC Member States
IOC Officers
Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons of IOC Intergovernmental Subsidiary Bodies
President and Executive Director, SCOR
Executive Director, ICS
Relevant Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations

Subject: Fifteenth Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB-XV), 23–25 March 2021 (online)

I have the pleasure to invite you, in your capacity as representative of your country or organization, to take part in the forthcoming IPHAB-XV session which, due to the COVID-19 situation, is to be held online from 23 to 25 March 2021.

The Panel was established by IOC Assembly Resolution XVI-4 in March 1991. At its Thirtieth Session in June 2019, the IOC Assembly decided to convene a fifteenth session of the IPHAB in order to maintain and accelerate momentum in the development and implementation of the Harmful Algal Bloom Programme (see Annex 1 hereafter).

The basic reason to form the IPHAB was the need to improve the managerial, scientific and financial resources available for the implementation of a global HAB Programme. A primary task is still to identify the required resources, so that the international community jointly can continue to implement activities addressing capacity building, international cooperative research, and communication networks.

For those IOC Member States who have not yet declared their intention to participate actively in the HAB Programme as per Resolution XVI-4 of 1991 and would like to do so, I highlight a paragraph of the resolution that refers to the composition of the IPHAB:

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Navy Hydrographic Service
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"The membership of the IPHAB is open to Member States of IOC which have declared to the Secretary IOC their involvement or intention to participate in the development and implementation of the HAB Programme on a global, regional, or national scale. The Panel shall include representatives of IOC regional or other subsidiary bodies, and other interested international organizations particularly SCOR. Invitations to participate in the IPHAB activities may be extended to scientific experts at the request of the Panel and with the approval of Secretary IOC."

Member States are invited therefore to declare their interest in the programme by means of a letter of interest and nominate their representative to the governance of the programme.

Member States who wish to update their [representative](#) to the programme are invited to inform me in the same way.

For the effectiveness of the IPHAB Intergovernmental Panel, it is crucial that nominated representatives have responsibilities in HAB science or management activities at national level, and that their designation on the Panel are acknowledged by the National Coordinating Body for Liaison with IOC (see [list online](#)). Through nominations of national representatives to IPHAB, Member States are able to pursue their priorities and raise any issues deemed important for them. IPHAB helps to implement cooperative and productive efforts in finding solutions at the regional and global scales.

With reference to section 3 of the Annex to Resolution XVI-4, I would like to remind that IPHAB sessions are intergovernmental in nature and are considered as UNESCO category II meetings.

The executive summary of the session together with the adopted decisions and recommendations to the IOC governing bodies will be prepared in the four working languages of the Commission and submitted to the forthcoming Assembly session. As customary, IPHAB-XV session will be conducted in English. The draft Provisional Agenda for the session is attached as annex 3. The documentation for the session will be sent to the IPHAB members in due time and be made available at the IPHAB home page at:

http://hab.ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=0

The Panel will discuss progress and actions to be taken on the issues raised at the last session ([IOC/IPHAB-XIV/3s](#)). However, **the Agenda for the session is open to other priorities expressed by Member States in advance of the session and sent to the Secretariat before 1 March 2021 at the latest.**

The session will be organized as a series of discussion panels, notably on **major ongoing and emerging issues requiring intergovernmental cooperation** (item 5 of the provisional agenda). Each panel is expected to be co-chaired by two IPHAB delegates with research and managerial background, respectively.

As an outcome of the session, IPHAB will recommend a workplan for the IOC HAB Programme for 2022–2023 to be presented to the IOC Assembly for endorsement in July 2021.

By this letter, we are seeking additional information to be received **by 1st March 2021 at the very latest**. It is about:

1. Detail of your delegation at the Fifteenth Session of the IPHAB;
2. Comments on the draft Agenda and suggestions for additional items requiring intergovernmental attention;
3. Possible nominations for one position as Chair and one position as Vice-chair of IPHAB. Elected Officers serve a term of two years corresponding to the intersessional period of IPHAB, once renewable. Dr Joe Silke (Ireland) as Chair and Dr Alexandra Silva (Portugal) as Vice-chair are completing their first mandate. Candidates should submit their names and contact information, as well as a curriculum vitae and a short statement outlining their views on the

future of IPHAB. Nominations should be emailed to the IPHAB Technical Secretary, Mr Henrik Enevoldsen, h.enevoldsen@unesco.org. Elected Officers of the IPHAB are expected to assist the Secretariat in implementing the workplan adopted by the Panel. They may need to participate in meetings, online discussions during the intersessional period of the Panel and be involved in the drafting of documents, and other activities in support of the IPHAB.

Detailed technical guidelines for this online session will be provided well ahead of the session.

With the assurance of my highest consideration, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary

Enclosures (3): Annex 1: IOC-XXX/Dec.6.1
Annex 2: Resolution XVI-4 and IPHAB Terms of Reference
Annex 3: Draft Provisional Agenda (IOC/IPHAB-XV/1 prov.(draft))

Annex 1

Thirtieth Session of the IOC Assembly

Paris, 26 June–4 July 2019

Decision IOC-XXX/6.1 and summary of discussions

(Extract from Doc IOC-XXX/3)

6. OCEAN RESEARCH

6.1 HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS: 14TH SESSION OF IPHAB, UNESCO, PARIS, 20–26 APRIL 2019

1. Mr Henrik Enevoldsen, Head of the IOC Science and Communication Centre on Harmful Algae, presented the main outputs of the 14th session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB). The Panel took eight decisions and endorsed two recommendations for the consideration of the Assembly. The decisions concern (i) the establishment of the Task Team on the Early Detection, Warning and Forecasting of HAB Events; (ii) Regional HAB Programme Development taking into account the difference of support for the various groups and networks depending on whether they are affiliated to a regional IOC subsidiary body or not; (iii) the continuation of the Task Team on the development of a periodic Global Harmful Algal Bloom Status Report with new terms of reference; (iv) the continuation of the Task Team on a Global Inter-Agency Ciguatera Strategy for Improved Research and Management with new terms of reference; (v) the continuation of the Task Team on Harmful Algae and Desalination of Seawater with new terms of reference; (vi) the continuation of the Task Team on Biotoxin Monitoring, Management and Regulations with new terms of reference; (vii) the continuation of the Task Team on Algal Taxonomy with unchanged terms of reference; and (viii) the continuation of the Task Team on Harmful Algae and Fish Kills with unchanged terms of reference.
2. He also informed the Assembly that upon negotiations, FAO, IAEA, IOC and WHO agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Ciguatera Poisoning. The document, presented to the Assembly as IOC-XXX/Inf.4, in line with the IOC status as a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO, has undergone an extensive review by the relevant services of these organizations. In accordance with Article XI.1 of UNESCO's Constitution, which requires that formal arrangements with specialized intergovernmental organizations and agencies be subject to the approval of UNESCO's Executive Board, the Draft MOU will be presented to the fall 2019 session of the Board, prior to signature (207 EX/36).
3. The representatives of 18 Member States took the floor.
4. The Assembly responded with strong support to the IPHAB Work Plan for 2020–2021 and several examples were given of how HABs continue to affect national economies and public health and how the HAB issue is an integral element in Marine Spatial Planning and Blue Economy. The Assembly welcomed the IOC-IAEA-FAO-WHO interagency Memorandum of Understanding on Ciguatera and acknowledged it as important to a needed increased focus on the issue. The Assembly acknowledged the importance of the work on delivering the Global HAB Status Report through IODE and OBIS.
5. Several Member States informed about the challenges posed by mass occurrences of Sargassum, and the Assembly welcomed the GlobalHAB-GESAMP initiative on Sargassum. The Assembly stressed the value of the regional HAB groups, and the importance of involving regional experts in the global programme activities. Several Member States expressed their commitment to stay actively involved in, and provide support for, regional IOC HAB groups.

6. Spain expressed its commitment to investigate how it can contribute to implementing capacity development in HAB. China expressed its wish to continue to support the work under TrendsPO on Climate Change and Global Trends of Phytoplankton in the Oceans.
7. The following Member States chose to provide records of their plenary intervention on this agenda item for the informational annex to the meeting report: Chile, China, Costa Rica, France, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Spain, Thailand, and. United Kingdom.

Decision IOC-XXX/6.1

Harmful Algal Blooms

The Assembly,

Having considered the Executive Summary Report of the 14th session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), its 8 Decisions and 2 Recommendations and the workplan for 2020–2021 adopted at the session (IOC/IPHAB-XIV/3s);

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

Agrees to the HAB workplan for 2020–2021 (Recommendation IPHAB-XIV.1) and to consider it in the overall IOC Programme and Budget resolution XXX-3.

Requests the Executive Secretary to complete preparations for the signature of the FAO-WHO-IAEA-IOC Memorandum of Understanding of Ciguatera Poisoning.

Annex 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE *ad hoc** IOC-FAO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

The IOC Assembly, at its Sixteenth Session, Paris, 7–21 March 1991, adopted the following resolution with respect to the formation of an *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms in order to identify adequate resources for a sufficiently broad programme to solve some of the real problems caused by algal blooms.

Resolution XVI-4

AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Recalling that the IOC, at the Fourteenth Session of its Assembly, endorsed the development of the sub-programme on Harmful Algal Blooms, and that the Twenty-third Executive Council, through its Resolution EC-XXIII.1, endorsed the programme development so far,

Being aware of the increasing socio-economic risks posed by toxic algae and harmful algal blooms to marine organisms, fisheries, aquaculture, human health and the coastal environment,

Approves the formation of an *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms, with the Terms of Reference shown in the Annex hereto;

Invites FAO to co-sponsor the *Ad hoc* Panel;

Invites Member States which intend to be involved in the implementation of a programme on Harmful Algal Blooms to nominate their representatives for the *Ad hoc* Panel and inform the Secretary IOC accordingly;

Decides to review, at the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly, the Terms of Reference of the *Ad hoc* Panel, in conjunction with the Commission's review of the overall organization of the OSLR Programme;

Instructs the Secretary to convene the First Session of the *Ad hoc* Panel as soon as possible.

Annex

Terms of Reference of the *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms

1. FUNCTIONS

The *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms is established to meet the scientific, managerial, implementation, and resource needs of the Harmful Algal Blooms Programme.

The Panel will carry out the following functions:

- 1.1 Review and identify programme requirements;
- 1.2 Promote efficient and cost-effective implementation of the HAB programme and prepare recommendations on this implementation to the Assembly and Executive Council;

- 1.3 Identify the resources necessary to meet HAB programme needs;
- 1.4 Ensure effective interaction and communication with regional intergovernmental (e.g., ICES, ICSEM and GFCM) as well as regional and global non-governmental (e.g., SCOR) organizations involved in research on toxic algae and harmful algal blooms; and
- 1.5 Report to the Twenty-fifth Session of the Executive Council and the Seventeenth Session of the Assembly.

2. COMPOSITION

The membership of the *Ad hoc* Panel is open to Member States of IOC (and FAO, if it agrees to co-sponsor the Panel) which have declared to the Secretary IOC their involvement or intention to participate in the development and implementation of the Harmful Algal Bloom Programme on a global, regional, or national scale. The Panel shall include the Chairman of the OSLR Guiding Group of Experts, representatives of IOC regional and other subsidiary bodies, and of other interested international organizations, particularly SCOR. Invitations to participate in Panel activities may be extended to scientific experts at the request of the Panel and with the approval of the Secretary of the IOC.

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSIONS

- 3.1 The Panel will, prior to the closure of each Session, elect from its members a Chairman who will serve in that capacity until the closure of the next Session.
- 3.2 The Sessions shall, in principle, be arranged without financial costs to IOC. Sessions will be conducted, documentation will be provided, and the report of each session will be prepared in English and in other working languages of the Commission as appropriate and required.
- 3.3 Secretariat support for the Panel will be provided by the Secretary IOC.

** The IPHAB is by decision of the IOC Assembly permanently established and the prefix ad-hoc does no longer apply*

Annex 3

Restricted distribution

IOC/IPHAB-XV/1 Prov. (Draft)
Paris, 12 November 2020
English only

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
(of UNESCO)

Fifteenth Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms
23–25 March 2021

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA - to be adapted to online meeting format

1. OPENING

- 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS
- 1.2 DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE IOC ASSEMBLY

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
- 2.2 DESIGNATION OF RAPPORTEUR

3. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE IOC HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM PROGRAMME AND THE IPHAB STRATEGY

4. HABP DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

- 4.1 CHAIR IPHAB AND TECHNICAL SECRETARY'S SUMMARY REPORT (on activities, implementation of IPHAB-XIV decisions, and recommendations of IPHAB groups)
- 4.1. REGIONAL HAB WORKING GROUPS
- 4.2. IPHAB XIV TASK TEAMS
- 4.3. WORKSHOPS CALLED FOR BY IPHAB XIV
- 4.4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

5. MAJOR ONGOING AND EMERGING ISSUES REQUIRING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION (INCLUDING INTERACTION WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES AND ORGANIZATIONS)

[This agenda item will be organized as a series of panels with a potential outcome of new recommendations or decisions:]

- 5.1 Global Assessment of HAB Events
- 5.2 The joint IOC and SCOR Global HAB Research Programme
- 5.3 Ciguatera, a strategy for improved research and management
- 5.4 Capacity building
- 5.5 Formulation/endorsement of specific objectives for Regional HAB Working Groups
- 5.6 etc...

6. REVIEW AND FINALIZATION OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS OF IPHAB-XV

7. WORKPLAN 2022–2023 INCLUDING OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES AND NEEDS

8. OPERATION OF THE IPHAB
9. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR
10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
11. ADOPTION OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
12. CLOSURE