IOC Circular Letter No. 2364
(Available in English only)

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16 November 2010

To: Members of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB)
IOC Member States Action Addressees;

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

Subject: Tenth Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB-X), UNESCO, Paris, 12–14 April 2011

Madam/Sir,

On behalf of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) I have the pleasure in inviting you, in your capacity as representative of your country, to take part in IPHAB-X, which will be held from 12 to 14 April 2011, at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France.

The Panel was formed in accordance with Resolution XVI-4, adopted by the Sixteenth Session of the IOC Assembly (March 1991). At its Twenty-fifth Session (June 2009), the IOC Assembly decided to convene a tenth session of the IPHAB in order to maintain and accelerate momentum in the development and implementation of the HAB Programme (Resolution XXV-10).

Resolution XXV.10 and the Terms of Reference of the IPHAB, are enclosed herewith.

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

.../...
For those Member States who have not already (as a response to IOC Circular Letter 1323 of 12 November 1991) provided the Executive Secretary, IOC with a letter of intention to participate actively in the HAB Programme as well as help provide adequate support and resources, we would in particular want to bring attention to the composition of the IPHAB as in Annex of Resolution XVI-4 (revised):

"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, who did not provide the Executive Secretary, IOC with a letter of interest and a nomination of their representative to the IPHAB, are hereby invited to do so.

Member States who wish to change their nomination for the IPHAB are invited to inform the Executive Secretary, IOC accordingly.

It is crucial to the effectiveness of the IPHAB Intergovernmental Panel that the representatives to be nominated do have responsibilities for national HAB science or management activities, and that their seats on the Panel are acknowledged at the appropriate national level. It is through the nominations for IPHAB that Member States decides how strong and visible the Panel gets.

We also want to bring to your attention section 3 of the Annex to Resolution XVI-4 on the organization of the sessions and especially its paragraph 3.2. In accordance with the name of the IPHAB, it is intergovernmental and the meeting will be considered as a UNESCO category II. Members of the IPHAB participating in the capacity of national representatives are expected to support their travel and per diem expenses from national sources.

IPHAB Sessions will be conducted and documentation be furnished in English. Reports of the Session will be prepared in English and in other working languages of the IOC as appropriate and required. The draft Provisional Agenda is attached. The Provisional Agenda and other documents for the Session will be sent to Members of the IPHAB in due time, and will also be available at the IPHAB home page at http://ioc.unesco.org/hab/IPHABX.htm

The major foci of the Tenth Session of IPHAB are tentatively:

1. **Formulation/endorsement of specific objectives for Regional HAB Working Groups:** IPHAB’s Regional HAB Working Groups are a critical link to member states and can serve to highlight international priorities for research, capacity building, data, communications, and other technical support required to prevent, control or mitigate HABs. Each Regional HAB Working Group will report on the priorities for its region and IPHAB will seek to strengthen regional HAB Programme components though formulation and endorsement of specific objectives for regional activities based upon this input from Regional HAB Working Groups.

2. **Capacity building:** The aim of IPHAB capacity building activities is to strengthen the capacity of governments and agencies to monitor and manage harmful algal events and to enhance the research capacity to deliver better forecasting tools and mitigation techniques. Based on the strategic plan for capacity building adopted by the Sixth Session of the Panel, and input from the Regional HAB Working Groups, the IPHAB will assess progress and identify actions to be taken.
3. The GEOHAB Research Programme: GEOHAB is established as an international research framework to facilitate and coordinate research that will deliver enhanced basic understanding of harmful algal ecology and thereby better and more operational modelling and forecasting tools. The IPHAB will assess advances in GEOHAB implementation, assess research needs of member states primarily through the Regional HAB Working Groups and identify IPHAB assistance required. With an anticipated sunset of GEOHAB in 2013 the Panel will assess the need for and focus of international led research beyond the current GEOHAB.

4. Harmful Algae and Human Health: The IPHAB has a Task Team working with incompatibilities in national and regional regulations on biotoxins in relation to human health and management of shellfish resources. Based on a review of the inter-sessional activities of the Task Team, and the potential for a closer cooperation with UN agencies with mandate for human health and seafood safety issues, IPHAB will identify actions to be taken. Long-term effects of exposure to low levels of biotoxins are poorly understood. The issue has received increased attention in relation to drinking water supply from surface water and from desalination of sea water. A related concern of desalination plants is algal biomass that clogs filters and fouls membranes. The Panel will assess the need for and possible action of IPHAB regarding HABs and human health (including HABs and desalination).

6. The Harmful Algae Information System and the International Ocean Data Exchange: The integrated IOC/IPHAB-IODE Harmful Algae Information system (HAIS) is designed to compile data on harmful events, biogeography of harmful species, current monitoring and management systems worldwide, and to be reference point for the usage of names of causative species. The IPHAB will review status and priorities 2012–2013 including how to strengthen mechanisms for data submission and an assessment of the needs among governments and their agencies and Regional HAB Working Groups for inclusion of additional data.

7. HAB observations and their inclusion in GOOS Regional Alliances: IPHAB has a Task Team to act as the focal and coordination point of the IPHAB regarding interaction with the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), the Joint WMO-IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM), and the IOC Ocean Related Hazards Early Warning System with respect to HAB observations, forecasting and warning systems. IPHAB will assess progress and actions to be taken based on the input of member states and Regional HAB Working Groups.

8. Harmful algal events, coastal zone management and linkages with coastal eutrophication: IOC has activities on coastal zone management and ecological modelling of coastal ecosystems in relation to nutrient loading. HAB management and prevention is closely related to these broader areas of concern. IPHAB will review progress on development of NEWS2USE and alternative models and technical tools as recommended by IPHAB-IX, and discuss how it can promote the further implementation.

9. Harmful Algae and Global Change: The scientific focus on effects of climate and global change on HAB occurrence and impact has so far been limited. However, a recent review (Hallegraeff 2010) has stressed the need for time series analysis to better understand and track relationships between global change and the frequency and geographical distribution of HAB species. IPHAB will discuss the need for an internationally driven initiative to focus science and seek to identify possible modalities for such work if deemed necessary.

The Agenda is furthermore open to the priorities of Member States.

The Session will be organised as a series of discussion panels each of which we seek to have co-chaired by two IPHAB members with research and managerial background respectively.

Based on its discussions the IPHAB will recommend to the IOC Assembly a work plan for the IOC HAB Programme for 2012–2013.
We would be grateful to be informed as soon as possible, and preferably not later than 1 March 2011, of your Governments position with regard to:

1. Attendance at the Tenth Session of the IPHAB

2. Comments to the draft Agenda and suggestions for additional items requiring intergovernmental attention.

3. Candidates to chair the 7 discussions panel listed above.

4. Nominations for Chair and Vice-chair IPHAB

Thank you for your interest and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Wendy Watson-Wright
Executive Secretary, IOC
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO

Attachments: Resolution XXV-10
Resolution XVI-4 and IPHAB Terms of Reference
Draft Provisional Agenda (IOC/IPHAB-X/1 prov.)
Annex 1

Resolution XXV-10

NINTH SESSION OF THE IOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (IPHAB)

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission,

Having considered the Executive Summary Report of the 9th Session of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB) and the Work Plan for 2010–2011 adopted at the Session (IOC/IPHAB-IX/3),

Endorses the Executive Summary Report of IPHAB-IX and the three Recommendations therein, including the proposed HAB Work Plan 2010–2011, within the limits of the available resources in the Regular Programme and of the extrabudgetary resources identified for this purpose;

Decides to take action on the following IPHAB Recommendations:


Recommendation IPHAB-IX.3: Operation of the IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms

Encourages IOC Member States to assist in the mobilization of funding that will ensure the continuation of the programme staff as well as the implementation of the Work Plan;

Requests the IOC Executive Secretary to convene the 10th Session of the Panel prior to the 26th Session of the Assembly.
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.
Annex 3

1. OPENING

OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS. DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE IOC ASSEMBLY

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
DESIGNATION OF RAPPORTEUR

3. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE IOC HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM PROGRAMME

4. HABP DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD:
   4.1 CHAIR IPHAB AND TECHNICAL SECRETARY’S SUMMARY REPORT on activities and implementation of IPHAB-IX decisions
   4.2 High-level summary of major IPHAB accomplishments
   4.3 The IPHAB Strategy

5. NATIONAL STATEMENTS

Panel Members will report on their national priorities for international cooperation on HAB. The National Statements will be summarized by the IPHAB Chair and Vice-chair into an overview of national priorities 2012-2013.

6. MAJOR ISSUES REQUIRING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION (INCLUDING INTERACTION WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES AND ORGANIZATIONS)

The aim is to stimulate efforts at the regional level in HAB science and management, and coordination between the HAB community and other communities (e.g. GOOS, ICAM, coastal managers, end users etc). This agenda item will be organized as a series of Panels as tentatively specified in the Circular Letter for IPHAB-X..

7. OTHER RELEVANT ITEMS

The Panel will discuss any other proposal for activities.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE IPHAB, OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES AND NEEDS - WORKPLAN 2012–2013

9. OPERATION OF THE IPHAB
10. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12. ADOPTION OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RESOLUTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

13. CLOSURE