**Action Paper**

**Version 3 (final)**

**This document was prepared in English and machine-translated into French, Spanish and Russian. We apologize for any errors in the translation**

This document will be the main working document for the 8th Session of the IOCAFRICA. It includes (i) the draft introductory text that will be used for the summary report of the Meeting; (ii) (in yellow) the proposed actions requested from the Committee.

Participants in the Session are requested to carefully read this document as well as other working documents.

Draft decisions and recommendations are also included in this document.

Full information and working documents are available from

<https://oceanexpert.org/event/4677>

For easy reference paragraphs have been numbered. Participants are invited to refer to paragraph numbers when submitting comments, suggestions or questions prior or during the IOCAFRICA-VIII Session.

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# 1. OPENING

1. The Session was opened by the IOAFRICA Chair **Prof Kaudio AFFIAN**. He welcomed the participants to the Eighth Session of the IOCAFRICA.
2. In his opening address the Chair ….[to be added after presentation]
3. In his opening words, **Dr. James Mwaluma**, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) Ag. Chief Executive Officer ….[to be added after presentation]
4. In his opening words, **Prof. Amr Zakaria Hamouda**, IOC Vice Chairperson (Group 5). ….[to be added after presentation]
5. In her opening words, **Ms. Lucy Obungu on behalf of Ms. Betsy Muthoni Njagi**, Principal Secretary for the State Department for Blue Economy and Fisheries, Kenya ….[to be added after presentation]
6. In his opening words, **Mr Vidar Helgesen**, IOC Executive Secretary ….[to be added after presentation]
7. In his opening words, ~~Hon. Ali Hassan Joho, Cabinet Secretary,~~ Ministry of Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs ….[to be added after presentation]

# 2. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

## 2.1 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The Member States were invited by the Technical Secretary, **Mr Ibukun Adewumi**, to review and adopt the provisional agenda (Document IOCAFRICA-VIII/1 prov[.](https://iode.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=27674)) available from the website on <https://oceanexpert.org/document/36447>
2. The Member States were requested to note that all working documents were made available only as on-line documents. Any new items or issues proposed by the Meeting were noted here and discussed either under the related Agenda Item or under Agenda item 5.5 (Any other business).
3. Proposed: **The Sub-Commission adopted** the agenda.

## 2.2 DESIGNATION OF A RAPPORTEUR

1. **Prof AFFIAN** invited the Member States to elect a Rapporteur for the Session. It was recalled that for the past four sessions, the Secretariat was tasked to identify rapporteurs for the meeting.
2. Proposed**:** **The Sub-Commission**, **acknowledging** the importance of accurate and timely reporting of the session’s proceedings, and recognizing Kenya as the host country of the Eighth Session, **invited** the delegation of Kenya to nominate a Rapporteur for the meeting. The Secretariat and Co-Chairs were **requested** to provide support in finalizing the report of the session.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF SESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS

1. Pursuant to Rule of Procedure 12 of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), which provides for the establishment of sessional working groups to assist in the conduct of business, the Chair, informed the Member States that sessional working groups may be established to examine specific technical or strategic issues in greater depth than is possible in plenary discussions.
2. The Chair recalled that, based on the programme structure and thematic priorities of IOCAFRICA, the following sessional working groups were proposed:

## Sessional Working Group on Ocean Observations and Monitoring (**chaired by Dr. Suzan Elgharabawy)**

## Sessional Working Group on Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments (**Chaired by Prof.Zacharie Sohou)**

## Sessional Working Group on Ocean Data and Information Management (**chaired by Ms. Candida Sete**)

## Sessional Working Group on Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization (**chaired by Mr. Justin Ahanhanzo**)

1. The Technical Secretary introduced the Draft Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Sessional Working Groups (document [IOCAFRICA-VIII/2.3.Doc(1)](https://oceanexpert.org/document/36241)), which had been prepared by the Secretariat to provide a standardized approach and clarify the roles, responsibilities, and modalities for sessional working groups operating under the authority of the Sub-Commission.
2. Mr Adewumi referred to the Guidelines for Sessional Working Group Reporting (document [IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.Doc(1)](https://oceanexpert.org/document/36509)), which had been prepared by the Secretariat to assist each working group in developing consistent and actionable contributions to the IOCAFRICA Work Plan. He also referred to the complementary Sessional Working Group Guidance Note ([IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.1.Doc(1),](https://oceanexpert.org/document/36510) [IOCAFRICS-VIII/5.2.2.Doc(1)](https://oceanexpert.org/document/36511), [IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.3.Doc(1)](https://oceanexpert.org/document/36512), and [IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.4.Doc(1)](https://oceanexpert.org/document/36516)), which was made available to help facilitators structure the discussions, and ensure that proposed actions are responsive to Member State priorities and regional needs.
3. He emphasized that the outputs of each sessional working group should provide a clear foundation for developing the 2026–2027 programme and budget, aligned with IOCAFRICA’s six functional areas and strategic directions, including support for the Ocean Decade, the revitalization of regional data and observation systems, and the advancement of science-policy interfaces.

## Member States were reminded that they had been invited to propose additional sessional working groups prior to the Session, and the Technical Secretary welcomed any new proposals for consideration by the Sub-Commission.

## In line with IOC procedures and the draft guidelines, each sessional working group will designate a Chair, who will be responsible for coordinating discussions, compiling outcomes, and reporting back to plenary during the appropriate agenda item.

## It was proposed that the sessional working group meetings be held during the lunch breaks on Wednesday and Thursday, with adjustments to the session timetable made as necessary and agreed by the Sub-Commission.

## The outcomes of these working groups, including identified priorities, proposed actions, and draft elements for inclusion in the IOCAFRICA Work Plan 2026–2027, will be presented under their respective sub-items of agenda 5.2.

1. Proposed: **The Sub-Commission adopted** the agenda.

## 2.4 SESSION TIMETABLE AND DOCUMENTATION

1. **Mr Ibukun Adewumi** invited Member States to review and adopt the Timetable (Document IOCAFRICA-VIII/2.1 Add.Prov. available from the website. He informed the Sub-Commission that plenary meetings would be held on Wednesday 07 May and Thursday 08 May, starting at 0930 until 1100 followed by a 30 min. break and then between 1130 and 1300. The afternoon session would start 1430 until 1600 followed by a 30 min. break and then continue until 1800. On Friday 14 March it was planned to complete the Session at 1300.
2. The IOCAFRICA Technical Secretary then reviewed the arrangements for the Session and presented the List of Documents available online throughthe OceanExpert web pages. He noted that the main working document for the Session would be the Action Paper, **Document IOCAFRICA-VIII//2** (this document).
3. He reminded the Member States that this Session had only 2 and a half days to deal with the substance of the meeting while the afternoon of the third day would be used to formally adopt the decisions and recommendations. Accordingly, there would be no time for extensive introductions of agenda items and participants were urged to carefully read the Action Paper and working documents in preparation for the Session.
4. All draft Recommendations and draft Decisions were included in the Action Paper and would be briefly reviewed during the concerned agenda item for final adoption during the final day of the Session.
5. Proposed**:** **The Member States adopted** the timetable for the Session

## 2.5 PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SESSION

1. Mr **Harrison Ongada, Chair, Local Organising Committee,** informed the Member States on rooms to be used for the sessional working groups as well as on practical arrangements for the Session.

# 3. INTERSESSIONAL REPORTS

## 3.1 STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

## This agenda item was introduced by **Prof Kouadio AFFIAN**, Chair, IOCAFRICA. He ---[to be added after speech]

## 3.2. REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL SECRETARY ON THE WORK

## ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE SUB-COMMISSION

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr Ibukun Adewumi**, Technical Secretary of the IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA). Mr. Adewumi opened the item with a compelling and visionary statement that underscored IOCAFRICA’s role as the preeminent intergovernmental mechanism for ocean science and governance coordination on the African continent. He reaffirmed the Sub-Commission’s commitment to advancing Africa’s ocean agenda in line with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), Africa’s Blue Economy Strategy, Agenda 2063, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).
2. Mr. Adewumi highlighted that the intersessional period from March 2023 to April 2025 marked a significant transformation in IOCAFRICA’s delivery model, institutional engagement, and visibility. Anchored by the launch and operationalization of **SEAWARD Africa**, IOCAFRICA has firmly positioned Africa as a global leader in ocean science co-design, regional coordination, and capacity development. The Technical Secretary noted that IOCAFRICA’s work reached over 500 stakeholders in more than 35 countries through diverse programming in ocean observations, data systems, climate resilience, early warning, ecosystem monitoring, capacity development, and societal engagement.
3. He emphasized that IOCAFRICA’s 2024–2025 programme (42 C/5) implementation is on track, with over 65% of the regular programme budget disbursed as of 28 April 2025. He commended the catalytic role played by Member States and development partners—including the Government of Flanders, NORAD, and national institutions—in expanding the Sub-Commission’s impact footprint. Beyond the regular budget, IOCAFRICA mobilized co-financing and in-kind support exceeding USD 1.5 million to deliver high-priority initiatives.
4. Key achievements showcased by Mr. Adewumi included:

* The integration of over 4 African institutions into digital data systems and ODIS nodes, advancing Africa’s interoperability within global data ecosystems;
* The strengthening of ocean observing capacity under GOOS-Africa and GLOSS, including technical reviews of tide gauges and expedition support for over 25 African researchers;
* The development and launch of the Africa Climate Hazard Dashboard under the ECRAMME initiative, supporting national adaptation planning and AU-led resilience frameworks;
* The endorsement of SEAWARD Africa as a continental Decade Action coordinating Africa’s contribution to the UN Ocean Decade, including 15 shortlisted actions;
* Training and mentoring of more than 180 ECOPs through blended courses, international fellowships, and regional training platforms;
* Advancing African visibility in global fora including COP28, ARFSD-11, IPCC AR7 processes, and UNOC-3 preparations;
* Implementation of ocean literacy initiatives in schools, marine biosphere reserves, and religious institutions, with toolkits translated into Kiswahili and Arabic.

1. Mr. Adewumi also drew attention to the operational resilience demonstrated by IOCAFRICA despite staffing constraints, noting the Secretariat’s effective coordination with UNESCO, national counterparts, and intergovernmental processes. He cited the successful reorganization and digital upgrade of the IOCAFRICA and ODINAFRICA websites, and the expansion of the African Marine Training Platform.
2. Due to time limitations, Mr. Adewumi invited the Sub-Commission and all Member States to consult the three background documents prepared under Agenda Item 3.2, which provide a more comprehensive and detailed account of all activities, partnerships, financial implementation, and policy contributions:

* **IOCAFRICA-VIII/3.2.Doc(1):** Report of the Technical Secretary on the Work Accomplished Since the Seventh Session (March 2023–April 2025);
* **IOCAFRICA-VIII/3.2.Doc(2):** Report on Budget Implementation (42 C/5) as at 31 February and 28 April 2025;
* **IOCAFRICA-VIII/3.2.Add(1):** Supplementary Report on Contributions to the IOC Assembly Since its Thirty-First Session (March 2023–May 2025).

1. He urged delegates to carefully review these documents, which are structured by thematic component and aligned with Africa’s priorities under Agenda 2063, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy, and the Ocean Decade. They represent the Sub-Commission’s continued leadership in advancing a data-driven, inclusive, and policy-relevant approach to sustainable ocean governance in Africa.
2. Proposed: **The Sub-Commission noted with satisfaction** the progress with implementation of the IOCAFRICA-VII decisions and recommendations.
3. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **took note** of the report of the Technical Secretary and **commend the Secretariat** for the quality, scope, and strategic direction of programme implementation during the reporting period;
4. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **endorsed** the continued implementation of IOCAFRICA’s work programme in alignment with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), Agenda 2063, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, and the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap;
5. Proposed: The Sub-Commission i**nvited** development partners and intergovernmental organizations to support IOCAFRICA’s expanding mandate through co-financing, joint programming, and technical collaboration.

***COMMENTS****: Egypt-*Egypt commended Mr. Ibukun but noted that the documents presented are not technical in nature. They do not clearly outline what has been done or what needs to be done. The report lacks essential data, such as ecosystem information, budget details, progress tracking, and specific site information, all of which are necessary for effective monitoring. There is also redundancy, with the term "ECOP" being mentioned multiple times. While various activities, such as those by WIOMSA and OceanX, have been highlighted for their contribution to IOC Africa, the financial information, particularly regarding the budget status, is unclear. Some sections in the summary are not addressed in the report. It is recommended that the report be rewritten into a clear, technical public document, with each project clearly defined, including budget, member state coverage, outputs, and contributions to Africa. Additionally, the report should be more quantitative, detailing the specific contributions of each project in Africa.

Senegal-Senegal commended Mr. Ibukun for his contributions. However, it noted that many projects carried out under the IOC framework are not adequately reflected in the current report that will make way to upcoming UNOC. Egypt supported this observation and emphasized the need to enhance Africa’s visibility in the report. Both countries recommended a review of the report to clearly highlight the contributions of individual projects across Africa, which is essential for building a stronger case for increased funding.

South Africa- The meeting acknowledged that IOC-Africa is currently operating with limited staff and under significant budgetary constraints. Despite these challenges, Mr. Ibukun and his team were commended for their commendable efforts. It was emphasized that all implemented activities should be thoroughly reported. Additionally, member states were encouraged to contribute to the preparation and production of these reports.

Cameroon-what is the link between OPERA project and IOC-africa or collaboration. Reports-She observed that essential activities were captured that are ongoing. Regarding IOC groups-is there a fixed number? Suggested that member states to appreciate the work of the IOC Africa chairman. [Reaction]-The chair overlooks the distribution among the groups to ensure equity

Response by Mr. Ibukun-Mr. Ibukun noted that working documents are shared in advance of meetings to give members ample time to review and prepare responses. He highlighted that document ***IOCAFRICA-VIII/3.2.Doc(2)*** contains detailed information on budget allocations and urged members to thoroughly read the provided materials, as they address most of the concerns raised.

Vice chair Group A seconded the secretary’s comment that the member states need to have a more look at the provided reports.

The Chair emphasized on the need to read and understand the documents in more detail to ensure in upcoming UNOC Africa can be represented as one voice. All the comments will be taken into account and addressed accordingly.

DRC-Requests the secretariat to leave documents open and allow members states time to comment

Kenya-suggests that member state should actively help the secretariat to improve the reports prior the meeting

### 3.3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN UNESCO AND IOC AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO IOCAFRICA

### 3.3.1 Report of the Executive Secretary on the Implementation of 42 C/5 Programme of Work (2022–2024)

1. This Agenda was introduced by Mr **Vidar Helgesen,** Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO). In his presentation, Mr. Helgesen shared the progress made under the 42 C/5 Programme of Work (2022–2024), while also candidly addressing a number of financial and strategic challenges facing the Commission.
2. He noted the significant uncertainty created by the IOC’s reliance on UNESCO’s funding structure, particularly in light of potential future decisions by the United States regarding its continued participation in UNESCO. Mr. Helgesen clarified that while the United States could potentially withdraw from UNESCO, it may still retain membership within the IOC. However, such membership does not necessarily entail continued financial contributions, and this remains an area of unresolved risk.
3. In light of these uncertainties, Mr. Helgesen emphasized the critical need to enhance financial transparency and accountability. He acknowledged growing interest from Member States in understanding the flow and utilization of resources and assured the Sub-Commission that efforts are underway to improve the clarity and accessibility of financial reporting.
4. He reiterated that programming decisions and oversight remain under the full authority of the IOC Assembly. As such, the Executive Secretary strongly encouraged Member States to participate actively in Assembly processes, as this is the principal platform for shaping IOC’s strategic direction, work planning, and resource mobilization.
5. Mr. Helgesen reaffirmed the importance of results-based reporting, underscoring the value of the IOC’s Results-Based Management framework as a structured and transparent tool for planning and measuring programme delivery.
6. He further underscored Africa as a strategic priority for the Commission, noting with urgency the continued need to strengthen ocean observing systems and marine governance capabilities across the continent. He called for stronger African representation in global ocean forums and reaffirmed the IOC’s commitment to supporting Africa’s scientific and policy leadership in ocean affairs.
7. Mr. Helgesen also highlighted the importance of the IOC Scientific Report as a valuable tool for advocacy, communication, and resource mobilization. He encouraged Member States, particularly from Africa, to actively contribute to the development of the report to ensure regional perspectives are fully reflected.
8. In closing, Mr. Helgesen called on all Member States to reflect on how they can further engage with the work of the Commission, strengthen institutional alignment, and reinforce the IOC’s financial and operational stability in the years ahead.

He …. [to be added during the session] The financial uncertainty resulting from reliance on UNESCO funding—particularly from the United States—was addressed. It was clarified that while the U.S. may choose to withdraw from UNESCO, it can remain a member of the IOC; however, such membership does not guarantee continued financial contributions. The ongoing review of future funding remains unresolved. The need for member states to better understand budget allocations and expenditures was acknowledged, and steps are being taken to improve transparency in this regard. It was emphasized that IOC programming falls solely under the authority of the IOC Assembly, making the active participation of member states in the Assembly critically important. The discussion also touched on the value of regular reporting. The IOC’s distinct results framework provides a structured basis for developing specific plans and activities aligned with its mission. Africa was highlighted as a priority, with an urgent need to strengthen ocean observation systems and marine governance. Ensuring African representation in global forums was deemed essential. The IOC’s scientific report was recognized as an important advocacy tool that can help secure funding and support for initiatives that serve African interests. Member states were encouraged to actively contribute to the development and enrichment of this report. *[****comments****-1)* ***Senegal****-Provide for a mechanism in which member states can contribute more; suggested to have ways/opportunities in which there is more funding can be channelled towards ocean observation research equipments etc. 2)* ***South Africa****-called member states to bridge the gap that maybe caused by funding constraint to achieve our goal while commending IOC for placing Africa as a first priority. Chair called for member states to submit proposals for funding to financial institutions for BE]*

1. **South Africa**
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the report from the Executive Secretary, and established that the Executive Secretary still recognises the UN principle of “Priority Africa” is still being advanced within the IOC system to strengthen the capacities of Member States. The Sub-Commission thanked the Executive Secretary for informing the Session that there is a possibility of financial constraints to the IOC due to a possible withdrawal of USA from UNESCO/IOC.
3. Proposed: Sub-commission **encouraged** Member States to anticipate this potential impact and plan their activities and strategies accordingly with adjustment to budgetary resources. The Sub-Commission requested the Executive Secretary to ensure that Africa and the Adjacent Small Islands “feels” the least impact by appropriately allocating resources from regular budget.
4. Proposed: The Sub-Commission, calls upon Member States to actively address funding gaps that may hinder the achievement of shared ocean science and governance objectives, and further encourages the submission of well-aligned project proposals to national, regional, and international financing institutions to support blue economy development, acknowledging the IOC’s continued prioritization of Africa.
5. **Senegal**
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **encourages** the development of a dedicated mechanism that enables Member States to contribute additional resources in a structured and transparent manner, with the aim of strengthening ocean observation systems, acquiring essential research equipment, and enhancing regional scientific capacity.

## IOC and the Future of the Ocean: Consultation Process

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Ms. Alison Clausen**. She provided a reminder of the rationale and structure for this process as outlined in **IOC Resolution EC-57/2 on** Governance, Programming and Budgeting Matters of the Commission. She informed the Member States that the first phase of the consultation includes a survey of Member States, of which 65 responses have already been received, as well as interviews with key informants and a series of regional workshops. One of these regional workshops is being convened in parallel with the current session of IOCAFRICA.
2. Ms. Clausen presented key initial findings emerging from the consultation process and emphasized their relevance for future programme design, budgeting priorities, and ultimately for the development of the next iteration of the **IOC Medium-Term Strategy**. She encouraged active engagement of IOCAFRICA Member States in the dedicated regional workshop taking place during the session to ensure the specific perspectives, needs, and ambitions of Africa are fully reflected in the consultation process.
3. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission took note of the initial outcomes of the Phase I consultations for the “IOC and the Future of the Ocean” process and requested the Secretariat to ensure that the detailed analysis of African interests and priorities is fully reflected in the subsequent phases of the consultation and the formulation of the next IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029).

***Comments****: Cameroon-In which way will these activities enforce the IOC activities? R: member states to identify existing gaps and discuss on priority activities. Egypt-what are the priorities activities this year for IOCAFRICA?*

1. *Proposed: The Sub-Commission* ***took note*** *of the comments from Member States regarding the importance of ensuring that the IOC consultation process contributes directly to the reinforcement of IOC activities, including identifying specific priority actions for IOCAFRICA.*
2. *Proposed: The Sub-Commission* ***encouraged*** *Member States to actively participate in the ongoing consultation process, particularly the regional workshop held in parallel with this session, as a platform to identify key gaps and propose concrete priorities for implementation.*
3. *Proposed: 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.*

*Feedback- More detailed reporting will be provided during the side event session on Thur 8th allowing more discussion.*

## IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Ms. Fanny Douvere**. She recalled that at its **32nd session**, the IOC Assembly took note of the scope and process for developing an IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM) for the period 2024–2030, as presented in document **IOC/A-32/4.7.Doc(1)**. The Assembly requested the IOC Secretariat to collect input from Member States, IOC programmes and technical bodies, and other relevant stakeholders, and to present a revised draft of the Strategy to the 57th Session of the IOC Executive Council.
2. Ms. Douvere reported that the draft IOC-SOPM Strategy was submitted to the Executive Council as document [IOC/EC-57/4.3.Doc(1).Rev](https://www.mext.go.jp/content/20231106-mxt_koktou01-000038579_9.pdf#:~:text=document%20IOC/A%2D32/4.7.Doc(1)%20from%20Member%20States%20and%20IOC,and%20rolled%20out%20to%20better%20understand%20the), and that it was developed through a broad and inclusive consultative process. This included:

* A global survey distributed through IOC Circular Letter 2968;
* Written submissions from Member States, IOC programmes and regional bodies;
* Two online consultation meetings with Member States held in May 2024;
* A synthesis of contributions presented in IOC/INF-1537 and its Addendum.

1. She informed the Sub-Commission that the Executive Council, through Decision IOC/EC-57/4.3, established the IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management, with the mandate to finalize the Strategy and develop a supporting Implementation Plan.
2. The Working Group convened three times:

* 6 February 2025 (online) to provide initial feedback and structure;
* 4–6 March 2025 (in-person) to review and refine the Strategy and Implementation Plan;
* 10 April 2025 (online) to finalize the documents following two additional consultation rounds.

1. Ms. Douvere noted that the final draft of the IOC-SOPM Strategy and its 2025–2027 Implementation Plan reflects the collective priorities of Member States and outlines deliverables across all of IOC’s functions—observation, data and information, science, early warning, and capacity development—to support countries in implementing knowledge-based, inclusive, and sustainable ocean planning.
2. She explained that the Strategy defines SOPM as a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to the management of marine and coastal resources. It aims to bridge the gap between the IOC’s scientific expertise and its role in providing policy-relevant guidance to Member States. The Strategy is intended to serve as a unifying and harmonizing framework for IOC Programmes, equipping Member States with the tools and partnerships required to implement integrated, ecosystem-based, and participatory approaches to marine governance.
3. The Strategy places particular emphasis on *building institutional and technical capacity*, especially among national authorities and decision-makers responsible for marine and coastal planning. She further noted that Terms of Reference have been drafted for the continuation **of the IOC Working Group on SOPM**, with an extended mandate to track implementation progress, ensure alignment with the outcomes of the IOC and the Future of the Ocean Consultation Process, and guide the IOC’s contributions to national and regional planning efforts under the UN Ocean Decade framework.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the progress made in the development of the IOC-wide Strategy on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management (SOPM) and its 2025–2027 Implementation Plan, and **commended** the inclusive and consultative process that shaped its development.
5. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **acknowledged** the valuable contributions made by African experts and institutions to the IOC Working Group on SOPM and **encouraged** their continued participation in the Strategy’s implementation during the 2025–2030 period.
6. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **supported** the continuation of the IOC Working Group on Sustainable Ocean Planning and Management, with revised **Terms of Reference** to guide implementation, monitor progress, and ensure synergies with the outputs of the **IOC and the Future of the Ocean Consultation Process**.
7. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **endorsed** the use of the IOC-SOPM Strategy as a framework to guide and harmonize IOCAFRICA’s initiatives and activities in the field of ocean governance, and **called** for enhanced regional alignment with the Strategy to improve coherence and impact across IOC programmes.
8. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **encouraged Member States** to identify and engage relevant national authorities and government officials responsible for ocean planning and management, and to promote national-level uptake of the Strategy’s recommendations and tools.
9. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **invited Member States** to share best practices, policy innovations, and lessons learned in sustainable ocean planning and management, and to explore opportunities for resource mobilization to strengthen institutional and technical capacity across the region.
10. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the Secretariat** to continue supporting Member States through technical assistance, capacity development, and coordination mechanisms in the implementation of the Strategy, and to provide regular progress updates to the IOC Executive Council and Assembly.

## 3.3.4 Reports on IOC Programmes and Initiatives

### 3.3.4.1 International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme (IODE)

1. **This agenda item was introduced by Mr Peter Pissiersses**, who reaffirmed the centrality of the long-standing collaboration between the IODE Programme and IOCAFRICA in advancing ocean data and information systems across the African continent. He emphasized that while notable progress has been made, urgent strategic and structural challenges must be addressed if Africa is to fulfil its potential in the global ocean data ecosystem.
2. Mr Pissierssens drew attention to the increasing number of training activities targeting African early career professionals through the OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA). For 2025, nine training course proposals have been received from Regional Training Centres (RTCs) in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique, as well as from IOCAFRICA and the Decade Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) network. Five of these requested financial support for face-to-face delivery, amounting to approximately USD 152,000—exceeding the current OTGA budget. He noted that discussions are ongoing to mobilize additional resources in collaboration with IOCAFRICA and other partners. In this regard, he stressed that IOCAFRICA's support—in partner outreach, coordination, and, where possible, direct funding—will be crucial to unlocking the full potential of these efforts.
3. Mr Pissierssens also referred to recent recommendations from the 28th Session of the IODE Committee, which acknowledged the need for a targeted revitalization of National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs) in Africa through joint resource mobilization, sustained capacity-building, and alignment with national science policies. He cautioned, however, that many African NODCs remain underperforming due to limited institutional ownership, weak integration into national observation systems, and the lack of downstream services that connect data to end-user needs. He recommended adopting a full value-chain approach—beginning with end-user demands for products and services, and working backward to determine observation needs and the required data systems. He suggested that the emerging Systematic Oceanographic Planning and Management (SOPM) concept could provide a suitable framework for this shift.
4. Following this, **Mr Pissierssens** elaborated on the strategic rationale for strengthening IODE’s partnership with IOCAFRICA, emphasizing that the effectiveness of Africa’s contribution to global ocean knowledge systems depends on its ability to manage, share, and utilize marine data through a fully functional value chain. He reiterated IODE’s commitment to supporting the revitalization of Africa’s data infrastructure, not only through capacity-building and digital integration, but also through the design of long-term frameworks that align ocean data management with the service and product needs of policymakers, industry stakeholders, and coastal communities.
5. He presented several recent achievements: support for five African ECOPs to attend an OTGA course in Malta; joint delivery of a high-level training on FAIR Data Principles in Mombasa in partnership with CODATA and KEMFRI; and an upcoming eDNA training workshop in Cape Verde. IOCAFRICA has also facilitated technical support to African institutions to integrate their systems with the Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS), including installations in Namibia and Tunisia. These efforts, he noted, represent a strong step toward building digital connectivity between African NODCs and global marine data repositories.
6. Yet, he cautioned that these gains risk being undermined without long-term, systemic investment. He cited the NODC Health Check assessments, which revealed that many of the 18 African NODCs—originally supported under ODINAFRICA—have since lapsed into inactivity. He emphasized that revitalizing these centres must be part of a broader strategy to ensure data stewardship and service delivery throughout the marine knowledge value chain.
7. Mr Pissierssens also flagged several persistent constraints:

* Chronic underfunding of operational and training activities;
* Fragmented national coordination across ministries and institutions;
* Limited policy commitment to data governance;
* Technical gaps in data management, integration, and service delivery;
* Lack of interoperability with global platforms such as ODIS and OIH.

1. Looking ahead, he outlined six strategic priorities for 2025–2026:
2. Establish a structured, long-term capacity development framework beyond short-term training;
3. Strengthen NODC infrastructure and connect more centres to global data systems;
4. Enhance interoperability and scale up digital infrastructure across the region;
5. Secure sustainable financing through joint fundraising and strategic partnerships;
6. Improve NODC performance through tailored technical support and national policy alignment;
7. Promote the use of ocean data in decision-making by engaging coastal planners, the private sector, and community stakeholders.
8. **Proposed:** 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.
9. Proposed: The Sub-Commission and partners are **encouraged** to support the scaling-up of OTGA training activities in Africa through voluntary contributions, in-kind support, and collaboration with development partners.
10. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **acknowledged** the recommendations of the IODE-28 Session, and endorsed the joint IOCAFRICA–IODE commitment to strengthen ocean data management in Africa through targeted investment, capacity development, and policy integration.
11. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **requested** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat and IODE Office to develop a structured, long-term engagement strategy that ensures the full integration of African ocean data systems into global frameworks and enhances their contribution to regional and international decision-making.

### 3.3.4.2 IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB)

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Ms. Yun Sun on behalf of** **Mr Henrik Enevoldsen**. He reported on the deliberations of the Seventeenth Session of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms with emphasis on capacity development and data sharing. He recalled the establishment of an IOCAFRICA Group of Experts in 2016 on HAB and the associated Terms of Reference and noted that they were still relevant in the context of the global HAB Programme and the focus of IPHAB. Finally, he summarised the achievements to date of the IOC project on enhancing early warning systems for HABS in Africa, including activities undertaken within the two pilot countries, Namibia and Morocco and presented the activities foreseen for 2025-2026.
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **took note** of the outcomes of the Seventeenth Session of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB-XVII), with particular emphasis on capacity development and data sharing as key priorities for strengthening early warning and response systems for harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the region.
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the continued relevance of the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on HABs and its Terms of Reference in supporting regional coordination and alignment with the global HAB Programme and IPHAB priorities.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **acknowledged** the achievements of the IOC project on enhancing early warning systems for HABs in Africa, including pilot activities in Namibia and Morocco, and expressed support for the implementation of planned activities for 2025–2026.
5. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **encouraged** Member States to participate actively in HAB monitoring, data sharing, and early warning efforts, and to nominate national experts to the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on HABs.
6. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **called** for strengthened collaboration between the IOC Ocean Science Section and the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to ensure regional priorities and capacity needs are fully reflected in the design and implementation of global HAB initiatives.

**Comments:** During the session, several countries provided insightful input regarding the issue of HABs in African coastal waters: 1) **Nigeria** highlighted that HABs in marine coastal waters are primarily driven by terrestrial sources, emphasizing the need to mitigate and monitor upland and point-source pollution. It was suggested that ocean literacy efforts be expanded to address these upstream drivers. 2) **South Africa** questioned why only Morocco and Namibia are currently involved in the project. The response clarified that the selection of these two countries was based on their readiness to participate as assessed in 2021. However, there is potential for the program to expand to additional African nations in the future. South Africa also emphasized the importance of ocean literacy concerning HABs, noting that many African countries societies lack sufficient knowledge and awareness. Furthermore, South Africa reported the successful development of an algorithm for HAB EWS in the Benguela current, which could be adapted for use elsewhere. They also noted that South Africa has an operational EWS for HABs and expressed willingness to collaborate with other countries, particularly given that Madagascar is also facing similar challenges. 3) **Senegal** reported that HABs are a growing issue in West Africa, adversely affecting fisheries resources in the region’s coastal areas. 4) **The Chair** commended the active interest shown by Member States in addressing HABs, acknowledging the complexity of the issue and the limited research currently available within the African context. He encouraged countries to draw lessons from the experiences of Namibia, Morocco, and South Africa, which have already implemented functional HAB monitoring and mitigation systems.

1. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **invited** Member States to identify priority needs, challenges, and capacities related to HABs in their regions, with a view to informing the expansion of IOC’s HAB early warning activities in Africa during the 2025–2026 biennium;
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **requested** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to coordinate the revitalization of the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms, with updated Terms of Reference reflecting current regional priorities and operational needs;
3. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **encourages** the integration of upstream and terrestrial pollution sources into regional and national strategies for the prevention and mitigation of HABs, including through enhanced ocean literacy and stakeholder engagement;
4. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **called** for strengthened cooperation among Member States, including the exchange of technical tools, predictive models, and operational practices for HAB detection, forecasting, and response;
5. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **encouraged** Member States to draw lessons from the experiences of countries that have established functional HAB monitoring and mitigation systems, in order to strengthen national and regional approaches to HAB risk reduction.

### 3.3.4.3 IOC Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala**. He reported on the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Programme, that comprises of 4 Regional Tsunami Warning and Mitigations Systems - CARIBEEWS, IOTWMS, NEAMTWS and the PTWS, each coordinated by an Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG). Dr. Tummala highlighted the outcomes of the 2nd Global Tsunami Symposium that was organized in commemoration of the 20 years of the 2004 Indian Ocean (Aceh) Tsunami and the work being undertaken as part of the Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme. He provided a brief on the important progress during the reporting period specifically highlighting the conduct of Wave Exercises, Capacity Assessment Surveys, Capacity Development Workshops & Trainings and implementation of the Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme in different ICGs, especially those involving the IOCAFRICA Members States in the IOTWMS and NEAMTWS.
2. Dr. Tummala reported that IOCAFRICA Member States engaged actively in the work programme of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (IOTWMS). A training workshop on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for National Tsunami Warning Centres (NTWCs) and Disaster Management Organisations (DMOs) of the Western Indian Ocean member states was organised by the IOTWMS during 03-06 July 2023 that involved participants from Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa. The Indian Ocean Wave Exercise (IOWave23) involved the participation of IOCAFRICA Member States including Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania. During this exercise, Mauritius organised full scale community evacuations in the tsunami vulnerable villages of Quatre Soeurs and Riviere Des Galets. To promote community preparedness, National Tsunami Ready Focal Points (TRFPs) were nominated by Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa who met during the IOTWMS Working Group 3 Meeting organised on 21 August 2024 and reported on the status of Tsunami Ready activities within their countries. To date there are 48 Tsunami Ready Communities in the IOTWMS in India and Indonesia. To facilitate the implementation of Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme (TRRP) in Africa, a dedicated national training was organised by the IOTWSM and IOTIC in November 2023 in Seychelles that involved 40 participants from the national and local government agencies and communities. IOCAFRICA Member States Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and South Africa participated in the Capacity Assessment of Tsunami Preparedness in the Indian Ocean undertaken by the IOTWMS in 2024, that highlighted the strengths and capacity gaps in the end-to-end tsunami early warning and mitigation system. These countries from IOCAFRICA also participated in the ICG/IOTWMS XIV Session in Banten, Indonesia during 17 – 19 November, that came up with a work plan for the next intersessional period 2025-2026.
3. He also reported on the engagement of IOCAFRICA Member States in the activities of the North-Eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and Connected Seas (ICG/NEAMTWS). The ICG/NEAMTWS held its 19th session on 27–29 November 2024, at the UNESCO-IOC Headquarters in Paris, France that strong participation from 17 Member including Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Mr Amr Hamouda (Egypt) from the National Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (NIOF) was elected as vice Chairperson of ICG/NEAMTWS at the 18th Session on 6–8 February 2024, at the UNESCO-IOC Headquarters in Paris, France. There are currently six Tsunami Ready Recognised communities in NEAM. In a milestone achievement, the city of Alexandria emerged as the first city in Egypt and Africa to achieve UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Ready Recognition. El- Jadida, Morocco is close to achieving the second recognition in Africa. Both cities participated in the regional NEAMWAVE 23 exercise conducted between 6-7 November in 2023. It was highlighted that the support of the UNESCO -IOC CoastWAVE European Commission DG ECH funded project has been instrumental in driving and promoting the Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme in the NEAM region. Egypt and Morocco continue to be involved in Phase II of the new CoastWAVE Project (CoastWAVE 2.0) ‘Scaling-Up and Strengthening the Resilience of Coastal Communities in the North-Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Regions to the Impact of Tsunamis and Other Sea Level-Related Coastal Hazards’ on 1 July 2024 and its kick-off workshop on 6 November 2024. New communities have been identified to implement the project activities in Egypt and Morocco. Egypt participated in the side event on Coastal Horizons: Pathways and Actions to Strengthen Resilience to Coastal Hazards, 27 June 2024 at the IOC Executive Council (EC-57). Two key recommendations at the 19th Session of ICG/NEAMTW for Africa include (i) encouraging Morocco (El Jadida) to finalize their efforts (on the establishment of the National Tsunami Ready Board) to complete the Tsunami Ready Recognition process and application and (ii) increase the availability of seismic and sea level data in the North of Africa through agreements with Member States and with the institutions in charge of the management of the monitoring networks.Noting with appreciation the strong engagement of IOCAFRICA Member States in the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Programme through the IOTWMS and the NEAMTWS through the Wave Exercises, Capacity Assessment Surveys and Capacity Development Initiatives
4. Also noting the UN Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme (ODTP) and its two primary goals of 1) Improved accuracy and timelines of the tsunami warnings through enhance and new observing systems, and 2) 100% of at-risk Communities resilient and prepared for the tsunami threat by 2030
5. Also noting 2nd UNESCO-IOC Global Tsunami Symposium Banda Aceh Statement on Global Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System: Building Sustainability for the next decade through Transformation and Innovation (IOC/BRO/2025/1), UNESCO and its partners call on States and civil society to drastically step up their investments and efforts to strengthen Tsunami Early Warning Systems and achieve 100% of Tsunami Ready Communities across the world by 2030.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the strong engagement of IOCAFRICA Member States in the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Programme, including their active participation in the Indian Ocean and NEAMTWS tsunami warning systems, Indian Ocean Wave Exercise (IOWave23), and community preparedness initiatives.
7. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **congratulated** Egypt on achieving the first Tsunami Ready Recognized Community in Africa (Alexandria), and encouraged Morocco to finalize the recognition of El Jadida as the second.
8. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **took note** of the outcomes of IOWave23, the 2024 Capacity Assessment of Tsunami Preparedness, and the ICG/IOTWMS-XIV and ICG/NEAMTWS-XIX sessions, and encouraged Member States to integrate their recommendations into national tsunami preparedness strategies.
9. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **urged** Member States to strengthen tsunami observing systems, promote real-time seismic and sea level data sharing, and address observation gaps in the region.
10. Proposed: **The** Member States called on Member States to accelerate the implementation of the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme (TRRP) by establishing National Tsunami Ready Boards and identifying at-risk coastal communities for recognition.
11. Proposed: The Sub-Commission invited Member States to continue engaging with the Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme and regional initiatives such as CoastWAVE to enhance the resilience of vulnerable coastal communities and support the goal of 100% Tsunami Ready Communities by 2030.

**Comments:** 1) **Egypt**-commended the presenter on good work. 2) **Comoros**-inquired whether island states are actively involved in the program and benefit from its capacity-building opportunities, noting that such participation would be valuable for enhancing coastal resilience in these nations. **In response**, it was clarified that the training program includes a diverse group of participants, among them representatives from African island states during which participants engaged in the production of hazard maps while establishing networking connections that enable continued collaboration and communication, contributing to the goal of becoming Tsunami Ready.

**Comoros**

1. Proposed: The Sub-Commission encouraged the continued and enhanced inclusion of African island states in the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Programme, particularly in training and capacity-building activities that contribute to achieving Tsunami Ready recognition and long-term coastal resilience.

### 3.3.4.4 IOC Ocean Literacy Programme

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr Reduto Leal, Bernardo** on behalf of **Ms. Francesca Santoro**, Senior Programme Officer in charge of coordinating the Ocean Literacy activities at IOC.
2. Ms. Santoro presented a comprehensive overview of **global Ocean Literacy initiatives**, with a specific focus on their relevance and implementation in Africa. She highlighted that Ocean Literacy is a central cross-cutting enabler of the **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)**, and an essential component for building an informed and engaged society capable of supporting sustainable ocean action.
3. Key highlights shared with the Sub-Commission included:

* **Ocean Decade "Ocean Literacy With All" (OLWA) Programme**:  
  The **4th edition of the Ocean Literacy Dialogues** was held in **Tanzania (4–5 November 2023)** in cooperation with the UNESCO Dar es Salaam Field Office and IOCAFRICA. It was integrated into **the 2nd Marine Spatial Planning Forum for Africa** and coincided with the Marine Regions Forum 2023. The event featured strong participation from African countries including Mozambique, Morocco, South Africa, Kenya, Benin, Nigeria, Cape Verde, and Cameroon. It enabled direct interaction between Ocean Literacy experts, scientists, and policymakers.
* **Endorsed African OLWA Projects:**
  + **Cape Verde**: A national public-private partnership coordinated by the Ministry of Maritime Economy aims to institutionalize ocean literacy across education systems, including training civil society, academia, and religious institutions, and proposes dedicated legislation.
  + **Nigeria**: The **Atlantic Maritime Academy** coordinates the **African Youths Sustainable Ocean Campaign (AYSOC)**—a multi-country initiative raising awareness among youth in the Gulf of Guinea about the ocean’s role in sustainable development and climate resilience, including marine litter club creation in secondary schools.
* **SEA BEYOND Project**:  
  Reaching over 35,000 students in 56 countries, the project supports educational innovation through school initiatives, including the **SEA BEYOND Ocean Literacy Centre** launched on **San Servolo Island (2025)** as a global hub for immersive ocean learning.
* **Blue Schools Network**:  
  With more than 2,000 schools and over 300,000 students engaged across 60 countries, the programme supports national-level development of Blue Schools in **Angola, South Africa, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria**, and **Cape Verde** through monthly coordination and teacher training.
* **Youth Engagement**:  
  Youth-focused efforts include the **UN Ocean Decade ECOPs Network**, the **Youth4Ocean Forum**, and the **EU4Ocean Summer Schools**, with the most recent held in **Malmö (2024)** focusing on the Northern and Baltic Seas.
* **Ocean Literacy World Conference (Venice, 2024)**:  
  A milestone event that gathered 131 delegates from UNESCO Member States and resulted in the co-creation and endorsement of the **“Venice Declaration for Ocean Literacy in Action”**, a living document promoting cross-sectoral engagement and innovation in ocean education.
* **Blue Thread Initiative**:  
  Launched after the Venice Conference, it recognizes institutions and individuals advancing the values of the Venice Declaration. To date, **83 project applications** from **37 countries** are under review.
* **Policy Brief (EU4Ocean/DG MARE/SEArica)**:  
  Released at the **European Parliament (March 2025)**, the brief called for mainstreaming Ocean Literacy in national curricula. Key findings from a review of nine countries (including **South Africa** and **Seychelles**) noted a general absence of ocean-specific content in formal education systems, even in natural sciences.

1. Ms. Santoro underlined that while significant efforts are underway, **there is a need for stronger regional coordination in Africa** to support the mainstreaming of Ocean Literacy in formal and non-formal education systems, and to ensure the alignment of efforts across IOCAFRICA Member States. She recommended the **establishment of a regional Task Team on Ocean Literacy**, modelled after similar mechanisms in IOCARIBE and WESTPAC, to operate during the intersessional period and coordinate the development of a tailored Ocean Literacy framework for Africa.
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the progress of global Ocean Literacy initiatives under the IOC, and **acknowledged** the growing portfolio of Decade-endorsed projects and educational activities being implemented in Africa.
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **commended** the successful organization of the **4th Ocean Literacy Dialogue in Tanzania and the integration of Ocean Literacy into the Marine Spatial Planning Forum for Africa, and encouraged** continued collaboration across IOC programmes to strengthen policy-science-society linkages in marine governance.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **supported** the establishment of a **Regional working group on Ocean Literacy in Africa**, to operate during the 2025–2027 intersessional period, with the mandate to:

* Coordinate Ocean Literacy activities across IOCAFRICA Member States;
* Develop a regional Ocean Literacy action framework and implementation roadmap;
* Facilitate integration of Ocean Literacy into national education systems;
* Support the mobilization of partnerships and resources for Ocean Literacy actions aligned with the Ocean Decade.

1. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **invited Member States** to share national good practices, engage youth and education sectors, and collaborate in developing national **Blue Schools networks and Ocean Literacy strategies**, building on existing initiatives.
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the IOCAFRICA Secretariat**, in collaboration with the IOC Ocean Literacy working group, to support the establishment and operations of the Task Team, and to report on its progress at the Ninth Session of IOCAFRICA.

[**Comments:** 1) **South Africa** expressed strong appreciation for the presentation, emphasizing its deep commitment to ocean literacy. The country has successfully launched Blue Schools in partnership with other African nations and actively engages early learners through competitions under an established ocean literacy program. These activities include educational exposure to research vessels such as the SA Agulhas, providing students with first-hand insight into scientific work at sea. South Africa has also integrated marine science into its school curriculum and is investing in capacity building for teachers to ensure knowledge effectively reaches young learners. The country is open to extending its ocean literacy efforts to the broader African continent. **2) Nigeria** commended the Blue Schools network as a critical tool for advancing the Blue Economy. It was suggested that the initiative be expanded to include schools located within coastal communities, as this would directly empower local populations to enhance climate resilience and sustainable practices. **3)Comoros**, shared that through its MPAs framework, efforts are underway to empower both educators and academic institutions. The aim is to demonstrate the value of Blue Schools and to adopt best practices inspired by South Africa’s model. This initiative is expected to significantly benefit young learners across the islands. **4) Cameroon** raised an inquiry regarding the current and future participating countries in the Blue Schools initiative. It was noted that the framework is presently being finalized, which will guide implementation moving forward.

1. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the growing commitment of IOCAFRICA Member States to advance ocean literacy and encourages continued support for the development and implementation of Blue Schools, particularly in coastal and vulnerable communities;
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **supported** the establishment of an IOCAFRICA Regional Task Team on Ocean Literacy to coordinate efforts across the region, facilitate knowledge exchange, and guide the co-development of a regional ocean literacy strategy and implementation framework;
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **invited** Member States to integrate ocean science and marine education into national curricula and teacher training programmes, building on successful models and practices from within the region;
4. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **encouraged** the sharing of best practices and collaborative outreach across Member States, including youth-targeted initiatives, experiential learning activities (e.g., shipboard education), and engagement through marine protected areas and local institutions;
5. Proposed: The Sub-Commission further **encouraged** the expansion of the Blue Schools Network to cover a broader range of African countries, guided by a common framework currently under development and adapted to regional priorities and contexts.

### 3.3.2.5 Marine Spatial Planning Global Initiative (MSPGlobal)

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Ms. Michele Quesada da Silva**, IOC Programme Specialist and Coordinator of the MSPglobal Initiative. Ms. Quesada da Silva provided an overview of the ongoing and planned activities under the MSPglobal programme, highlighting its relevance and expansion across Africa.
2. She recalled that the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) has, for the past two decades, served as the leading international organization promoting Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) globally. Within the framework of the Joint Roadmap to Accelerate Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning Processes Worldwide (MSProadmap), updated in 2022, IOC has been implementing the MSPglobal Programme, composed of a core MSPglobal project co-funded by the European Commission and other associated projects.
3. Ms. Quesada da Silva reported that the second phase of MSPglobal (MSPglobal 2.0) commenced in July 2023 and will run through June 2025, with the third phase (MSPglobal 3.0) confirmed for 2025–2027 with the continued support of the European Union. Additional support is being provided by the Government of Sweden, with current funding secured through December 2026.
4. She highlighted key activities under MSPglobal 2.0 in Africa, particularly along the West African coast, where Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo have benefited from national-level activities including trainings, workshops, and the application of the new MSPglobal Rapid Assessment Methodology (RAM). The RAM culminates in the co-development of a national Action Plan to guide MSP processes. Similar activities will be rolled out in South Africa in 2025 and in a sixth African country in 2026.
5. Ms. Quesada da Silva emphasized that MSPglobal also promotes transboundary marine spatial planning to strengthen dialogue among Member States sharing sea basins. In this context, discussions are underway with IOCAFRICA and the Abidjan Convention Secretariat to establish a Technical Expert Group on MSP for West Africa. Further collaboration with GEF IW:LEARN and other partners is under negotiation to support regional trainings and workshops.
6. She recalled the successful organization of the 2nd MSPforum for Africa in the United Republic of Tanzania in November 2023, co-organized by IOC, IOCAFRICA, the African Union, and UNEP Regional Seas, which attracted 74 participants from 24 countries. Plans are underway for a 3rd edition of the MSPforum for Africa at the end of 2025 or early 2026.
7. In terms of knowledge development, Ms. Quesada da Silva informed the Sub-Commission that four MSP-related publications focused on Africa were developed between 2023 and 2025, addressing themes such as blue economy integration, poverty, gender considerations, and initial MSP planning processes. She noted that the MSPglobal website (www.mspglobal2030.org) remains a critical multilingual knowledge platform for accessing IOC publications and resources on MSP.
8. Looking ahead, she announced that two regional trainings for Africa are planned under MSPglobal 3.0 in 2026:

* Biodiversity-inclusive and Climate-smart MSP; and
* Ocean Observation and Data Management for MSP.

1. She also shared that upcoming global guidance documents on biodiversity, climate, data integration, and offshore wind energy engagement in MSP will be launched by mid-2025.
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission welcomed the update provided on the MSPglobal Programme and commended the IOC Secretariat for the progress made in advancing national and regional marine spatial planning processes in Africa.
3. Proposed: The Sub-Commission supported the establishment of a joint MSP Technical Expert Group for Western Africa under IOCAFRICA and the Abidjan Convention Secretariat. This group would not have an institutional status but would play an advisory role to support both organisations in delivering MSP activities, fostering synergies among different regional initiatives and projects, and building a community of regional MSP practitioners that can significantly contribute to national and regional policy making.
4. Proposed: The Sub-Commission welcomed the opportunity for further MSP trainings and forums, as well as the continued implementation of the MSPglobal Rapid Assessment Methodology (RAM) in additional African countries during the next period 2025–2027.
5. Proposed: The Sub-Commission encourages Member States to continue collaboration with regional economic communities, regional seas conventions, LME projects, and Ocean Decade initiatives and national mandated institutions to promote coherence, avoid duplication, and maximize the impact of marine spatial planning efforts across Africa.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission requested the Secretariat to ensure that future regional trainings under MSPglobal 3.0 are inclusive and address cross-cutting priorities such as biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, ocean data integration, and equitable blue economy development.

[**Comments:** Cameroon-How long will take to have national and regional trainings? South Africa-Noted the complexity of implementation of MSP; welcomed IOC to visit south Africa to learn about the current state of MSP in south Africa and lessons learnt. **Proposal 66**. Rephrase the name of the expert group from ‘*western Africa’* but to use the ocean terminology like ‘*South-East Atlantic’* to clearly define the geographic coverage of the expert group.

1. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **encouraged** the IOC Secretariat to engage with Member States to align the timing of national and regional MSP trainings with local implementation contexts and welcomes the invitation for IOC to undertake a learning visit to South Africa to understand the country’s experience, challenges, and lessons learned in MSP implementation;
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **supported** the proposal to rename the planned Technical Expert Group on Marine Spatial Planning from “Western Africa” to “South-East Atlantic” to better reflect the oceanographic scope and regional coverage of the initiative.
3. Proposed: The Sub-Commission welcomes the invitation extended to the IOC Secretariat to undertake a technical visit to 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.

## 3.4 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

## 3.4.1 Overview of National Ocean Programmes and Plans

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Ms. Rebecca Murito**, who noted that the Secretariat was tasked with compiling and presenting an overview of national ocean programmes and plans based on submissions received from IOCAFRICA Member States in response to IOC Circular Letter 3033. She emphasized that this exercise provides a baseline for assessing the state of ocean governance, institutional frameworks, Ocean Decade Action implementation, and strategic priorities across the region.
2. Ms. Murito explained that the Secretariat had received 2 submissions and had synthesized the inputs into a consolidated overview, highlighting key trends, innovations, gaps, and opportunities for cooperation. She encouraged countries that had not yet submitted reports to do so in future sessions, as this process is essential for promoting transparency, shared learning, and regional alignment.
3. She further noted that this agenda item serves as a foundation for future programme development, partner engagement, and the design of regional initiatives, and is critical for tracking Africa’s progress in advancing the objectives of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap, and continental frameworks such as the African Union Blue Economy Strategy.
4. **Proposed:** Member States **appreciated** the use of the reporting template to guide country presentations and encouraged its continued use as a tool for structured information sharing and alignment with IOCAFRICA and Ocean Decade frameworks.
5. **Proposed:** Member States **requested** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to compile a summary of national inputs, including trends, gaps, and priorities, and to integrate this into the Sub-Commission’s 2025–2027 programme planning and regional coordination efforts.
6. **Proposed:** Member States **emphasized** the need to build on this baseline to establish a more systematic mechanism for reporting on the status of national ocean science programmes, including through the use of dashboards, periodic surveys, and regional synthesis reports.
7. **Proposed:** Member States **encouraged** continued dialogue among countries and partners to strengthen regional collaboration and mutual support in implementing national ocean plans, Ocean Decade Actions, and AU-led blue economy initiatives. will reinforce IOCAFRICA’s role as a hub for coordination and cooperation in ocean science, sustainable blue economy development, and coastal and marine governance across Africa.

## 3.4.2 Partners Report on Ocean Science, Management and Blue Economy

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr. Ibukun Adewumi**, who emphasized the importance of deepening dialogue between IOCAFRICA and its partners to ensure that investments and activities in ocean science, governance, and the blue economy are coherent, strategically aligned, and grounded in Africa’s regional priorities. He noted that a wide range of institutions—including development agencies, research centres, regional economic communities, and international organizations—are implementing diverse and dynamic programmes in the ocean space across Africa. While these contributions are vital, many are taking place in parallel or in isolation, missing critical opportunities for synergy, shared learning, and coordinated delivery.
2. Mr. Adewumi stressed that this session serves as a timely opportunity to share what is new, what challenges exist, and what partnerships can be strengthened or initiated. He encouraged all participating organizations to highlight not only their achievements, but also the areas where IOCAFRICA can add value—whether through technical coordination, policy alignment, data sharing, or joint capacity development. He underlined that this exchange will help lay the groundwork for more coherent and impactful implementation of the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy, and the AU Blue Economy Strategy, while addressing the persistent gap between scientific research and blue economy development on the continent.
3. Mr Adewumi invited partners to take the floor to report on ocean-related activities …..[partners report and information to be added after the Session]
4. **Proposed:** Member States **welcomed** the Partner Tour de Table and appreciated the updates and forward-looking insights provided by partner organizations.
5. **Proposed:** Member States **encouraged** IOCAFRICA to use the outcomes of the Partner Report session to enhance coordination with development partners, regional organizations, and scientific institutions, and to integrate identified areas of collaboration into the Sub-Commission’s 2025–2027 work programme.
6. **Proposed:** Member States **called** on partners to continue sharing strategic information on their ocean-related activities in Africa and to explore structured modalities for co-designing and co-implementing projects that advance shared goals under the Ocean Decade and other relevant frameworks.
7. **Proposed:** Member States **requested** the Secretariat to prepare a summary of contributions shared under Agenda Item 3.4.2, including opportunities for partnership, and circulate this summary as a reference for future engagement.

## 3.4.3 Scientific Conference on Advancing the Blue Economy in Africa Report

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Ms. Candida Sete**. [to be added after the Session]
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission …

# 4. PROGRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS

## 4.1 IOCAFRICA STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2030

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Prof. Amr Hamouda** (IOC Vice Chair, Group C).
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission…

## 4.2 STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE OCEAN DATA AND INFORMATION NETWORK FOR AFRICA (IOCAFRICA-ODIN) 2022–2030

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr. John Ndarathi**, who presented the Strategic Plan for the IOCAFRICA-Ocean Data and Information Network (IOCAFRICA-ODIN) for the period 2022–2030. He recalled the historical importance of the ODINAFRICA initiative, implemented from 1989 to 2014 as part of the IOC’s International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) programme, which played a critical role in strengthening African marine data infrastructure, National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs), and regional cooperation.
2. Mr. Ndarathi emphasized that the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan represents a comprehensive framework to revitalize the legacy and functions of ODINAFRICA, aligning with the data needs of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and regional priorities articulated in the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap, AU Agenda 2063, and Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy).
3. The Strategic Plan sets out three interconnected strategicpriorities:
4. Establish IOCAFRICA-ODIN as the African regional node of the Ocean Information Hub (OIH) and Ocean Data and Information System (ODIS)
   * Develop interoperable, discoverable data platforms and databases;
   * Reactivate African OBIS nodes;
   * Operationalise the African Coastal and Marine Atlases (ACMA);
   * Foster public-private partnerships and integrate national data into global systems.
5. Ensure capacity development for ocean data management and use
   * Reactivate and strengthen National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs);
   * Conduct targeted trainings on metadata, data sharing, and standards;
   * Promote shared tools, guidelines, and infrastructure for secure, open access and quality-controlled data.
6. Establish and advance the development of a regional Digital Twin Ocean (DTO) for Africa
   * Support the development and deployment of analytical algorithms for big data;
   * Strengthen collaboration among marine, data, computer, and social scientists;
   * Improve storage, visualization, and forecasting capabilities for sustainable ocean management.
7. He further noted that the Strategic Plan includes a robust results-based framework with concrete targets and indicators for each priority, and a detailed implementation timeline covering the 2022–2030 period. These efforts are expected to enhance Africa’s capacity to generate, manage, and use ocean data for evidence-based decision-making, reporting on SDGs, climate and disaster resilience, and ecosystem-based marine governance.
8. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the presentation of the Strategic Plan for the IOCAFRICA-Ocean Data and Information Network (IOCAFRICA-ODIN), 2022–2030, and recognized its importance in revitalizing the former ODINAFRICA network as a core regional mechanism for coordinated ocean data and information management.
9. **Proposed**: 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;
* Operationalising the African Coastal and Marine Atlases (ACMA);
* Advancing the development of a DigitalTwin Ocean for Africa.

1. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested** the Secretariat, in cooperation with the IODE Project Office and OIH partners, to provide technical guidance and mobilize resources for the phased implementation of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan.
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **encouraged** Member States to designate and support active National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs), integrate their data systems with ODIS-compliant services, and contribute to IOCAFRICA-ODIN’s shared platforms and initiatives.
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **supported** the establishment of a Digital Twin Task Team under IOCAFRICA-ODIN to guide Africa’s contribution to the global Digital Twin Ocean community and enable predictive ocean management applications.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the Secretariat** to convene regular coordination meetings of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Steering Group and to present a report on progress, lessons learned, and partnerships at the Ninth Session of IOCAFRICA.

## 4.3 REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP FOR AFRICA (2021–2030)

1. This agenda item was jointly introduced by **Ms. Alison Clausen** and **Dr. Jacqueline Uku**.
2. Ms. Clausen provided an update on the global implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. She highlighted that the Decade has now reached its **mid-point**, with a rapidly expanding portfolio of endorsed Decade Actions spanning all ten Ocean Decade Challenges and demonstrating growing thematic and geographic diversity.
3. She drew attention to the outcomes of the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, particularly the **Barcelona Statement** and the accompanying report “Ambition, Action, Impact: A pathway for the Ocean Decade to 2030.” These provide a shared vision and renewed momentum for the second half of the Decade. She also underlined the role of the **Decade Advisory Board**, the growing number of **National Decade Committees**—now totaling 40, including several from Africa—and the strengthening of **decentralized coordination mechanisms**.
4. Ms. Clausen emphasized the need for **increased investment and political commitment** from Member States to sustain and scale up the work of the Decade Coordination Unit, IOC-led Decade Actions, and decentralized structures. She further highlighted the findings and recommendations of the **Mid-Term Evaluation** and the **IOC Management Response**, which outline a pathway for reinforcing delivery and impact over the next five years.
5. Dr. Jacqueline Uku presented the **Final Report of the First African Ocean Decade Taskforce (2022–2024)**. She recalled that the Taskforce, comprising 20 members—including institutional representatives from WIOMSA, AfDB, AUC, NORAD, and the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions—was established to support the implementation of the **Africa Ocean Decade Roadmap**.
6. She outlined key achievements of the Taskforce, notably:

* The development and successful launch of the **SEAWARD Africa Programme**, an umbrella Ocean Decade programme providing a continental framework to coordinate African Decade Actions;
* Effective **regional and global visibility** of Africa’s engagement in the Ocean Decade through representation in more than 20 major events;
* Establishment of key **strategic partnerships**, including with GEOMAR, OceanX, WIOMSA, and the Belmont Forum;
* Drafting of the **Terms of Reference for the Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for Africa**, to be hosted by IOCAFRICA, subsequently endorsed by the IOC Assembly;
* Organization of impactful events such as the **Africa Satellite Event** at the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference and regional webinars to mobilize stakeholders for Decade Action submissions.

1. She further outlined ongoing actions requiring follow-up by the next Taskforce cohort, including finalization of the SEAWARD Africa communications plan, strengthening partnerships, follow-up on initiatives such as the **OceanX Around Africa Expedition, FUTURO project,** and engagement in major upcoming events like **UNOC 2025** and the **WIOMSA Symposium.**
2. Dr. Uku emphasized that the continued success of the Taskforce depends on **active participation, institutional support,** and **adequate funding.** She called for stronger linkages with National Decade Committees, balanced regional representation, and sustained momentum through the operationalization of the DCO for Africa.
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **took note** of the progress made in the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development at the global level, including the findings of the **Mid-Term Evaluation** and the **IOC Management Response**, and **encouraged Member States** to align national policies and priorities with the Decade vision and the Barcelona Statement.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the achievements of the First African Ocean Decade Taskforce (2022–2024), including the successful launch of the **SEAWARD Africa Programme**, and **commended** the Taskforce members for their dedication and contribution to the Africa Ocean Decade Roadmap implementation.
5. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **reaffirmed its support** for the operationalization of the **Decade Coordination Office (DCO) for Africa** hosted within IOCAFRICA and **called upon Member States and partners** to provide the necessary political, financial, and technical support for its full establishment and functioning.
6. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the Secretariat** to ensure a smooth transition to the Second African Ocean Decade Taskforce, including documentation of lessons learned, continuity of partnerships, and alignment with SEAWARD Africa priorities.
7. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **invited** partners and Decade Coordination Structures to explore synergies between African initiatives and global Decade Programmes, and to ensure meaningful African participation in key platforms including the **2025 UN Ocean Conference** and other international fora.

## 4.4 REPORT ON GLOBAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM (GOOS-AFRICA)

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Prof. Kouadio Affian**, Chair of GOOS-AFRICA. He presented the comprehensive report on the achievements and ongoing developments of GOOS-AFRICA during the period April 2022 to April 2025, recalling its foundation as mandated by the **Pan-African Conference on Sustainable Integrated Coastal Management (PACSICOM)** and endorsed through ***IOC Assembly Resolutions XX-20, XX-21, and XX-22.***
2. Prof. Affian emphasized that **GOOS-AFRICA** remains a cornerstone for operational oceanography in Africa, dedicated to fostering a sustained, integrated observing system that supports climate services, ecosystem management, early warning systems, and sustainable ocean governance across the continent. Despite historical setbacks—including the cancellation of a dedicated professional post within UNESCO to coordinate GOOS-AFRICA—the Coordinating Committee, with strong support from the **African Union Commission,** has successfully revitalized the initiative.

**Key Milestones and Achievements**

1. **Strategic Partnership with GMES & Africa**  
   GOOS-AFRICA developed a formal collaboration with the **GMES & Africa Programme**, leading to a series of joint technical meetings:
   * **Kigali (October 2022):** Laid the foundation for coordinated priorities on observations, governance, and data sharing.
   * **Mombasa (September 2023):** Agreed on a detailed matrix of deliverables, including the establishment of a continental **inventory of ocean observation infrastructure,** drafting of a new strategic plan, and engagement with AUC departments and regional conventions.
   * **Sharm El-Sheikh (November 2023):** Refined a **Long-Term Vision,** Strategic Action Plan (2024–2026), and agreed on priorities for Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs), technology innovation, communication, and evaluation mechanisms.
2. **Operationalization of the GOOS-AFRICA Secretariat**  
   GOOS-AFRICA, with endorsement from stakeholders and the African Union, formally established its **Secretariat at CURAT** (Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Côte d’Ivoire). This Secretariat serves as a continental coordination hub, enabling structured engagement with national institutions and regional stakeholders.
3. **Development of a Three-Year Strategic Action Plan (2024–2026)**  
   The Plan prioritizes:
   * Infrastructure mapping and upgrades;
   * National and regional capacity development;
   * Engagement with the SEAWARD Africa Programme and Ocean Decade Roadmap;
   * Promotion of Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs);
   * Communication, education, and evaluation strategies;
   * Integration of innovation and low-cost technologies for observation.
4. **Governance Reform and Advisory Board Creation**  
   Recognizing the need for strategic continuity and institutional memory, a revised governance structure was proposed and endorsed. This includes:
   * A strengthened **GOOS-AFRICA Coordinating Committee**;
   * The establishment of an **Advisory Board** comprising former GOOS-AFRICA Chairs, LME project leaders, and heads of major African marine institutions to provide oversight, guidance, and support to Secretariat functions.
5. **Continental and Regional Initiatives**  
   GOOS-AFRICA coordinated and documented ocean observing efforts across key African LMEs:
   * **GCLME:** Ocean acidification (BIOTTA), Argo, summer schools, and fisheries assessments.
   * **Canary Current:** Glider surveys, CO₂ monitoring, satellite/in situ sensors, and artisanal fisheries tracking.
   * **Mediterranean/North Africa:** ODYSSEA project, CIESM cooperation, tide gauge networks, WestMED.
   * **Benguela Current:** BCC-led marine spatial planning and monitoring via MARISMA.
   * **Western Indian Ocean:** Contributions to IOGOOS, IndOOS, SWIOFP, and coastal surveillance systems.
6. **Training and Capacity Development**  
   GOOS-AFRICA delivered and planned several regional workshops at:
   * **CURAT (Côte d’Ivoire):** Remote sensing training;
   * **INRH (Morocco):** Modelling and forecasting;
   * **NIOF (Egypt):** Data acquisition, processing, and archiving. These were complemented by bilateral cooperation with China, including training in ocean color remote sensing, BGC-Argo floats, and ecological monitoring.
7. **Innovation and Technology Integration**  
   Ongoing efforts include:
   * Validation of low-cost sensors in partnership with GAIA;
   * Smart buoy donations from China;
   * Expansion of tide gauge networks;
   * Engagement with Copernicus and the Ocean Prediction DCC to support early warning and digital twin systems for Africa.
8. **Ocean Literacy and Community Engagement**  
   GOOS-AFRICA is preparing a full communications strategy, with plans to launch:
   * A **GOOS-AFRICA website and brand identity;**
   * Newsletters and social media platforms;
   * Outreach events and citizen science initiatives;
   * Collaborations with WIOMSA and faith-based groups to promote community awareness.
9. **International Collaboration**  
   GOOS-AFRICA continues to play an important role in:
   * The **OPERA project,** supporting ocean forecasting through three consortia;
   * The **MoNITOR project** with China;
   * Enhancing Africa’s visibility in the global ocean observing community
10. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **took note** of the comprehensive report on the revitalization and implementation of GOOS-AFRICA and **commended** the Coordinating Committee for advancing a continent-wide ocean observing agenda under challenging circumstances.
11. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the adoption of the **GOOS-AFRICA Strategic Action Plan (2024–2026)** and **requested the Secretariat,** in collaboration with GOOS-AFRICA and the African Union, to support its phased implementation.
12. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **supported** the proposed revised governance structure of GOOS-AFRICA, including the creation the Steering Committee and a high-level **Advisory Board** to guide long-term strategy, coordination, and fundraising.
13. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **encouraged Member States** to designate national GOOS focal points, actively support national and regional infrastructure development (e.g., tide gauges, EOVs), and strengthen participation in GOOS activities and training.
14. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **encouraged GOOS-AFRICA** to continue engagement with international initiatives including **OPERA, MoNITOR,** and the **Ocean Prediction DCC**, while reinforcing African ownership of operational data and forecasting tools.
15. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the Secretariat**, in collaboration with GOOS-AFRICA, to ensure that its activities are synergistically implemented with the **SEAWARD Africa Programme** and to present a progress report at the Ninth Session of IOCAFRICA.
16. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **invited partners and donors** to provide financial and technical support to GOOS-AFRICA’s operations, capacity building, infrastructure development, and innovation in ocean observing systems in Africa.

## 4.5 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IOCAFRICA OCEAN DATA AND INFORMATION WORKING GROUP

1. The agenda item was introduced by **Mr. John Ndarathi**, who presented the rationale for the establishment of the **IOCAFRICA Ocean Data and Information Working Group (IOCAFRICA-ODIN) Working Group** as a structured mechanism to guide, coordinate, and sustain the revitalized Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa.
2. He recalled that IOCAFRICA has a long and successful history in supporting ocean data and information management across the continent through the **ODINAFRICA initiative**, and emphasized that the evolving challenges and opportunities under the **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)** call for a renewed governance mechanism.
3. Mr. Ndarathi informed the Sub-Commission that the proposal aligns with the **February 2024 decision of the IODE Management Group**, which recommended the reactivation of regional Ocean Data and Information Networks (ODINs) as regional communities of practice to ensure inclusive participation, capacity development, and interoperability of data systems.
4. He stressed that the establishment of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Working Group is critical to realizing the goals of the **IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan (2022–2030)**, and to achieving alignment with regional and global frameworks such as:

* The **IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029)**;
* IOC Strategic Plan for Ocean Data and Information Management (2023–2029)
* The **African Union Agenda 2063**, **Blue Economy Strategy**, and **Africa Space Policy and Strategy**;
* The **Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap**.

1. He concluded by emphasizing the strategic importance of the Working Group in strengthening Africa’s position in the global ocean data landscape and ensuring a future-ready, inclusive, and sustainable data governance ecosystem across the continent.
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **endorsed** the establishment of the **IOCAFRICA Ocean Data and Information Working Group** (IOCAFRICA-ODIN Working Group) as the oversight mechanism to coordinate and guide the implementation of the IOCAFRICA-Ocean Data and Information Network Strategic Plan (2022–2030).
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the Secretariat**, in consultation with the IOCAFRICA Officers and IODE Secretariat, to finalize the **Terms of Reference** for the Working Group, including its objectives, membership, governance structure, and operational modalities.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **invited Member States** to nominate qualified national representatives from their National Oceanographic Data Centres (NODCs), marine-affiliated institutions, and relevant agencies to serve on the Working Group.
5. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **encouraged** the Working Group to promote integration with global and regional frameworks, including ODIS, and the Digital Twin Ocean, and to lead efforts on data interoperability, secure sharing, and digital innovation.
6. **Proposed**: The The Sub-Commission **requested the IOCAFRICA Secretariat** to facilitate the inaugural meeting of the Working Group, support the development of a regional work plan, and coordinate periodic reporting on implementation progress to the IOCAFRICA Officers and future Sub-Commission sessions.
7. **Proposed**: The Member States **invited partners and donors** to support the activities of the Working Group through technical and financial contributions, including in areas such as training, digital infrastructure, and stakeholder engagement.
8. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.5**

### **DRAFT DECISION IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.5**

**The Sub-Commission,**

**Recalling** the longstanding contribution of the Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa (ODINAFRICA) to ocean data governance and capacity development in the region,

**Acknowledging** the outcomes of the February 2024 meeting of the IODE Management Group, which called for the revitalization of Ocean Data and Information Networks (ODINs) as regional communities of practice under the framework of the Ocean Decade and IOC Strategic Plan for Ocean Data and Information Management (2023–2029),

**Recognizing** the role of IOCAFRICA in leading the revitalization process through the IOCAFRICA-Ocean Data and Information Network (IOCAFRICA-ODIN), and the strategic alignment of this initiative with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), Agenda 2063, the African Union Blue Economy Strategy, the Africa Space Policy and Strategy, and the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap,

**Noting** the growing importance of structured, interoperable, and secure ocean data systems to inform sustainable ocean governance, marine spatial planning, early warning systems, and climate adaptation strategies in Africa,

**Emphasizing** the need for a regional coordination mechanism to support the governance, oversight, and sustainability of ocean data initiatives across the continent,

### **Decides to:**

1. **Establish the IOCAFRICA Ocean Data and Information Working Group** (IOCAFRICA-ODIN Working Group) as the strategic oversight body to guide the development, implementation, and governance of the IOCAFRICA-Ocean Data and Information Network;
2. **Adopt the Terms of Reference** for the Working Group, to be finalized by the IOCAFRICA Officers in consultation with the IODE Secretariat and relevant stakeholders, outlining its mandate, composition, governance arrangements, and modalities of operation;
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.

## **ANNEX A to DRAFT DECISION IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.5**

### **Terms of Reference**

### **Background**

The revitalization of the Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa (ODINAFRICA), now positioned as **IOCAFRICA-ODIN**, has been strongly recommended by a series of regional consultations and endorsed by the February 2024 meeting of the IODE Management Group. The initiative is intended to strengthen Africa’s ocean data and information ecosystem in alignment with the **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030),** the **Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap,** and the **IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan (2022–2030).**

The establishment of a **dedicated Working Group** will ensure the structured governance, coordination, and implementation of the Strategic Plan’s three priority pillars:

1. Advancing a regional **Digital Twin Ocean**;
2. Enhancing the ODINAFRICA Data Portal as the African Regional Node for **ODIS**;
3. Promoting **capacity development** and stakeholder engagement for ocean data governance.

### **Objective**

The primary objective of the Working Group is to convene regional and global experts and institutions to:

* Coordinate and oversee the implementation of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan;
* Promote regional ownership and participation by Member States, academia, and stakeholders;
* Enhance Africa’s contribution to and benefits from the global ocean data ecosystem

### **Mandate and Key Functions**

The Working Group shall:

* Guide the translation of the IOCAFRICA-ODIN Strategic Plan into co-designed actions;
* Advise on resource mobilization, partnership development, and coordination with global frameworks;
* Promote harmonization of data sharing standards, access policies, and technical architecture;
* Expand multisectoral engagement, including indigenous knowledge holders, Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs), and private sector actors;
* Support training programmes, infrastructure development, and the creation of regional research and data hubs;
* Facilitate integration with the **Ocean Information Hub (OIH)**, **ODIS**, and **Digital Twin Ocean (DTO)** initiatives;
* Recommend strategies for open access, cloud-based data infrastructure, AI applications, and data security (e.g., blockchain)

### **Composition**

* The Working Group shall consist of up to **10 regional and international experts** in the areas of:
  + Ocean data and information management,
  + Ocean observation and forecasting,
  + Capacity development,
  + Climate and ocean health,
  + Digital technologies (DTOs, AI, cloud computing),
  + Policy, law, and governance.
* **Diversity and balance** in terms of geography, generation, gender, and institutional representation will be prioritized, including ECOPs.

### **Selection Process**

* Members will be selected by a **panel convened by the IOCAFRICA Chair and Vice-Chairs**, with technical support from the IOCAFRICA and IODE Secretariats.
* Selection will be based on expertise and demonstrated commitment to the objectives of IOCAFRICA-ODIN.
* Members will serve in a personal capacity for a **two-year term**, renewable once.
* Terms will be staggered to ensure continuity and institutional memory.

### **Chairperson and Secretariat**

* The Working Group will elect a **Chairperson** from among its members for a two-year term.
* The **IOCAFRICA Secretariat** will serve as the Secretariat to the Working Group, providing administrative, technical, and editorial support.

### **Working Modalities**

* The Working Group will meet at least **four times per year**, including **one in-person meeting**, subject to resource availability.
* Meetings may include invited external experts on specific themes, as agreed by consensus.
* Minutes will be documented by the Secretariat and shared with all members.
* The Working Group will report **annually** to the IOCAFRICA Officers and **biennially** to the full IOCAFRICA Session.
* A **consensus-based decision-making process** will be used.

### **Communication and Collaboration**

* The Working Group will utilize digital tools (e.g., email, virtual conferencing, collaborative platforms) to ensure effective communication and task execution.
* Clear task allocation and follow-up mechanisms will be implemented.

### **Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation**

* A results-based framework will be applied for tracking progress and impact.
* Annual reports will include achievements, challenges, recommendations, and updated action plans.

## 4.6 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IOCAFRICA OCEAN-CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr. Edwin Mwashinga**, who emphasized the growing urgency to strengthen regional coordination and scientific input on the ocean-climate nexus in Africa, given the continent’s increasing vulnerability and underrepresentation in global ocean-climate decision-making processes.
2. He noted that Africa’s marine and coastal ecosystems are facing escalating threats from ocean warming, acidification, sea-level rise, and deoxygenation, which have direct impacts on biodiversity, fisheries, food security, and coastal livelihoods. At the same time, the ocean is a key climate regulator—absorbing vast amounts of heat and CO₂—offering untapped potential for nature-based solutions such as blue carbon ecosystems, ocean-based mitigation, and adaptation measures.
3. Mr. Mwashinga recalled the call made in **Decision IOCAFRICA-VII/5.2** to enhance regional capacity for responding to climate-related ocean impacts. He emphasized that the establishment of an **IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group** is a strategic and technical response to the continent’s need for coordinated, science-based advice and policy engagement on ocean-related climate issues.
4. He further noted that the Working Group will support:

* Mainstreaming ocean priorities into climate policy frameworks such as NDCs, NAPs, and long-term low-emissions development strategies (LT-LEDS);
* Generating Africa-specific scientific guidance and policy briefs;
* Facilitating coherent participation in UNFCCC processes, including COPs, the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, and the Loss and Damage Fund;
* Enhancing access to international climate finance;
* Strengthening regional partnerships with IPCC, the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, the African Union Climate Change Strategy, and the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap.

1. The Working Group is designed as a multidisciplinary platform composed of up to 15 experts from across sectors and regions, supported by the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, and will deliver flagship reports, technical guidance, capacity-building activities, and strategic submissions to international forums.
2. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **endorsed** the establishment of the **IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group** as a dedicated mechanism to coordinate regional science-policy engagement, build institutional capacity, and promote the integration of ocean-based solutions in climate planning and finance across Africa.
3. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **endorsed the Terms of Reference** for the Working Group as outlined in document IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.6.Doc(1), including its objectives, scope, membership criteria, and reporting responsibilities.
4. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the IOCAFRICA Secretariat** to initiate the selection and appointment of up to 15 experts based on demonstrated expertise in ocean-climate science, blue carbon, coastal adaptation, marine policy, and climate finance, while ensuring generational, geographical, and gender balance.
5. **Proposed**: The Sub-Commission **requested the IOCAFRICA Secretariat** to provide technical and logistical support to the Working Group and to facilitate its participation in global and regional climate processes including the UNFCCC COP, IPCC working groups, and climate finance platforms.
6. **Proposed**: The Member States **invited Member States and partners** to support the Working Group through financial contributions, technical inputs, and collaboration, particularly in the development of guidance tools, capacity-building activities, and strategic publications.
7. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA/VIII/4.6**

**Draft Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.6**

**Recalling** Decision IOCAFRICA-VII/5.2 on the vulnerability of Africa and the Adjacent Island States to climate change and the call for enhanced capacity to respond to ocean-related impacts;

**Acknowledging** the critical role of the ocean in regulating the global climate system, and the emerging threats of ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation, and sea level rise to marine ecosystems and coastal communities in Africa;

**Recognizing** the growing integration of the ocean into global climate policy mechanisms, including the UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, the Global Stocktake, and the Loss and Damage Fund;

**Affirming** the relevance of regional frameworks such as the Africa Climate Change Strategy, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, in guiding ocean-climate action on the continent;

**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. **Endorses** 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.

Annex A to **Draft Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/Dec.4.6**

Terms of Reference for the IOCAFRICA Ocean-Climate Working Group

**Purpose**:

To provide expert advice, foster strategic partnerships, and facilitate the coordination and implementation of regional initiatives related to the ocean-climate nexus in support of IOCAFRICA Member States.

**Scope of Work**:

* Provide science-policy input on the ocean-climate nexus, particularly in relation to African contexts;
* Monitor and assess the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems;
* Support the integration of ocean-based actions in national and regional climate strategies;
* Contribute to regional and international policy processes through position papers, technical reports, and expert representation;
* Facilitate access to and mobilization of climate finance for ocean and coastal initiatives;
* Promote capacity development and exchange of best practices among Member States.

**Membership:**

* Composed of up to 15 experts drawn from diverse disciplines, sectors, and regions;
* Members shall be invited by the IOCAFRICA Secretariat based on their demonstrated expertise in ocean-climate science and policy, as well as their contributions to regional and international initiatives related to climate change, ocean governance, and sustainable development. The Secretariat will consult with relevant IOC programmes and partner institutions to ensure a balanced representation across geography, disciplines, and sectors. This approach ensures a targeted and strategic selection of members while minimizing procedural delays. Appointments shall be for a renewable two-year term, subject to performance and continued relevance to the Working Group’s objectives.
* Gender and generational balance shall be upheld in the composition.

**Governance:**

* Co-Chairs elected by Working Group members will lead activities and report to the IOCAFRICA Secretariat;
* The Secretariat will provide coordination, logistical support, and liaison with IOC and partner organisations;
* The Working Group will operate under a consensus-based decision-making process and may form thematic sub-groups as needed.

**Reporting**:

* The Working Group shall submit quarterly updates to the Secretariat and an annual report to the IOCAFRICA Officers;
* A comprehensive report shall be presented at each IOCAFRICA Session, outlining progress, challenges, and recommendations for future actions.

**Meetings**:

* Meetings will be held quarterly, with at least one physical meeting per year, subject to resource availability;
* Additional meetings may be convened ahead of major global or regional events.

## 4.7 REVITALISATION OF THE IOCAFRICA GROUP OF EXPERTS ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Prof. Zacharie Sohou**, who highlighted the growing need to revitalise the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) as a strategic response to the increasing frequency, severity, and spatial expansion of HABs across African marine and coastal waters. He emphasized that these events pose escalating risks to human health, marine biodiversity, fisheries, and economic livelihoods, especially in communities reliant on shellfish, aquaculture, and tourism.
2. Prof. Sohou recalled that the Group of Experts was initially formed in 2015 and held its first meeting in 2016, during which Terms of Reference were adopted to guide foundational assessments and capacity mapping. However, the group became inactive in the absence of dedicated coordination mechanisms, funding, and institutional follow-up.
3. He noted that the proposed revitalisation is aligned with IOC's Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap, the African Union Blue Economy Strategy, and the regional call for action echoed during the March 2025 meeting of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB). Prof Sohou underscored the opportunity for the revitalised group to serve as Africa’s principal mechanism for coordinating HAB monitoring, building institutional capacity, guiding national early warning and response frameworks, and ensuring consistent data contributions to global HAB repositories including HAEDAT and OBIS.
4. He introduced the revised Terms of Reference (IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.7.Inf.1), which reflect a broader scope of responsibilities and are designed to position the group as a multidisciplinary platform bridging science, policy, and regional partnerships.
5. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the initiative to revitalize the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), recognizing the increasing threat HABs pose to coastal ecosystems, food security, public health, and economic resilience in Africa.
6. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **endorsed** the updated Terms of Reference for the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on HABs as outlined in document IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.7.Inf.1, and requested the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to facilitate the reconstitution of the Group through a transparent and inclusive nomination process.
7. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **encouraged** the designation of national HAB focal points and the integration of HAB monitoring into national ocean science and coastal risk management programmes.
8. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **urged** enhanced collaboration with IOC-IPHAB, the HANA network, IAEA, regional fisheries bodies, and other relevant partners to support training, monitoring, data exchange, and coordinated response to HAB incidents.
9. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **requested** that the revitalised Group submit an annual update to the IOCAFRICA Officers and a biennial progress report to the Sub-Commission, outlining scientific contributions, data submissions, partnerships, and strategic priorities moving forward.
10. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/Dec.4.7**

**Draft Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/Dec.4.7**

The Sub-Commission**,**

**Recalling** the persistent and growing threat posed by Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) to marine ecosystems, fisheries, aquaculture, public health, and coastal economies across Africa;

**Recognizing** the foundational efforts undertaken by the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on HABs established in 2015 and the valuable contributions of the IOC-FAO Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), including the regional North African HAB network (HANA);

**Acknowledging** the outcomes of the IPHAB meeting held from 18 to 20 March 2025, which reinforced the importance of enhanced regional coordination and data contributions to global HAB monitoring systems;

**Affirming** the alignment of the proposed revitalised Group with the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), the Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap, the African Union Blue Economy Strategy, and Agenda 2063;

**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 transparent and inclusive 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 biennial progress report to the Sub-Commission, outlining achievements, lessons learned, and forward-looking priorities.

**Annex A to Draft Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/Dec.4.7**

Draft Terms of Reference for the IOCAFRICA Group of Experts on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

**1. Mandate:**  
The Group shall serve as a regional technical and advisory mechanism under IOCAFRICA, tasked with coordinating efforts to monitor, mitigate, and manage harmful algal blooms in Africa. It will support scientific exchange, policy guidance, training, and integration of HAB monitoring into national marine governance systems.

**2. Objectives:**

* To facilitate harmonized HAB monitoring, data collection, and reporting across Member States;
* To support capacity development in HAB detection, toxin analysis, and ecological forecasting;
* To promote integration of HAB risk assessment into marine spatial planning, fisheries, aquaculture, and public health frameworks;
* To enhance Africa’s participation in global HAB-related networks and assessments.

**3. Functions:**

* Develop and oversee the implementation of a biennial regional work plan;
* Serve as a platform for knowledge sharing and collaborative research;
* Produce technical guidance, policy briefs, and regional advisories on HAB response and management;
* Coordinate training and capacity development programmes with support from partners such as IPHAB, IAEA, and regional academic institutions;
* Ensure timely submission of data to IOC’s HAEDAT and OBIS platforms;
* Support the development of national HAB focal points and technical working groups.

**4. Composition:** The Group shall comprise up to 15 members nominated by Member States and selected based on expertise in marine ecology, toxicology, monitoring technologies, climate-ocean interactions, public health, or ocean governance. Geographic, gender, and generational balance will be ensured. Members will serve in their personal capacity for a renewable term of two years.

**5. Governance and Reporting:** The Group will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for two-year terms. It will meet at least once per year and provide:

* An annual progress report to IOCAFRICA Officers;
* A biennial report to the IOCAFRICA Sub-Commission;
* Contributions to IPHAB and IOC Global HAB assessments.

**6. Secretariat Support:** Administrative and technical support will be provided by the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, in close collaboration with the IOC Secretariat and IPHAB.

**7. Collaboration:** The Group will work in coordination with relevant IOC programmes (IPHAB, IODE, GOOS), the Ocean Decade, regional fisheries bodies, LMEs, academic networks, and civil society.

**8. Resource Mobilization:** The Group will assist IOCAFRICA in identifying and developing funding proposals, partnerships, and in-kind contributions to support implementation of its work plan and long-term sustainability.

## 4.8 PROPOSAL FOR OCEAN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR AFRICA PROGRAMME

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr Edwin Mwashinga**, who started by underscoring the urgent need for Africa to address increasing threats from ocean-related hazards—including storm surges, coastal erosion, tsunamis, and sea-level rise—through a dedicated regional initiative introduced this agenda item.
2. He continued by drawing attention to the increasing vulnerability of African coastal and island states to ocean-related hazards such as tsunamis, storm surges, sea-level rise, and coastal flooding. He emphasized that while considerable efforts have been made at the national level to strengthen meteorological and hydrological early warning systems, a critical gap remains in the integration of oceanographic components, which are essential for comprehensive multi-hazard early warning services.
3. He noted that the impacts of climate change, rapid coastal urbanization, and limited observational coverage have exacerbated the region’s exposure to marine hazards. To address these challenges, the proposed Ocean Early Warning System for Africa (OEWS-Africa) aims to establish a coordinated, fit-for-purpose, and continent-wide framework that integrates observation, forecasting, communication, and community preparedness. The initiative will build on existing IOC/UNESCO programmes and regional capacities, while leveraging the momentum of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).
4. Mr Mwashinga further explained that the OEWS-Africa proposal is designed to complement other continental frameworks such as the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS), the African Union Agenda 2063, the AIMS 2050 Strategy, and the UN “Early Warnings for All” initiative. It aims to promote regional integration, enhance ocean observation infrastructure, foster institutional partnerships, and deliver tailored early warning services that are responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities.
5. **Proposed:** The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the proposal for the Ocean Early Warning System for Africa (OEWS-Africa), recognizing the growing threats posed by ocean-related hazards such as tsunamis, storm surges, and sea-level rise. They emphasized the critical need for a regional approach to strengthen ocean-based hazard monitoring and prediction capabilities, given the limited geographic coverage and fragmented institutional capacities across the continent. Member States reaffirmed the urgency of addressing these vulnerabilities as a priority for building resilience in African coastal and island communities.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **acknowledged** the importance of bridging the gap between scientific data generation and actionable early warning services. They highlighted that while data on ocean conditions is increasingly available, it often fails to reach end-users in a timely or accessible manner. The proposed OEWS-Africa programme was commended for its ambition to integrate monitoring, forecasting, communication, and community-level preparedness within a cohesive operational framework that ensures scientific outputs are transformed into effective early warning and risk communication systems.
7. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **recognized** the OEWS-Africa proposal as a timely and strategic initiative that aligns with ongoing continental and global efforts, including the UN “Early Warnings for All” initiative, the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (AMHEWAS), and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Member States underscored the potential of this programme to leverage existing infrastructure and partnerships, catalyze investment in ocean monitoring systems, and support the integration of ocean hazards into national and regional disaster risk reduction frameworks.
8. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/Dec.4.8**

**Draft Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/Dec.4.8**

The Sub-Commission**:**

1. **Recalling** Objective 2 of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029) on effective warning systems and preparedness for tsunami and other ocean-related hazards;
2. **Emphasizing** the objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), particularly the challenge on enhancing multi-hazard early warning services for ocean and coastal hazards;
3. **Acknowledging** the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) as a guiding continental framework for early warning implementation;
4. **Recognizing** the importance of sustained ocean observation, fit-for-purpose models, and community-centric communication channels;
5. **Noting** the limited availability and interoperability of ocean data across African regions;
6. **Reaffirming** the coordinating role of IOCAFRICA in strengthening early warning systems and facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships;

**Decides to:**

* **Endorse** the development of the Ocean Early Warning System for Africa (OEWS-Africa) as a regional flagship initiative under IOCAFRICA;
* **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;
* **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;
* **Encourage** the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to initiate resource mobilization efforts, including partnerships with development banks, philanthropic organizations, and climate finance mechanisms;
* **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.

## 4.9 PROPOSAL FOR HOSTING THE GLOBAL OCEAN ACCOUNTS AFRICAN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

1. The agenda item was introduced by **Mr. Ibukun Adewumi,** Technical Secretary of IOCAFRICA. He explained that the proposal responds to the increasing need for integrated and policy-relevant approaches to measure and manage the contributions of ocean and coastal ecosystems to national development. He noted that ocean accounting—as promoted under the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP)—offers a scientifically grounded and internationally recognized framework to inform sustainable ocean planning, ecosystem valuation, and the development of the blue economy.
2. Mr. Adewumi recalled that the GOAP African Community of Practice (Africa CoP) was launched in 2022 to foster knowledge exchange, institutional learning, and regional collaboration on ocean accounts across the continent. The Community of Practice has since developed a draft Vision Strategy (2024–2026), with a focus on national pilot accounts, regional training, and policy engagement.
3. He emphasized that IOCAFRICA is well positioned to host and coordinate the Africa CoP, given its mandate to promote ocean science and knowledge-based decision-making in Africa, and its close working relationships with African Union bodies, regional seas conventions, statistical agencies, and marine research institutions.
4. Hosting the Africa CoP under IOCAFRICA, he explained, would enhance coherence between ocean accounting and ongoing initiatives on sustainable ocean planning, ecosystem assessment, and blue economy policy. It would also allow the Sub-Commission to contribute actively to global processes, including the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029).
5. Mr. Adewumi invited the Member States to consider and endorse the proposal for IOCAFRICA to host the Africa CoP in partnership with the GOAP Secretariat and relevant regional institutions. A draft decision outlining the proposed modalities, roles, and expected outcomes was submitted for the Sub-Commission’s review under this item.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **endorsed** the proposal for hosting the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) African Community of Practice (Africa CoP) under the auspices of IOCAFRICA, in coordination with the GOAP Secretariat and relevant partners.
7. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **designated** IOCAFRICA as the Secretariat for the GOAP Africa CoP, facilitating technical engagement, membership expansion, capacity building, and regional alignment with IOC and UN Ocean Decade frameworks.
8. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.9**

**Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.9**

The Sub-Commission**,**

**Recalling** IOC Decision A-31/3.7 and Decision IOC/EC-57/4.5, as well as the recommendations of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), which emphasize the need for improved integration of environmental, social, and economic data for sustainable ocean governance,

**Recognizing** the importance of ocean accounting as a tool to support evidence-based ocean governance, ecosystem valuation, blue economy planning, and sustainable use of marine resources across Africa,

**Acknowledging** the work of the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) and its African Community of Practice (Africa CoP), which has produced a draft Vision Strategy (2024–2026) to advance ocean accounting and capacity development in the region,

**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:
   * Demonstrating policy uptake of ocean accounts in at least five countries;
   * Producing Africa-specific ocean accounting guidance and research outputs;
   * Establishing academic and policy practitioner forums for knowledge exchange;
6. **Request the Secretariat to collaborate with African regional organizations** (such as the African Union, UNECA, Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, and AfDB) 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.

## 4.10 FOSTERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF OCEAN SCIENCE PLANS AND STRATEGIES IN MEMBER STATES

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr Ibukun Adewumi**, who stressed that the accelerated expansion of ocean-based activities across Africa—ranging from fisheries and port development to marine energy and coastal tourism—is creating unprecedented demands on scientific institutions and data systems. However, he warned that the region continues to face a critical shortfall in the scientific planning and institutional capacities needed to guide this growth in a sustainable and inclusive manner.
2. Drawing attention to the findings of the *Global Ocean Science Report 2024*, Mr Adewumi noted that Africa accounts for less than 1% of global investment in ocean science and has the lowest density of ocean science professionals globally. This reality contributes to a persistent science-policy gap, where ocean governance decisions are often made in the absence of sound, coordinated, and forward-looking scientific evidence.
3. He observed that although the blue economy features prominently in strategic frameworks such as the African Union Agenda 2063, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, and the 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), many African coastal and island states still lack dedicated national strategies to guide ocean science research, investment, and innovation. Without these frameworks, countries risk fragmentation, duplication, and missed opportunities for leveraging ocean science in support of national development goals and global commitments such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).
4. To address this strategic gap, Mr Ibukun Adewumi proposed that IOCAFRICA initiate a new regional effort to support the development of National Ocean Science Plans and Strategies (NOSPSs) as a core instrument for building national ocean governance capacities. He stressed that this proposal responds directly to the growing mismatch between Africa’s expanding ocean economy and the limited availability of structured, science-based frameworks to guide decision-making, investment, and policy development. NOSPSs would provide Member States with a nationally led process to identify ocean science priorities, strengthen coordination across ministries and institutions, and align with regional and global agendas such as Agenda 2063, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, the 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
5. He noted that IOCAFRICA, in consultation with Member States and partners, could play a catalytic role by offering technical guidance, developing a practical NOSPS toolkit, supporting pilot initiatives, and convening capacity-building activities and peer-learning exchanges. Mr Adewumi emphasized that the goal is not to prescribe one-size-fits-all strategies, but rather to empower each country to define a tailored, long-term vision for ocean science that supports its unique development context—anchored in national priorities, informed by best practices, and positioned to attract long-term support from donors and development partners.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the proposed IOCAFRICA initiative to support the development of National Ocean Science Plans and Strategies (NOSPSs) as a timely and strategic response to the growing science-policy gap in Africa’s ocean governance landscape. Member States acknowledged the urgent need for structured national frameworks to align ocean science efforts with development priorities and policy objectives.
7. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **recognized** the NOSPSs as a practical and scalable mechanism to institutionalize marine science planning, guide national investment, foster inter-ministerial coordination, and strengthen the continent’s ability to respond to climate change, marine pollution, overexploitation, and other ocean-related challenges. The emphasis on inclusive stakeholder engagement, integration of traditional knowledge, and alignment with the UN Ocean Decade was particularly welcomed.
8. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **commended** IOCAFRICA for proposing a facilitation framework that includes a regional toolkit, capacity-building activities, peer learning platforms, and pilot country support. Member States called for robust resource mobilization and strategic partnerships to ensure successful implementation and sustainability of NOSPSs at the national level.
9. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.10**

**Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.10**

The Sub-Commission**,**

1. **Recalling** the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), which emphasizes the importance of strengthening national institutional capacities and promoting science-based policy frameworks for sustainable ocean governance;
2. **Recognizing** the objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), particularly the call for transformative ocean science that delivers actionable knowledge for development and resilience;
3. **Acknowledging** the strategic alignment of NOSPSs with continental frameworks including the African Union Agenda 2063, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, and the 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS);
4. **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*;
5. **Recognizing** the role of IOCAFRICA in coordinating and facilitating regional capacity development in ocean science and governance;

**Decides to:**

(a) **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;

(b) **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;

(c) **Invite** Member States to designate national focal institutions to lead NOSPS processes and ensure inclusive, science-informed coordination and policy integration;

(d) **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;

(e) **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.

## 4.11 DEVELOPING A ROLLING PLAN FOR OCEAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Prof. Suzan Elgharabawy**, who underlined that capacity development has been a foundational pillar of IOCAFRICA’s work since its inception. However, she observed that despite decades of investment, the impact of capacity development interventions across the continent has often remained fragmented, externally driven, and short-lived. Many initiatives, she noted, have been focused on individual training with little follow-up, institutional embedding, or long-term national ownership—limiting their transformative potential and undermining Africa’s ability to fully harness its marine resources and manage ocean-related risks.
2. She emphasized that the current moment—marked by rapid ocean development, accelerating climate impacts, and increasing global expectations for data-driven marine governance—calls for a **new approach** to capacity development: one that is holistic, adaptive, inclusive, and anchored in African leadership. She pointed to the growing demand from Member States for support that goes beyond short courses or donor-led consultancies, towards frameworks that empower national institutions, foster regional knowledge ecosystems, and enable long-term investment in people, infrastructure, and innovation.
3. In this context, Prof Elgharabawy introduced the proposal to develop a Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa, a strategic initiative designed to serve as IOCAFRICA’s principal guiding instrument for capacity development from 2025 to 2030. The Rolling Plan is grounded in the principles and impact pathways of the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030), but tailored to the specific needs, contexts, and ambitions of the African region. It reflects a deliberate shift from *transactional training to transformational empowerment*, embedding ocean science capacity within governance systems, educational institutions, data infrastructures, and communities of practice.
4. She explained that the Rolling Plan draws inspiration from the IOCAFRICA Secretariat's concept of *ocean capacity empowerment*, which frames capacity not only as the acquisition of skills, but as the *institutionalization of knowledge systems, the democratization of scientific access, and the creation of durable platforms for innovation and collaboration*. The Plan will be structured as a “living framework,” co-developed with Member States, and implemented through an evolving set of actions, including:

* the creation of a **technical task group** on capacity empowerment;
* the establishment of **national focal institutions**;
* the coordination of **multi-year implementation cycles**;
* the convening of an annual **IOCAFRICA Capacity Development Forum**;
* and the deployment of a **matchmaking mechanism** to align capacity needs with funding and technical support.

1. Prof Elgharabawy stressed that this Rolling Plan is not meant to replace existing strategies, but to complement and reinforce them—serving as a regional engine for operationalizing the global IOC Strategy and the UN Decade of Ocean Science. It will also support the implementation of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, Agenda 2063, and the SEAWARD Africa Programme by embedding capacity development as a central enabler of sustainable ocean governance and climate resilience.
2. In closing, she highlighted that the success of this initiative will depend on strong political commitment, inclusive engagement of youth and marginalized groups, alignment with regional and global partners, and the establishment of robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The Rolling Plan, she concluded, represents not only a technical response to capacity gaps, but a political statement that *Africa is ready to lead its own ocean future—on its own terms, with its own institutions, and through its own scientific excellence.*
3. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **welcomed** the proposal to develop a Rolling Plan for Ocean Capacity Development in Africa and **recognized** it as a transformative step toward a more coherent, sustainable, and equity-focused capacity development agenda in the region.
4. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **acknowledged** the importance of shifting from short-term, transactional training interventions to long-term empowerment of African institutions, researchers, and communities. The Rolling Plan was **commended** for its emphasis on national leadership, regional collaboration, youth and gender inclusion, and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems.
5. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **supported** IOCAFRICA’s facilitation framework for the Rolling Plan, including the establishment of a technical task group, a dedicated coordination unit, and the launch of a matchmaking platform to align capacity needs with available support. **Called** for sustained financial and technical engagement from development partners to ensure the initiative’s success.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.11**

**Decision IOC/IOCAFRICA-VIII/4.11**

1. The Sub-Commission,

**Recalling** the decision of the IOC Assembly to adopt the IOC Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030) as the principal global framework for building ocean-related scientific, technical, and institutional capacities;

**Recognizing** the alignment of the Rolling Plan with continental frameworks such as the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, the African Union Agenda 2063, the African Ocean Decade Roadmap, and the SEAWARD Africa Programme;

**Acknowledging** that Africa faces 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 to collaborate with the IOC Secretariat 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.

## 5. GOVERNANCE, PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETING

## 5.1 DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2026–2027 (Draft 43 C/5, first biennium 2026–2027)

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Mr Ibukun Adewumi**, Technical Secretary, IOCAFRICA Secretariat, who emphasized the importance of structured planning and strategic alignment in the lead-up to UNESCO’s 2026–2029 Medium-Term Strategy (43 C/4). He noted that the present document outlines a proposed functional programme and indicative budget for IOCAFRICA for the 2026–2027 biennium, developed by the Secretariat in line with global IOC priorities, regional frameworks, and Africa’s emerging needs in ocean science, services, and governance.
2. Mr Adewumi clarified that the programme is presented as a draft proposal, based on regional trends, Secretariat consultations, and insights from previous biennia. It is intended to serve as a foundation for Member State deliberations and will be subject to refinement based on the outcomes of Agenda Item 5.2, which includes recommendations from the four Sessional Working Groups on Ocean Observations, Ocean Science and Biodiversity, Data and Information Management, and Capacity Development and Partnerships.
3. The proposed programme is structured around **six functional areas**, four of which correspond directly to the thematic domains being reviewed by the sessional working groups under Agenda Item 5.2. These include:
4. Ocean Observations and Monitoring,
5. Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments,
6. Ocean Data and Information Management, and
7. Capacity Development, Partnerships and Innovation.
8. In addition, the Secretariat proposes two additional functional areas—namely,  
   5) Ocean Governance and Management, and  
   6) Regional Governance and Coordination—to ensure that IOCAFRICA's programme not only delivers technical outputs but also strengthens institutional leadership, intergovernmental cooperation, and alignment with continental and global ocean policy frameworks. These additional areas are intended to provide cross-cutting support for programme coherence, stakeholder engagement, and strategic visibility.
9. Mr Adewumi highlighted that the proposed programme was **deliberately costed** under three distinct budget scenarios, consistent with UNESCO’s budgeting protocols:

* **Zero Real Growth (ZRG)** – A baseline scenario that maintains the current resource envelope without adjusting for inflation or scale-up.
* **Zero Nominal Growth 1 (ZNG1)** – A scenario introducing modest cost containment and administrative deferrals, especially in staffing.
* **Zero Nominal Growth 2 (ZNG2)** – A more restrictive scenario reflecting deferred obligations and deep budget compression, particularly impacting programme implementation and voluntary staff posts.

1. In each scenario, allocations were made to the six functional areas based on strategic relevance, absorptive capacity, and expected impact. The proposed **ZRG scenario**, which assumes regular budget parity with the 2024–2025 period, provides the following indicative allocations:

**Table 3: IOCAFRICA Integrated Budgetary Framework 2026–2027 – Aligned with IOCAFRICA-VIII Agenda and Proposed Draft Decisions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IOCAFRICA Function / Workplan | 42 C/5 Approved (USD) | Draft 43 C/5 (ZNG1) | Draft 43 C/5 (ZNG2) | Draft 43 C/5 (ZRG) | Indicative VC (USD) | Total IBF (ZRG) (USD) | % Share |
| Ocean Observations and Monitoring | 109,328 | 90,317 | 93,825 | 109,328 | 500,000 | 609,328 | 20% |
| Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments | 150,000 | 123,917 | 128,729 | 150,000 | 400,000 | 550,000 | 18% |
| Ocean Data and Information Management | 130,000 | 106,445 | 110,579 | 130,000 | 800,000 | 930,000 | 30% |
| Capacity Development & Ocean Literacy | 380,000 | 313,309 | 325,000 | 380,000 | 200,000 | 580,000 | 19% |
| Governance, Planning & Coordination | 120,000 | 98,825 | 102,165 | 120,000 | 100,000 | 220,000 | 7% |
| Regional Governance and Coordination | 120,000 | 98,825 | 102,165 | 120,000 | 100,000 | 220,000 | 7% |
| Total | **982,365** |  |  | **982,365** | **2,300,000** | **3,282,365** | **100%** |

1. Mr Adewumi stressed that under ZNG1 and ZNG2 scenarios, the programme would be forced to reduce its scope, particularly with respect to regional training activities, participation support for Member States, and secondment of expert consultants. For example, under ZNG2, the Ocean Literacy line would fall below USD 50,000, limiting regional engagement efforts significantly.
2. Crucially, Mr Adewumi drew attention to the chronic under-resourcing of the IOCAFRICA Secretariat, which continues to operate with a limited staffing structure despite a growing programme portfolio. As of the 2026–2027 biennium, the Regular Programme covers only two Professional staff positions, of which only one is currently filled. The General Service (GS) capacity is sustained only through in-kind secondment from the Government of Kenya and shared arrangements with the Ocean Decade Office in Paris, with no GS-level staff formally financed through the Regular Programme. In response, IOCAFRICA has proposed to allocate approximately USD 120,000 (13%) of its Regular Programme budget under ZRG to staff-related costs—demonstrating a lean operating model that prioritizes delivery, regional partnerships, and technical execution while maintaining minimal fixed overheads.
3. He further underscored the importance of voluntary contributions and partnership-based resource mobilization as enablers for successful implementation under constrained budget environments. Member States were invited to support targeted co-financing of programme components, consider hosting training or observatory centres, and identify domestic partners aligned with IOCAFRICA objectives.
4. In conclusion, Mr Adewumi reiterated that the proposed programme and budget are to be treated as indicative and preliminary, and that final prioritization, thematic refinement, and implementation planning will be based on the synthesis of recommendations from the Sessional Working Groups under Agenda Item 5.2. He welcomed Member State feedback to help ensure that the 2026–2027 Work Plan is not only realistic but also ambitious enough to serve the continent’s ocean science and policy needs.
5. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **took note** of the Secretariat’s draft functional programme and budget proposal for the 2026–2027 biennium, and acknowledged its alignment with UNESCO’s Draft 43 C/5, the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029), and key regional priorities outlined in the Africa Blue Economy Strategy and the African Ocean Decade Roadmap.
6. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **appreciated** the clear articulation of expected outcomes, regional relevance, and budget implications under different UNESCO planning scenarios (ZRG, ZNG1, ZNG2), and emphasized the need for realistic prioritization in light of funding constraints.
7. The Sub-Commission **took note** of the three budget scenarios (ZRG, ZNG1, and ZNG2), acknowledged the implications of each on the implementation potential of programme components, and encouraged the Secretariat to actively pursue complementary funding through partnerships and voluntary contributions.
8. The Sub-Commission **expressed** concern over the Secretariat’s limited staffing resources and acknowledged the continued structural underfunding of General Service positions, which constrains the efficient implementation of an expanding regional mandate. It noted the Secretariat’s lean budgeting approach, including the proposal to allocate USD 120,000 (13%) of the ZRG budget to staff-related costs.
9. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **invited** Member Statesto provide feedback and suggestions to guide the finalization of the programme, including identification of co-financing opportunities, institutional partnerships, and in-kind contributions to strengthen programme delivery.
10. Proposed: The Sub-Commission**adopted Decision IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.1**

The Sub-Commission**,**

**Recalling** the objectives of the IOC Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2029) and the Draft UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2026–2029 (43 C/5), which guide the strategic and operational priorities of IOCAFRICA,

**Recognizing** the role of IOCAFRICA as a regional platform for the coordination of ocean science, data, capacity development, and policy support in Africa and the Adjacent Island States,

**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,

**Decides to:**

1. **Urge** 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. **Requests** the IOCAFRICA Chair to bring to the attention of the 33rd Session of the IOC Assembly, the IOCAFRICA Programme and Budget for the period 2026-2027, as attached in the Annex to this Decision.

## 5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF IOCAFRICA WORK PLAN FOR 2026–2027 REPORT OF SESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS

1. This agenda item was introduced by **Prof Kaudio AFFIAN**.

## 5.2.1 Ocean Observations and Monitoring

1. [to be added, as information may be available only during the intersectional working group reporting sections

## 5.2.2 Ocean Sciences, Biodiversity and Assessments

1. [to be added, as information may be available only during the intersectional working group reporting sections

## 5.2.3 Ocean Data and Information Management

1. [to be added, as information may be available only during the intersectional working group reporting sections

## 5.2.4 Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization

1. [to be added, as information may be available only during the intersectional working group reporting sections
2. **The Sub-Commission adopted** Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.4, added in Annex II (to be added after the Session).

**Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII.5.2**

**IOCAFRICA Workplan and Budget 2026-2027**

**The Sub-Commission,**

**Having considered** the detailed outcomes and strategic recommendations presented by the four Sessional Working Groups convened under Agenda Item 5.2, and guided by the framework set out in document IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2.Doc(1),

**Recognizing** the need to ensure continuity, coherence, and regional ownership in the development of the IOCAFRICA Programme and Budget for the 2026–2027 biennium,

**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,

**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,

**Welcoming** 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
* Capacity Development, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization,

**Further recognizing** that the next session of IOCAFRICA will be convened in early 2027, and that the current work planning period shall therefore cover April 2025 through December 2026,

**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,

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

**Decides to:**

1. **Adopt** the thematic priorities, proposed outputs, and action areas developed by the four Sessional Working Groups as the strategic basis for the development of IOCAFRICA’s Work Plan and Budget for the period April 2025 to December 2026;
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. **Further 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, with clearly defined milestones, performance indicators, reporting responsibilities, and feedback loops to support evidence-based decision-making and accountability.

**Annex to Recommendation IOCAFRICA-VIII/5.2**

[budget table, to be added after the Session]

* 1. ELECTIONS OF THE OFFICERS OF THE SUB COMMISSION

1. The IOCAFRICA Technical Secretary, **Ibukun Adewumi**, introduced this item. He referred to the *Rules of Procedure of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission* ([IOC/INF-1166](https://oceanexpert.org/document/1199)), and more specifically to **Rule 25, paragraph 2**, which states:

*“No person shall hold the same office for more than two successive terms.”*

1. He informed the Member States that, in accordance with this provision, the current Chairperson, Prof. Kouadio Affian (Côte d’Ivoire), and the three Co-Chairs, Prof. Zacharie Sohou (Benin), Ms. Candida Sete (Mozambique), and Prof. Zuzan Elgharabawy (Egypt), had completed their **second consecutive terms** and were therefore **ineligible for re-election** to the same positions.
2. The Technical Secretary further recalled that, as part of the preparation for this session, Member States had been formally invited to submit nominations for the positions of Chair and three Co-Chairs of the Sub-Commission. In line with the procedural guidance and the call issued by the Secretariat through document [CL-3033](https://ioc-africa.org/images/2025/circulareighthsession.pdf), nominations were requested to be submitted by the evening of **7 May 2025**, to ensure transparency and allow proper verification before the conduct of elections.
3. Mr Adewumi then proceeded to inform the Member States of the nominations received, and outlined the procedure to be followed for the election, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure and the established practices of the Sub-Commission.
   * 1. ELECTIONS OF THE CHAIR PERSON OF THE SUB COMMISSION
4. Proposed: **The Member States unanimously elected** Ms …… as IOCAFRICA Chair for the next inter-sessional period.
   * 1. ELECTIONS OF THE VICE-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SUB COMMISSION
5. Proposed: **The Member States unanimously elected** …… as IOCAFRICA Co-Chairs for the next inter-sessional period.
6. The Co-Chairs briefly addressed the Member States….. this will be completed during the Session.

# 5.4. DATES AND PLACE OF THE 9th SESSION OF THE SUB COMMISSION

1. This agenda item was introduced by **[one of the new Co-Chairs]**. The Member States was invited to consider holding the meeting the month of March or April 2027, taking into consideration the need to report to the IOC Assembly in June 2027.
2. Countries that would be prepared to host the next Session were kindly requested to inform the IOCAFRICA Secretariat of their intention to host, not later than 12 months before the next Session dates (i.e., before March 2026). Interested Member States can alo make there interest known within this Session. Full information on the in-kind contributions expected from a Host are available upon request from the IOCAFRICA Secretariat.

# 5.5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. This agenda item was introduced by **[one of the new Co-Chairs]**, based upon input from the Member States under agenda item 2.1.

(this will be completed during the Session)

# 5.6. ADOPTION OF THE IOCAFRICA WORKPLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2026–2027

1. This agenda item was introduced by **(one of the new Co-Chairs)**, based on input from the Member States under agenda item 5.1 and 5.2.

(this will be completed during the Session)

# 13. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS AND MODALITIES FOR THE FINALISATION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

1. This Agenda Item was introduced by [the new Chair]. The Member States were invited to adopt the Decisions and Recommendations which had been reviewed during the Session and included in the action paper.

*[Note: Adopted Decisions and Recommendations will be attached as an Annex to the Summary Report of the Session].*

1. [the new Chair] invited the Sub-Commission to review and adopt all action items (marked in yellow in the action paper) during the Session. Introductions and other text would not be reviewed. He informed the Member States that the Secretariat would review and finalize the report. The report would then be posted on the IOCAFRICA website, OceanExperts, and circulated to all participants by the end of May 2025. An executive Summary containing the adopted Decisions and Recommendations would be prepared for the IOC Assembly in June 2025.
2. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **requested** the IOCAFRICA Chair, Co-Chairs and the IOCAFRICA Secretariat to make editorial corrections as necessary, taking into account the discussions held during the session.
3. Proposed: The Sub-Commission **requested** the IOCAFRICA Chair and Co-Chairs to present the Executive Summary to the Thirty Second Session of the IOC Assembly that would take place in June 2025.

# 15. CLOSURE

*[Note: text to be added after the Session]*

1. The IOC Vice-Chairperson addressed the Member States
2. The Chair addressed the Member States.
3. The Co-Chair addressd the Member States
4. The Chair closed the Session on Friday 09 May 2025 at XXXX

Annex I

**AGENDA**

To be added after the session

Annex II

**IOCAFRICA-VIII DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Draft Decisions and Recommendations have been included under the relevant agenda item above. They will be included in Annex II of the summary report after adoption by the IOCAFRICA Member States.

Annex III

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

To be added after the session

Annex IV

**SUMMARY REPORT OF OCEAN SCIENCE TO ENHANCE THE BLUE ECONOMY-III**

To be added after the session

Annex V

**IOCAFRICA ACTION SHEET**

To be added after the session

…

[end of document]