



## **THIRD SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF UNESCO CATEGORY 2 REGIONAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE ON OCEANOGRAPHY FOR WEST ASIA (RCOWA)**

**27 June 2019, UNESCO/IOC Headquarters, Paris, France**

# **SUMMARY REPORT**

## **1. OPENING and WELCOME**

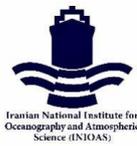
The Third Session of the Governing Board of the UNESCO Category 2 Regional Education and Research Centre on Oceanography for West Asia (RCOWA) was hosted by UNESCO and organized in conjunction with the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the IOC Assembly on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2019. The list of participants is presented in Annex 2

Professor Behrooz Abtahi, Chair of the RCOWA Governing Board and Director of the Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science (INIOAS), opened the meeting. He welcomed participants with a short introduction and thanked UNESCO/IOC for providing the necessary facilities. He then invited the IOC Executive Secretary, Dr Vladimir Ryabinin, to address the meeting.

Dr Ryabinin joined the Chair in welcoming participants and highlighted the RCOWA pivotal role in assisting IOC Member States to meet new challenges facing the IOC in the implementation of IIOE-2, in Ocean Literacy programme and marine natural disaster mitigation and in meeting the Ocean Science Decade objectives where the IOC plays a key role. He emphasized the importance of cooperation between RCOWA, UNESCO Chairs and Regional Centres as well as the contribution of RCOWA to IOCINDIO activities.

Finally, he called on the Board to refer to the IOC Medium Term Strategy and current plans for the Ocean Science Decade as bases of RCOWA plans for the coming years.

The Chair thanked the IOC Executive Secretary for finding time in his heavy schedule to deliver his welcome address to the Board. The Chair then invited participants of the meeting to have a round table introduction.



## **2. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

The Chair introduced Document RCOWA 3/1 as the Provisional Agenda for comments and adoption. The Agenda was adopted as presented in Annex 1.

Mr Justin Ahanhanzo, Representative of UNESCO, presented the timetable of the meeting and described local arrangements. He noted that it would be desirable to finish meeting discussions by lunchtime as many participants are required to attend the IOC Assembly and contribute to the discussions at this important event.

To save time, it was agreed skipping a morning coffee break and that the draft of the Summary Report of the Board meeting be prepared by the Chair and secretariat after the meeting and mailed to all participants for comments and final approval.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

The Chair of the Board reminded participants of the RCOWA responsibilities as presented in the Agreement between UNESCO and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of IR of Iran signed in 2015. He pointed out the RCOWA activities undertaken in the past years were implemented along the lines presented in the Agreement.

Since 2015 the responsibilities of the Board focussed on approving plans and programs of the Centre, examining and approving annual reports submitted by the Centre Director, the Centre's contribution to UNESCO/IOC program objectives, developing the Centre's financial plans and deciding on the Centre's cooperation with other organizations.

The Director of the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Dr. Satheesh C. Shenoi, described main areas of activities of the C-2-C in India and called on increased cooperation between RCOWA and INCOIS in the areas of common regional and global marine related interests.

The Board supported the call and agreed to consider concrete proposals aimed to increase cooperation in adopting RCOWA plans for 2019-2020.



#### **4. RCOWA ACTIVITIES SINCE ITS SECOND SESSION**

The Board Chair referred participants to the RCOWA work plan for 2018 approved by the second session of the Centre.

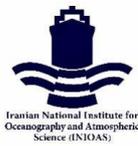
As recommended by the second session, Dr. D'Adamo identified the need to support the acidification workshop initially envisaged for the implementation in 2017 to the attention of the IOC Secretary. By the end of 2018, lecturers' names were identified and the workshop on acidification implemented in June 2019.

Although both a research expedition into the Persian Gulf area and a training workshop on ocean observations were implemented, due to delays associated with administrative and local arrangements, participants from other countries of the region could not take part in the expedition. The expedition's results were presented and discussed at a scientific meeting held in INIOAS and data collected during the expedition are available in the data centre of the Institute.

The Board recommended that it is desirable to provide information about planned expeditions well in advance, in order to make all necessary administrative arrangements on time and thereby facilitate as wide as possible engagement of RCOWA constituents.

The Board Chair also advised that in the period since the RCOWA second session the following activities were implemented in cooperation with other national institutions or regional organizations:

- From 27-29 November 2017 in Tehran, a training course on “Modelling Aquatic Ecosystems with Ecopath, Ecosim and Ecospace”;
- From 23-26 September 2018, in Tehran, in cooperation with the IOC Ocean Teacher Global Academy(OTGA) a training course on “Marine Biogeographic Data Processing Using OBIS”;
- From 8-12 March 2019, Kish Island, IR of Iran, in cooperation with IOC experts, consultations on “Scientific Tsunami Hazard Assessment of the Makran Subduction Zone” took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March followed by the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS-XII);



- From 8-9 June 2019, Kish Island, IR of Iran, in cooperation with the IOC, an ocean acidification workshop: “Developing regional capacity for ocean observations in support of SDG Target 14” was implemented. The workshop preceded the celebrations of Ocean Day.

The Board expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved by RCOWA, however, noting; that some of the recommendations made at the previous RCOWA session have not been fully implemented and require more attention.

For example, it reiterated that more to be done regarding establishing closer contacts with mass media and closer cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental organizations working in the region. Furthermore, announcements of the activities of RCOWA should be made well in advance (at least 4 months) to help in implementing administrative arrangements and give time to be successful in fund raising.

## **5. FORMULATION OF A WORK PLAN FOR 2019-2020 and BUDGET MATTERS**

The Board Chair presented a work plan and budget for 2019-2020.

The Board noted information provided by the IIOE-2 Coordinator and the Director of C-2-C in India, respectively, regarding the forthcoming International Indian Ocean Science Conference 2020 (IIOOSC 2020, 16-20 March 2020, Goa, India).

The Board further invited the RCOWA Director to seek resources to support the participation of experts and in covering the logistical support of a second acidification workshop, to be implemented some time in 2020.

With these comments, the Board approved the work plan and budget for 2019 – 2020, as presented in Annex 3

## **6. DATES AND PLACE OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE RCOWA GOVERNING BOARD**



The Board agreed to have the fourth session in June 2020 at a place to be identified later. The option of having it in conjunction with the IOC Executive Council may be considered.

## **7. ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board adopted the meetings' Recommendations and decided that the adoption of the Summary Report will be through mail arrangements. The draft of the Summary Report will be finalized within a few weeks following this third session, and will be made available to all Board members (present and absent at the session) for comments and adoption.

## **8. CLOSURE**

The session was closed at 12.00 on the 27 June 2019.

The Board Chair thanked Mr Justin Ahanhanzo, UNESCO/IOC Representative, for all meeting arrangements and for hospitality.