



Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture



INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
(of UNESCO)

IOC-WMO-UNEP/I-GOOS-VIII/3s  
Paris, 19 June 2007  
Original: French

## **Eighth Session of the IOC-WMO-UNEP Intergovernmental Committee for the Global Ocean Observing System (I-GOOS-VIII)**

13-15 June 2007  
Paris, France

### **Executive summary**

This document was prepared by the Chair of the Intergovernmental Committee for GOOS, Mr François Gérard. As a primary subsidiary body of IOC, the Committee is required to submit to a governing body of the Commission a report on its activities since its previous session (Rule 48.3 of the Rules of Procedure).

The Assembly is invited to adopt draft resolution XXIV-(4.3.1) as it stands, or as amended at the present session.

1. The eighth session of I-GOOS was held from 13 to 15 June 2007 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Although this date enabled more delegations than usual to attend, it has not allowed for a full report of the session to be submitted to the Assembly. Accordingly, the Chair of the Committee presents herein a summary of the main debates as a **covering note to the draft resolution concerning GOOS**.
2. This session of I-GOOS was the first since the 23rd session of the Assembly, which had decided on a new organization of the programme (Resolution XIII-5) and accepted the implementation strategy for the coastal module of GOOS (GOOS Report No. 148). Three main subjects have accordingly been addressed as priorities:
  - (i) sustainability of GOOS;
  - (ii) regional development of GOOS;
  - (iii) capacity-building.

## **1. Sustainability of GOOS**

3. The national reports on GOOS have drawn been up using a new model that has enabled a synthesis of them to be produced highlighting areas of satisfaction as well as two problems.

4. First, although the GOOS climate module is developing well, there is at present a downturn in efforts of contributing members which can make it difficult to achieve the objectives provided for in the development plan of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS). On the other hand, it would seem that some regional or coastal observation systems could benefit from substantial contributions to the extent that they respond to well identified needs. The result is a highly uneven development of the GOOS coastal module, which should be mitigated by good inter-regional coordination. Lastly, it appears that much remains to be done with regard to the gathering and dissemination of data and the development of services, as GOOS is working to transform observation into information. The Committee therefore agrees to:

- (i) improve the national reporting process in order to acquire a reference database on the state of GOOS and its development, and to do so by using existing systems and relying, where possible, on regional alliances;
- (ii) encourage members to complete and support the climate module with the aim of carrying out a performance review in 2012;
- (iii) maintain a concerted effort with the partners (Committee on Earth Observation Satellites – CEOS; Coordination Group for Meteorological Satellites – CGMS; Global Earth Observation System of Systems – GEOSS; Joint Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology – JCOMM) in order to ensure the continuity of space observation as regards altimetry and ocean colour.

5. The general objective of I-GOOS in this context is to contribute to the constitution of databases on the “blue” ocean and the “green” ocean that would be useful for the development of knowledge and for applications.

6. Lastly, the participants considered it essential to make the achievements of GOOS better known by means of a “document for decision-makers” which will be prepared by the Secretariat before the Committee’s next session.

## **2. Regional development of GOOS**

7. The Committee considered this subject at length, using the report of the Chair of the GOOS Scientific Steering Committee (GSSC), the report of the third GOOS regional forum and a proposal of the Chair on the implementation strategy for the coastal module of GOOS. The main proposal up for discussion was the establishment of a GOOS regional council (GRC) responsible for the exchange of practices and the coordination of actions and of these groups within the institutional framework of GOOS. The accreditation of two new regional alliances was also discussed, as was the proposal to establish an alliance in the Arctic. The following proposals emerged from the debates:

- (i) the development of the coastal module of GOOS will take place around regional observation networks (ROOS) implemented for and by the regional alliances (GRC). The coherence of these networks is ensured by the observation of a range of essential parameters, governed by common practices, procedures and standards in accordance with GOOS development principles.

- (ii) the regional alliances recognized by I-GOOS will constitute a GOOS Regional Council (GRC) whose chairperson will be invited to participate in I-GOOS Bureau meetings. The Council's terms of reference were adopted by the I-GOOS Committee;
- (iii) participation in the Council will be open to regional alliances that follow the GOOS regional policy adopted by the IOC Assembly at its 22nd session. Accordingly, the Committee welcomed two new alliances, namely the Regional Alliance in Oceanography for the Upper Southwest and Tropical Atlantic (OCEATLAN), covering the east coast of South America, and the Regional Alliance for the Southeast Pacific (GRASP), covering the west coast. That raised the number of GOOS regional alliances to 11, as nine had already been recognized or confirmed by the IOC Assembly at its 22nd session;
- (iv) lastly, the Committee requested the Bureau to work, with all parties concerned, on the establishment of an Arctic observing system, drawing on all that had been achieved in the International Polar Year.

8. The Committee noted the importance to the conduct of GOOS of the regional offices in Australia and Brazil, and of the Secretariat post dedicated to Africa. It congratulated the holders of those posts on the quality of the activities undertaken. Accordingly, after having heard the independent evaluation report on the Rio office, the Committee is in a position to recommend that the contract between IOC and the Government of Brazil in respect of the operation of the office be renewed.

9. Lastly, the third regional forum noted the advantage of developing synergies with other regional initiatives such as projects on major marine ecosystems. Under such projects, resources can be mobilized to launch regional observing systems. The Committee therefore also recommends that synergies be developed between this type of project, GOOS regional alliances and the IOC's regional subsidiary bodies.

### **3. Work of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Global Ocean Observing System (GSSC)**

10. The Committee reviewed the work done by GSSC, noting with satisfaction the launch of pilot projects that had already yielded good results, an example being ChloroGyn, a chlorophyll monitoring project involving the use of satellite imaging. Other GSSC proposals are included in the I-GOOS work programme for the next two years.

11. In that connection, the Committee's most important decision was to endorse the establishment by GSSC of a group of experts on integrated coastal observation (PICO). That decision was taken pursuant to a recommendation made by the Executive Council at its 39th session, calling for an interim solution to be found pending the formation of a joint group (J-PICO) with other partners such as GTOS. The formation of that internal group did not entail any budgetary implications. The Committee considered, however, that it was desirable to retain the ultimate goal of establishing a joint group.

### **4. Capacity-building**

13. As a result of a report on capacity-building conditions in Africa submitted by Mr Kuadio Affian, Vice-Chair, the Committee considered that the key to the development of GOOS in the developing countries must be support for local initiatives designed to meet regional needs. The GOOS capacity-building programme will therefore be revised on that basis, in conjunction with the

corresponding IOC strategy. Lastly, the Committee drew the Executive Secretary's attention to the need to coordinate capacity-building in ocean observation (IODE, GLOSS and other activities).

## **5. Programme and budget**

14. The Committee took note of the draft regular budget of the GOOS programme drawn up by the Secretariat in accordance with the UNESCO budgetary guidelines. It gave full latitude to the Bureau of the GOOS programme to adapt its budget allocation according to requests received, with the agreement of the I-GOOS Bureau.

15. In regard to the mobilization of resources required for GOOS development, the Committee drew a clear distinction between direct contributions to the system and the need to provide the Secretariat with the resources to ensure overall coordination and support the launching of some initiatives. An integrated programme, including decisions adopted, had been drawn up, quantified and submitted to the Committee. The Committee noted the programme and Member States were invited to propose their potential contributions to the GOOS development support programme as soon as possible.

16. The eighth session of GOOS was very successful and was attended by a large number of participants. The work programme produced will mobilize I-GOOS Bureau members, whose term of office has been renewed for a further two years, the Secretariat team and, of course, all of the regional alliances, which are now central to GOOS development.

17. The GOOS Intergovernmental Committee submits draft resolution XXIV-(4.3.1) to the IOC Assembly at its 24th session