

Thank you Ms. Chair

- Thank you for this opportunity to address the PICES Governing Council on behalf of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.
- In June this year, during the IOC Assembly, PICES and IOC signed a Letter of Agreement formalizing our cooperation regarding compilation of harmful algae event data in the IOC-ICES-PICES Harmful Algae Event database, HAE-DAT
- The IOC highly appreciates this very concrete cooperation on data management between PICES and IOC. The partnership with PICES is a major step towards building a global data base on harmful algae events.
- At the HAB Section meeting on Saturday and Sunday we made solid progress in integrating PICES data into HAEDAT.
- As you may be aware, ICES and IOC has jointly with IMO a Working Group on Ballast of Ships and other Vectors (WGBOSV).
- ICES and IOC have the last months discussed the Terms of Reference for the joint Working Group on for 2006. In this context also the recommendations of IOC Governing Bodies that PICES is invited to join the WGBOSV has been taken into consideration.
- WGBOSV has the role of providing scientific advice to both Member States and to the sponsoring organisations. As the overall responsibility and the facilitation of the implementation of the IMO Convention on Ballast Water lies with IMO, ICES and IOC consider it most important that balanced and scientifically sound advice and recommendations are provided from an as authoritative source as possible. With this in mind, ICES and IOC see an advantage in not spreading the focus but rather strengthening the focus further of the group in which IMO itself is a co-sponsor.
- Thus there are very positive moves within ICES and IOC towards welcoming PICES as a co - sponsor of WGBOSV. This would naturally imply that future ToRs are elaborated in cooperation. However, we realise that there may be other aspects of concern to PICES when organizing its work on the ballast issue/introduced species, and we therefore wish to have a dialogue with you in this respect.
- GOOS remains committed to strong and meaningful collaboration with PICES. I recall to you that GOOS has recently published its Strategic Implementation Plan for the Coastal Module of the Global Ocean Observing System for follow-up in relevant regional alliances.

- I wish to stress the fact that while IOC/WESTPAC did not have the resources to be directly represented at this meeting, its absence does not in any way diminish its commitment to sustain the IOC/WESTPAC partnership with PICES on issues of mutual concern.
- We hope that IOC and PICES step by step can expand and strengthen its partnership in areas where we have priorities in common.

Thank you Ms. Chair.