



COMMUNIQUÉ
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Appointment of Canadian Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright as Assistant Director-General and Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

Ottawa, October 15, 2009. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), announced the appointment of Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright as Assistant Director-General and Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The two-year appointment was announced at the Ministerial Roundtable on Oceans held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on October 12-13, 2009. The Roundtable took place as part of the 35th General Conference of UNESCO.

Originally from the Maritime Provinces, Dr. Watson-Wright has enjoyed an extensive career in senior executive positions in Canada and the Canadian public service, including serving as Associate Assistant Deputy Minister for Population and Public Health at Health Canada. She is currently Assistant Deputy Minister, Science, at Fisheries and Oceans Canada where she is responsible for providing strategic direction to 15 Research Institutes across Canada responsible for programs in oceanography, hydrography, fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic ecosystem science.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) was established in 1960 by the General Conference of UNESCO. Canada was one of the 40 founding members.

The IOC is a specialized organization of the United Nations system that coordinates ocean scientific research and ocean services worldwide. It is also responsible for global coordination of the four regional Intergovernmental Coordination Groups for Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation Systems.

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2009.

Dr. Watson-Wright, the first woman to hold this position, will begin her appointment on January 4, 2010.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. Its role is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication and information. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the only member of the United Nations System to have National Commissions performing this role in each of its Member States.

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Contact Dominique Potvin
 Programme Officer
 Natural Sciences

613-566-4414, ext. 5517

Alysouk Lynhiavu
Public Affairs Officer

613-566-4414, ext. 4532