**Notes from Ad hoc Meeting on ICG-WIGOS Governance, Geneva, September 17 2015**

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I. Background

The background for this meeting was the strong desire expressed by the WMO President and others during EC-67 to strengthen the role of the Executive Council in the governance of the WIGOS Pre-operational Phase, due to importance of WIGOS both to the organization as a whole and to the individual Members. The Council did not reach a definitive conclusion on this issue, but agreed on the following text (Resolution 8, EC-67):

*(the Council …) Requests the ICG-WIGOS co-chairpersons and the Executive Council focal points to provide a recommendation for the sixty-eighth session of the Executive Council on ways of strengthening the role of the Council in the governance of the WIGOS pre-operational phase; (….)*

The Ad hoc Meeting on ICG-WIGOS Governance convened in Geneva on September 17, immediately following the Second Session of the WIGOS Task Team Meeting on WIGOS Pre.Operational Phase, marked the first step toward formulating such a recommendation.

II. General discussion and viewpoints.

The general view of the meeting was that while ICG-WIGOS has been very successful under its current Terms of Reference and under its current co-leadership provided by the Commission for Basic Systems (CBS) and the Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observations (CIMO), with high level representatives from other Technical Commissions and Regional Associations, the desire expressed by the Executive Council to increase its own role in the leadership should be seen as a very positive signal.

Furthermore, considering the five priority areas of WIGOS Pre-operational Phase approved by Cg17, in particular the WIGOS National Implementation and the establishment of WIGOS Regional Centers, both of which will additional resources and considerable effort to motivate the Members, the meeting recognized that an increased EC involvement can have a very strong and beneficial impact, both in terms of the WIGOS uptake within the Members and in terms of outreach to external partners at the national level.

However, the meeting was keen not to disrupt the momentum of the ongoing technical work and to ensure adequate support for the new technical priorities approved by Cg-17, namely the continued development of Phase II regulatory material (Manual, Guiding material, etc), the WIGOS Information Resource, and the development of WIGOS Quality Monitoring System. This work relies completely on the availabitliy of technical commission experts and their efforts for its continued development. The meeting therefore felt that it would be important maintain an appropriate balance between enhanced EC-level governance on one side and ensuring a continued co-leading role of technical commissions on the other. During the discussion, it was noted that ICG-WIGOS had been so successful in the past precisely because technical and management aspects of WIGOS were discussed in a single forum, with the participation of representatives from both the technical side (technical commissions) and the management side (Regional Associations and EC focal points).

III. Specific proposals and recommendations.

The meeting therefore expressed itself in favor of a model in which the dual technical and overall coordination nature of the WIGOS development would be reflected not only in the composition of ICG-WIGOS, but also in its governance. Several possible models for this were discussed:

1. ICG-WIGOS chaired by an EC Member (e.g. the President or 1st Vice President), supported by two Co-Chairs, one from CBS, one from CIMO.
2. ICG-WIGOS chaired by an EC Member (e.g. the President or 1st Vice President), supported by two Co-Chairs, one being a representative from the Regional Associations, the a representative from the technical commissions.
3. ICG-WIGOS Co-chaired by an EC Member and a technical commission (CBS or CIMO) representative.

Each of these models was found to have both strengths and weaknesses, and no definitive conclusion was reached regarding a preference. However, after some discussion, option 1 & 3 seemed to garner the broadest support, since they both reflect the dual nature of WIGOS described in Section II. At the other end of the spectrum, option 2 was found to have significant weaknesses in terms of symmetry, since any regional representative by definition only would be able to speak with authority for their own region.

Finally, the meeting was of the opinion that while changes in the governance of WIGOS might be needed, the underlying reasons for that would apply equally well to the way in which the Secretariat is structured. The meeting recognized that the structure and modes of collaboration among the relevant departments of the Secretariat is the responsibility of the Secretary General. However, they recommended that stronger and more direct links at working level be developed between the WIGOS Project Office and the other technical departments as well as the Regional Department. This was felt to be critical for the success of the WIGOS Pre-operational phase.

The final decision on the future governance of ICG-WIGOS will be made by EC-68. In the interim, the group will continue to be co-chaired by CBS and CIMO per the decision made by EC-67. However, it could be considered to share the duties of chairing the fifth session of ICG-WIGOS between the Co-Chairs and the EC members, according to the nature of the agenda item, with the Co-Chairs taking responsibility for the technical aspects, and EC members taking the lead on regional and national items.