

## IORA UPDATE

Growth through the Blue Economy is a long term strategy that has been recognised as a priority by almost all Member States. The Indian Ocean is a valuable resource for the Indian Ocean Rim economies, who are committed to develop a common vision that would make this sector a driver for balanced economic development in the Indian Ocean Rim region. It holds great potential for innovation and sustainable job creation, as well as contributes to food security and poverty alleviation in the Indian Ocean. However, overexploitation of resources, coupled with the impact of climate change, have put increasing pressure of coastal and marine resources, thereby requiring Member States to adopt new approaches, such as ecosystem-based management approaches as a tool to maintain ecosystems in healthy, productive and resilient conditions in order to provide services according to human wants and needs.

In 2015, the first IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC-I) on “Enhancing Blue Economy Cooperation for Sustainable Development in the IORA Region” took place in Mauritius with the aim of conceptualising the sustainable development of Blue Economy sectors, including fisheries and aquaculture, renewable ocean energy, seaport and shipping, and offshore hydrocarbon and seabed minerals within the IORA context. The BEC-I resulted in the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration on Blue Economy, which seeks to harness ocean resources in a sustainable manner.

The Second IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC-II) is scheduled to be held on 08 – 10 May 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The conference will be preceded by a Working Session and a Senior Official Meeting to discuss outcome document, which is the “Jakarta Declaration on the Blue Economy” and the way-forward for the sustainable development of the Blue Economy. Several focus areas have been identified for the BEC-II, including *inter alia*: aquaculture and fisheries; marine tourism; Marine Tourism; Port Network; Customs Network and Management of goods (logistic); and Combatting Marine

In order to fully realise the economic potential of the Indian Ocean, a coordinated and inclusive approach towards better harnessing our ocean's wealth and resources that would yield shared benefits for all is needed. The upcoming ministerial conference will promote efforts to map and coordinate work done on the sustainable development of the Blue Economy within IORA.

26 April 2017