

IORA Sustainable Development Programme (ISDP)
"IORA workshop on seafood handling, post-harvest processing and storage of fisheries and
aquaculture product in the Indian Ocean region."
Date: 1-2 September, 2016

Press Release



Representatives and experts from across 13 IORA Member States gathered at Itsandra Hotel in Moroni - Comoros on 1-2 September 2016 for the Workshop on Seafood Handling, Post-Harvest Processing and Storage of Fisheries and Aquaculture Product in the Indian Ocean region. The workshop was jointly organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Comoros and the IORA Secretariat.

During the two-day workshop, one of the key point agreed upon by the delegates was that fisheries management is one of the priority areas for all IORA Member States and that more cooperation and efforts are needed in this sector. Topics discussed during the two-day workshop included, *efficient post-harvesting processes, handling and storage facilities and best practices in the IOR region; methods of enhancing safety and quality of fish products; post-harvesting processing and health implications; safety and quality standards and international norms; among others.*

As part of IORA's Blue Economy agenda and as an attempt to achieve Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the workshop contributed in advancing knowledge and expertise in fish processing operations among the rim countries and was in line with the IORA Blue Economy Declaration endorsed during the First IORA Blue Economy Ministerial Conference in Mauritius in September 2015.

Delegates at the workshop stressed on the need for greater cooperation in fisheries management, namely in capacity building, sharing of best practices and technology advancement to ensure quality production of seafood.

In his opening speech, Mr Firdaus Dahlan, Director of IORA highlighted the need to conduct fish processing operations efficiently in order to minimise wastage or reduce post-harvest loss. He expressed concern, saying, "...millions of people are short of food and suffer from numerous socio-

economic vulnerabilities and reducing post-harvest loss would mean making more effective use of our resources which would assist decreasing food insecurity".

The deliberations were substantiated through the intervention of a number of regional experts from the fisheries sector. Several recommendations were proposed by participating Member States as the way forward for the sustainable development of this important sector, including inter alia: capacity building programmes to comply with international certification and seafood waste management and evaluation; exchange programmes in existing regional laboratories for skill development in the field of seafood handling, post-harvest processing and storage of seafood products; the development of financing facilities, including microfinance, for small-scale industries; promoting women involvement and skill development; transfer of simple innovative technologies for artisanal fishermen; promotion of public-private partnership for infrastructure development and technology improvements; and creation of a marketing information network or platform to share market information on the different value of fish species in the region.

In his closing remarks, H.E Mohamed Bacar Dossar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Union of Comoros congratulated the delegates from IORA Member States for their active participation during the two-day event. He further thanked delegates for sharing their knowledge and national experience in fish processing operations. He also expressed his gratitude to the organiser, as well as the IORA Secretariat who contributed to the success of the event.

On behalf of the Secretary General of IORA, Mr. Firdaus Dahlan, the Director extended his gratitude to the Government of Comoros for the excellent arrangements made for the Workshop on seafood handling, post-harvest processing and storage of fisheries and aquaculture product and thanked the delegates for their participations. He pointed out that the workshop gave rise to valuable discussions and recommendations as way forwards to the sustainable development of the fisheries sector in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

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