



## IORA UPDATE

According to the United Nations, more than 40% of the world population lives near the coast and the Indian Ocean Rim region is home to nearly one-third of the world's population. Therefore, this makes the Indian Ocean one of the most important resources that can be exploited for the wellbeing of its inhabitants. It is also of high economic significance due to its strategic location and provides an important route for world's trade. The Indian Ocean has been identified as one of the site with the greatest densities of nodules. With the decreasing inland mineral deposits and increasing industrial demands, much attention is being geared towards the seabed for mineral exploration and mining. Therefore, the Seabed Exploration Sector represents important potentials that can contribute to the economic development of the IORA Member States.

The Australian Government and the Australian Institute of Marine Science will host a two-day workshop on "Indian Ocean Region Workshop on "Exploration and Development of Seabed Minerals and Hydrocarbons: Current Capability and Emerging Science Needs" that would be held from 26 - 27 July 2015, in Bali, Indonesia. This workshop would bring together officials from IORA Member States, as well as Dialogue Partners in a forum to pursue discussion on the importance of Seabed Exploration and Mineral mining in the Indian Ocean region. Furthermore, this two-day event will address the policy/regulatory responsibilities and scientific/technical expertise of IORA Member States relevant to Exploration and Development of Seabed Minerals and Hydrocarbons.

IORA Member States, strongly believe that there is an urgent need to promote the different sectors of the Blue Economy for the proper management of resources of the Indian Ocean. This workshop will also enable experts, Member States and/or Dialogue Partner States to combine their experience, expertise and technical knowledge for the management and sustainable development of seabed resources in the Indian Ocean region.

The workshop would focus on the Exploration of Seabed Minerals and Hydrocarbons in the Indian Ocean Region and will aim at: providing a better understanding of existing and emerging opportunities from sustainable development of seabed resources in the Indian Ocean; increasing awareness of the importance of robust governance to capture opportunities and attract investment for the development of seabed resources; increasing knowledge in the seabed exploration sector through researcher exchanges, capacity building and skills development; identifying key knowledge gaps constraining informed decision-making; assessing the need for public-private development partnerships for seabed exploration; increasing awareness of the potential impacts of seabed exploration and mining on the marine environment; evaluating technology transfer relationships among IORA Member States; and developing recommendations and priorities for consideration at the First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference in Mauritius in September 2015.

The workshop comprise of several sessions including: Policy and governance fundamentals for seabed exploration and resource development; Managing sustainability - environmental and social considerations; Technologies and skills for exploration and management of Indian Ocean seabed resources; and The potential role of public-private partnerships in sustainable development. It will also focus on enhancing capacity building in the Indian Ocean Region to improve skills and build an experienced group of experts in the Seabed Exploration Workshop. The establishment of a Core Group that would work toward the sustainable development of this sector for the benefits of the inhabitants of the Indian Ocean is also envisaged. The outcomes and recommendations of the workshop would be fed into the First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference scheduled to be held in Mauritius on 2 – 4 September 2015.

With the increasing importance of the Blue Economy and the growing interest of IORA Member States to explore and exploit the resources from the Indian Ocean, the IORA strongly believe that this workshop will be a major ground-breaking step towards the sustainable development of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, the IORA also believe that this workshop would also enhance IORA Member States experiences and capacities in the Fisheries & Aquaculture sector.

09 July 2015