

## IORA UPDATE

The Blue Economy has been recognised as a priority by almost all IORA Member States due to its growing global interest and potential. Since the Indian Ocean harbours a wide range of valuable resources, the Blue Economy is gaining increasing interest of IORA Member States that are all committed to develop a common vision that would make this sector a driver for balanced economic development in the Indian Ocean Rim region. It is viewed as means of employment generation and to ensure sustainability in business and economic models in the Indian Ocean. However, overexploitation of resources, coupled with the impact of climate change, are putting increasing pressures on marine organisms and their habitats, thus necessitating 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.

The Third IORA Blue Economy Core Group on “Environmental sustainability and the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean rim region” will be held on 10-11 April 2017, in Mauritius. Two previous workshops have already been carried out, namely: (i) The First IORA Blue Economy Core Group Workshop on “Promoting Fisheries & Aquaculture and Maritime Safety & Security Cooperation in the Indian Ocean region”, which was held on 4 - 5 May 2015, in Durban, South Africa; and (ii) The Second IORA Blue Economy Core Group Workshop on “Maritime Connectivity and Financing for Development in the Indian Ocean Rim”, took place at Qingdao, China from July 13-14, 2016. This Third IORA workshop on the Blue Economy would bring together officials from IORA Member States, as well as Dialogue Partners in a forum to pursue discussion on measures and actions to be taken to deal with the issues of environmental sustainability and blue economy, climate change adaption and disaster risk reduction.

Apart from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners, the workshop is expected to be attended by experts from regional/international organisations, who would share their expertise and best practices to participants. The present workshop would focus on several topics, including *inter alia*: impacts of climate change on blue economy, coastal environment and marine resources; approaches towards disaster risk prevention, reduction and management; collaboration to strengthen early warning systems; community resilience and integration for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response; post-disaster management, construction and rehabilitation; and networking and public-private partnership for sustainable development of the Blue Economy.

In addition, the deliberations of the Blue Economy Workshops would be fed at the upcoming Second Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC-II), which would be held on 09-10 May 2017 in Indonesia. The workshop will also comprise of a session whereby IORA Member States will be updated about the preparation of the BEC-II.

The Human Science Research Council (HSRC), under the membership of the Republic of South Africa, would be the lead coordinator of this project, in collaboration with the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the IORA Secretariat. The third Blue Economy Core Group workshop would benefit all IORA countries since they would be able to gain experience, share knowledge and best practices, as well as explore potentials for collaboration and cooperation to deal with the issues of Blue Economy, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, the IORA also believe that this workshop would also enhance IORA Member States experiences and capacities in these important sectors.

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