



## IORA UPDATE

Fisheries provide food and are a source of income for coastal communities in IORA regions and thus play an important role in ensuring food security and poverty alleviation. Natural fisheries resources are being overexploited and experiencing high pressures and the aquaculture industry is one of the alternatives to remedy to this situation. Aquaculture not only provides food and livelihoods to fishers but is a source of hard currency via export and participates in boosting up the countries' economy. The Fisheries and Aquaculture sector is one of the priority areas of the Blue Economy and is of common interest to most of the IORA Member States. Sustainable aquaculture development, as a mean to sustain the world fish supplies, is therefore a promising sector, and several aspects require future attention from IORA Member States.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Madagascar in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Rim Association will host a two-day Trainer's training programme on Marine Aquaculture on 2 and 3 May 2016 in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The training programme would bring together experts from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners on a common platform to share knowledge and experience, as well as empower artisanal fishermen to develop small-scale marine aquaculture activities as a mean to sustain livelihood in coastal regions.

The IORA Member States, including Madagascar, has ranked the Blue Economy as their priority for future economic development. They also recognised the need to shift to a more sustainable fisheries and aquaculture systems and attach high importance to the protection and conservation of the marine ecosystems. Promoting capacity building is a mean to promote the Sustainable development of the Blue Economy and this training programme will enable the sharing of expertise in the aquaculture sector among IORA Member States and address several topics, including *inter alia*: sustainable aquaculture practices and systems; broodstock and egg production; use of sustainable fish feeds; environmentally sound resource management (to prevent further depletion of fish stocks); safe and sound aquaculture practices; coastal/marine pollution; trade and marketing; conservation and rehabilitation of aquaculture sites; and post-harvest use, storage and processing.

In an attempt to strengthen the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector and to enhance regional mechanisms and cooperation for sustainable development of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean region, this training programme is viewed as a commendable initiative and is considered as being a first step toward developing small-scale marine aquaculture activities.

It is worth noting that it is estimated that 85% of fish stocks worldwide are over-exploited, depleted, fully exploited or in recovery from exploitation. Moreover, the world total fish demand is expected to increase from 50 million to 183 million tons in 2015 and aquaculture activities are predicted to cover about 73% of this increase. Therefore, a better understanding and knowledge of aquaculture systems and its functioning is of prime importance.

The workshop is also part of the implementation of IORA Sustainable Development Programme (ISDP) with the main objectives is to encourage peer-to-peer learning, capacity building, sharing information, experience, and best practices among Member States on Marine Aquaculture, in view of promoting the sustainable development of this important sector.

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