

## **THE ZANZIBAR CONSENSUS**

1. The Ninth Indian Ocean Dialogue was held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, on 22-23 May 2023. The Dialogue was opened by His Excellency H.E. Hon. Othman Masoud Othman, First Vice President of Zanzibar. The Dialogue was hosted by the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation and the IORA Secretariat. The Dialogue was attended by around 150 participants, including from 14 Member States and 5 Dialogue Partners.
2. The 9<sup>th</sup> IOD welcomed the participation of international/regional organisations, including the UNEP-Nairobi Convention.
3. The Dialogue plays an important role in addressing emerging challenges and major strategic issues faced by the IORA Member States with the involvement of major players in the region, including, among others, scholars, experts, policy makers and research institutions.
4. The Dialogue facilitates regional, interdisciplinary discussions across various sectors, including the Blue Economy, and identifies concrete deliverables and partnerships to meet innovative development pathways focusing on raising the standard of living of the people.
5. The 9<sup>th</sup> IOD discussed issues that were taken up at the 1<sup>st</sup> IOD in Kochi, India, the 2<sup>nd</sup> IOD in Perth, Australia, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> IOD in Jakarta, which highlighted the need to encourage greater use of regulatory frameworks to tackle maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean, including Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing through capacity building programs targeting small-scale fisheries and local communities.
6. The 9<sup>th</sup> IOD recommended further engagement and partnership with international/regional organisations working on areas of common interest, with the aim of consolidating, developing and detailing cooperation and effectiveness to achieve the common objectives of ocean governance in the Indian Ocean region.
7. The 9<sup>th</sup> IOD participants and the expert/speakers from the UNEP-Nairobi Convention discussed four major themes around: (i) ocean governance and the blue economy; (ii) marine biotechnology, research, and development; (iii) advancing the IORA's blue economy agenda; and (iv) financing the blue economy in IORA.
8. The Dialogue recognized the importance of proper regulatory framework as a collective and regional approach, in line with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other relevant legal instruments and frameworks, for the sustainable development and management of ocean resources, including the marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), as well as for addressing maritime security issues. The need for urgent action towards improved governance structures to preserve the ocean's resources for future generations was stressed.
9. The participants discussed key maritime security issues in the Indian Ocean region and commended Sri Lanka for organizing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security in March 2023. The Dialogue recommended the IORA Secretariat to collaborate with Mauritius for the organization of the third Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security in October 2023. The participants recognized the negative impacts of Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) fishing, as one of the most significant maritime security threats, on the sustainable management of fisheries resources leading to losses of government revenue, employment, fisheries value-chains and decreases in food security.
10. As effective approaches to combatting IUU fishing are information sharing, regional coordination, listing of fishing vessels, signing of Ports States Measures Agreement (PMSA) and compliance, the Dialogue observed that IORA should consider building capacity of the Member States to enforce IUU regulations, as

well as strengthening collaboration with other regional/international organisations, including the Regional Seas Conventions such as the Nairobi Convention, and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) to address the maritime challenges facing the region. The Dialogue recommended IORA to play an active role in developing an IUU Guideline to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA MS's supply chains.

11. In light of the growing demand for plastic consumption in the IORA region, the impact of increasing marine pollution from various forms of plastics and litter on environmental health, human health and economic wellbeing was revisited. Participants welcomed various actions including promoting the use of biodegradable materials, investing in clean-up efforts, banning of certain forms of plastics, restriction of production, recycling, and possible global treaty for plastic management, creation of awareness and promotion of corporate and individual behaviour change, exploring the potential of private sector partnerships, to address marine pollution being undertaken at national and regional level. The 9<sup>th</sup> IOD recommended for more collaborative effort at the regional level through, *inter alia*, sharing of information and best practices, trainings, regional policy dialogues and technical and technology transfer to enhance plastic value chains. The participants also proposed a more harmonized approach to management of marine plastics as a transboundary issue.
12. The Dialogue emphasized the use and integration of digital tools for the sustainable usage of space and resources i.e. for the coastal zones and the marine areas. The participants highlighted the importance of using innovative tools and digital technologies, such as remote sensing applications for monitoring, communications and exchange of information for market and trade dynamics, which IORA needs to focus on. The Dialogue observed that IORA should focus on building the capacity of the Member States on the use of innovative tools and technology for this purpose.
13. The Dialogue shared experiences about the use of ecosystem-based approaches, through appropriate tools, such as Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), as crucial to maximize sustainable economic yield from the ocean and coastal areas that may be considered as the guiding principle for all policy development and implementation undertaken in the maritime space.
14. The participants recognized the importance of leveraging community awareness, capacity development, financing and entrepreneurship on sustainable blue economy in realising the SDG14 targets that require nations to utilize the ocean in a more sustainable manner that supports economic development, whilst protecting and conserving the marine ecosystems. Participants suggested to explore the potential for the private sector investments in sustainable blue economy initiatives.
15. The participants discussed the need to protect and conserve blue carbon ecosystems that include mangroves, sea grasses and saltmarshes that support coastal water quality, food security and economic self-sufficiency through their role in supporting fisheries and tourism. They also play an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation and protect lives and livelihoods through buffering the effects of storms and tsunamis. IORA should build awareness and capacity in coastal protection and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems in IOR region, as observed by the Dialogue. It was also proposed that Member States develop and implement policies that support the protection and conservation of the blue carbon ecosystems.
16. The Dialogue discussed climate adaptation through Blue Carbon Initiatives and explored the potential opportunities through climate financing, including blue carbon financing, tourism and Marine Conservation Financing and financing opportunities in fisheries and aquaculture, that requires collaborative efforts to mainstream financing programs to protect the critical habitats through development and protection of marine carbon sinks.

17. The participants recognized the multi-faceted dimensions of women's economic empowerment which remains the cornerstone of sustainable development of the IORA region, particularly within the blue economy sector. The participants also stressed upon the multiple gains that would ultimately result, therefrom, ranging from greater productivity, increased employment, poverty alleviation, to enhance livelihoods and economic growth. The Dialogue stressed that IORA should empower women entrepreneurs to ensure equitable and sustainable economic growth.
18. The Dialogue highlighted the importance of collaboration and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including regional and international organisations, as well as initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI) for the advancement of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean rim region, including in carrying out marine research; sharing, collecting and managing data and information; and the implementation of concrete projects on emerging ocean science and blue economy issues. The Dialogue recommended IORA to explore the possibility of deepening links with relevant initiatives, such as IPOI, and stakeholders for advancing blue growth in the region and to achieve meaningful progress.
19. The participants acknowledged the progress made by various partners in developing Our Blue Future (OBF), a multi-stakeholder collaborative system for advancing inclusive sustainable blue economy in the Western Indian Ocean region. OBF envisions a healthy, prosperous, and resilient Western Indian Ocean for all, underpinned by participatory governance, sustainable economies and thriving coastal and marine ecosystems. Participants underscored the importance of collaborative multi-stakeholder approach in the sustainable blue economy space and welcomed the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, the GIZ funded Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI) and other partners for coming up with this initiative and encouraged other key actors including governments and the private sector to support such initiatives.
20. The Dialogue underlined the importance of the Blue Economy in contributing to food security; poverty alleviation; the mitigation of and resilience to the impacts of climate change; enhanced trade and investment; enhanced maritime connectivity; economic diversification; job creation and socio- economic growth. The participants also highlighted that Blue Economy development requires collaboration and cooperation among various relevant stakeholders, including academicians, researchers, regional/international organizations, private sectors, among others, to identify and address potential challenges or drawbacks of promoting the blue economy, such as the potential negative impact on marine ecosystems in the IOR.
21. The participants welcomed the progress made under the Blue Economy since its introduction in IORA in 2014, including the establishment of the Working Group on the Blue Economy and the implementation of its Work Plan and the work of other IORA Working Groups dealing with blue economy related topics, with the support of the Member States, IORA Specialised Agencies, Dialogue Partners and international organisations, such as the Food and Agricultural Organisations (FAO), International Seabed Authority (ISA), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO). The Dialogue expressed the hope that cooperation in this field will be further strengthened as IORA is exploring the opportunities to partner with other regional and international organisations, as well as with the Indo-Pacific countries.
22. The participants underscored the importance of adopting a regional approach for the creation of a conducive environment for a peaceful, stable, rules-based, inclusive and prosperous Indian Ocean. The participants noted that the adoption of IORA's Indo-Pacific Outlook will provide opportunity for the Member States to further promote economic growth and shared prosperity in the Indian Ocean region, including through building synergies among the various outlooks/strategies and initiatives of IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners.

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