



Mauritius Declaration on Blue Economy

Declaration

Declaration of the Indian Ocean Rim Association on enhancing Blue Economy Cooperation for Sustainable Development in the Indian Ocean Region

Mauritius

2 – 3 September 2015

WE, the Ministers and representatives of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (hereinafter referred to as “IORA”), Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand and United Arab Emirates attended the First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference in Mauritius on 2 – 3 September 2015;

- **RECOGNISING** the importance of the Blue Economy vis-a-vis :
 - **Fisheries and Aquaculture** to ensure food security and contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods;
 - **Renewable Ocean Energy** to reduce the cost of energy and to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change;
 - **Seaport and Shipping** to promote trade, investment and maritime connectivity in the Indian Ocean Rim region; and,
 - **Offshore Hydrocarbons and Seabed Minerals** to foster new business opportunities and attract investment in the Indian Ocean;
- **RECOGNISING** the need of Member States and Dialogue Partners to promote proper management of marine resources and enhance capacity building in developing countries, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs);
- **REAFFIRMING** IORA’s role to promote collaboration and cooperation in the Blue Economy for balanced economic development among IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners;
- **ENCOURAGING** IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to enhance capacity for the protection of coastal areas, marine environment and resources to ensure sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Rim region;
- **RECALLING** the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20 - 22 June 2012, that integrates social, economic and environmental goals and objectives for decision-making;

- **RECALLING** the IORA Perth Principles for peaceful, productive and sustainable use of the Indian Ocean and its resources agreed by IORA Ministers in Perth, Australia on 1 November 2013; and the IORA Economic Declaration adopted by IORA Ministers in Perth on 9 October 2014 which recognized the blue economy is emerging as a common source of growth, innovation and job creation for the Indian Ocean Region;
- **RECALLING** the establishment of the Blue Economy Core Group and the conduct of the preparatory workshops for the First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC) including: (i) The IORA Blue Economy Core Group Workshop on “Promoting Fisheries & Aquaculture and Maritime Safety & Security Cooperation in Indian Ocean Region” that was held in Durban, South Africa, on 4 - 5 May 2015; (ii) The Indian Ocean Region Workshop on “Exploration and Development of Seabed Minerals and Hydrocarbons: Current Capability and Emerging Science Needs” that took place in Bali, Indonesia from 26 - 27 July 2015 and (iii) the IORA Dialogue on the Blue Economy in Goa, India on 17-18 August, 2015;
- **RECALLING** the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13-16 July 2015 that holistically looked at financing for development across three dimensions and addressed the way in which inclusive growth and sustainable development can be achieved to address issues including sustainable energy; climate change; disaster risk reduction; oceans and seas; food security and nutrition; sustainable transportation; gender equality and women’s empowerment; and, biodiversity;
- **RECOGNISING** the importance of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the Blue Economy, especially for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for development;
- **RECALLING** IORA’s commitment to develop a common vision in making the Blue Economy an engine for sustainable development and sound environmental management in the Indian Ocean Region;
- **RECONFIRMING** IORA’s belief in promoting an innovative and sustainable Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Region;
- **COMMITTING** to an optimization of the populations’ benefit from the economic activity of the ocean;
- **REITERATING** the importance of IORA’s cooperation and engagement with Dialogue Partners, relevant international and regional organizations, the private sector, and civil society in delivering Blue Economy objectives;

HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

That the Member States of IORA will be guided by the following principles in our shared goal to foster the sustainable development of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Region:

- The Blue Economy paradigm is founded on the ecosystem approach, including science-based conservation of marine resources and ecosystems, as a means to realise sustainable development;
- IORA's priority sectors of the Blue Economy, including: Fisheries and Aquaculture; Renewable Ocean Energy; Seaports and Shipping; and Offshore Hydrocarbons and Seabed Minerals that should be developed in an environmentally sound manner for the socio-economic benefit of the population;
- Sustainable use of marine resources of the Indian Ocean should be carried out according to international law including UNCLOS and the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Member States are also encouraged to consider formulating measures for the development of the Blue Economy in a sustainable manner;
- Cooperation by IORA Member States on data collection and development of environmental baselines could ensure a strong foundation for informed decision making and policy development;
- IORA Member States shall promote sustainable fisheries including combating Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- The role of the IORA Blue Economy Core Group that will focus on: Fisheries and Aquaculture; Renewable Ocean Energy; Seaports and Shipping; and Offshore Hydrocarbons and Seabed Minerals; to promote the Blue Economy as a driver for sustainable development; research and development; investment, technology transfer and capacity building should be encouraged so as to explore the full potential of the oceans and to ensure sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Rim region;
- IORA Member States should attach higher importance on the sustainable development of the Blue Economy and be encouraged to strengthen networking, the exchange of experiences and best practices in relation to the development of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Rim region;
- Member States and Dialogue Partners should be encouraged to facilitate and allocate the availability of sufficient funding from all sources to promote mutual cooperation and technology transfer with regards to the sustainable development of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Rim Region;
- The sustainable development of the IORA priority sectors of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Region would contribute 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 empowerment of women and facilitation of micro, small and medium enterprises to participate in the development of the Blue Economy is essential to equitable and sustainable economic growth;

- Improving research, networking, and promoting researchers' exchange programmes among the Member States and Dialogue Partners is vital to ensure sustained development in the region: taking advantage of the upcoming UNESCO Indian Ocean Expedition II (IOEII) as endorsed by the 2014 Perth Communique;
- The need to involve Public-Private Partnership to enhance productivity and marketing efforts in different sectors of the Blue Economy;
- The need to set-up or revise existing regional regulatory frameworks and governance with regard to development of the Blue Economy in the region, drawing upon existing case studies and experience where it exists;
- The participation of Multilateral Organisations can make a valuable contribution to the sustainable development of the Blue Economy;
- Blue Economy development in Member States would create a conducive business environment and attract foreign investment to boost growth;
- Member States and Dialogue Partners should promote capacity building for the development of professional skills for the sustainable development and sound environmental management of different sectors in the Blue Economy.

ADOPTED by the Blue Economy Ministers and Senior Officials of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association on 03 September 2015 in Mauritius.