

# INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JAN-MARCH 2023 - 1ST ISSUE

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## Secretary-General's Note

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the first issue of IORA's newsletter. This publication will serve as a valuable resource for sharing information and updates on various activities and initiatives by our Association. The newsletter reflects our collaborative efforts towards a prosperous and inclusive Indian Ocean Rim and I thank all Member States, Dialogue Partners and stakeholders for their support in advancing the objectives of IORA.

H.E Dr. Salman Al Farisi



## IORA DAY 2023

- To mark the 26th anniversary of IORA, a press gathering was held on 7th March 2023, in Mauritius. The Secretary-General (SG) of IORA, Dr Salman Al Farisi emphasized the importance of IORA as a "crucial platform for fostering economic cooperation and sustainable development" in the Indian Ocean region among its 23 Member States and 10 Dialogue Partners.
- With a vast maritime zone, IORA serves as the first line of defence to build upon existing national, regional and international measures to enhance coordination and support harmonized international Maritime Safety and Security collaboration. So far, 14 Memorandum of Understanding have been concluded by IORA with international/regional organizations in areas of mutual interest under IORA's six priorities and cross cutting.



Watch the news coverage on IORA Day on our YouTube channel: [IORAofficial](#)

## In 1995...in the press



IORA in the news 28 years ago, before its establishment

- The newspaper reports: 28 years ago, during a meeting held at Grand-Baie, Mauritius, comprising of international experts, a consensus was reached on the setting up of an association. As a result, Mauritius was assigned as the President of the Working Group to look into the structure and mode of operation of IORA.
- Two years later, IORA was born... The vision for IORA originated during a visit by late President Nelson Mandela of South Africa to India in 1995. The creation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (then known as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation) in March 1997.

## Signing of MoU between the IORA and the IOC-UNESCO



*Photo: Secretary-General of IORA (on left) and Executive Secretary of IOC of UNESCO, Dr Vladimir Ryabinin (on right)*

**During a virtual ceremony on 14th March 2023, an MoU was signed between the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO).**

- This MoU provides a framework for future cooperation between IORA and IOC of UNESCO to promote capacity development for their Member States in ocean sciences and its applications to the sustainable ocean economy.
- The Secretary General of IORA highlighted that the joint collaboration would develop the capacities and capabilities of the countries in the region in ocean science and its applications to sustainable blue economy.
- The Executive Secretary of IOC of UNESCO added that the idea is to generate a new level of science for sustainable ocean planet and sustainable ocean management, climate change and reducing pollution. With that, regional economies will have solid foundation for growth.

*Did you know?*

The IORA Indian Ocean Blue Carbon Hub aims to build knowledge and capacity relevant to protecting and restoring blue carbon ecosystems which include mangroves, seagrasses and tidal marshes throughout the Indian Ocean in a way that enhances livelihoods, reduces risks from natural disasters and helps mitigate climate change.



## **Third Meeting of the IORA Group on Maritime Safety and Security held in Sri Lanka**

The Third Meeting of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (WGMSS) took place on March 20, 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The main objective of the 3rd WGMSS was to update and review the progress of the 2nd Work Plan (2022 - 2026) by the Member States with their respective responsibilities. Coupled with the WGMSS meeting, a three-day in-person workshop on "Cooperation for Maritime Security" was held from March 21 - 23, 2023 with support from GIZ and Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law. Its objective was to sensitize Member States on the need to harmonize domestic legislation to combat piracy, unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation and other maritime crime recognized under 2nd Work Plan of WGMSS.

There were participants from 19 IORA Member States (Australia, Bangladesh, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand and Yemen) who attended the event in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



*Photo: Heads of Delegates of Member States at the Inauguration Ceremony in Sri Lanka*



*Photo: Delegates from IORA Member States at the Workshop on Cooperation for Maritime Security*

## **IORA GIZ Research Study on "COVID-19 and Climate Change: Prospects for a "Green" Recovery in the Indian Ocean Region"**

At IORA's 25th anniversary celebrations, H.E. Dr Salman Al Farisi, IORA Secretary General, and Dr Thomas Krimmel, Project Director for the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) launched the commissioning of a comprehensive academic research study on the relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change in the Indian Ocean Region, including prospects for a "Green" Recovery with a focus on the maritime and coastal space.

The Secretariat is pleased to announce that Prof Agnes Muthumbi and the consortia, comprising academia from universities in Kenya, Bangladesh, Germany, Malaysia and Seychelles, have completed the first phase of the study. The Secretariat wishes to express its deep appreciation to the Evaluation Committee Prof Juliet Hermes, Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG), Dr Francis Aron Mwaijande, Dr Sulagna Chattopadhyaye, Dr Sadhana Rayalu and also to Ms Nicole Du Plessis for providing editorial assistance.

As it is envisaged that the research will continue with field work studies, the IORA is exploring partnership opportunities with relevant government agencies.

## Executive Director of International Trade Centre, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton at IORA



From left to right: Mr Rajib Mohan Tripura - Director of IABE, H.E Salman Al Farisi- SG of IORA, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton – Executive Director of ITC and ITC Officials

During her visit in Mauritius, the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, Ms. Pamela Coke- Hamilton met with the Secretary-General of IORA, H.E Salman Al Farisi

Discussions were focused on joint initiatives on promoting women's economic empowerment and on broadening collaborations in the areas of women's economic empowerment, trade, tourism and blue economy.

## Webinar on Artificial intelligence Application in Broadcast and Media and the Role of Radio in Helping People in Critical Situations

The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Chair of the Working Group on the Women's Economic Empowerment hosted a webinar on 14 March 2023 in collaboration with the IORA Secretariat on "Artificial intelligence Application in Broadcast and Media" and "the Role of Radio in Helping People in Critical Situations".

The role of Radio in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of countries following natural disasters have been highlighted with clear examples on how radio communications allowed countries experiencing floods and earthquakes to communicate while other means of communications were down. Moreover, attendees had the opportunity to learn more on the use of AI on media platforms and how to recognize "Deep Fake" information, from real information and avoid disinformation.

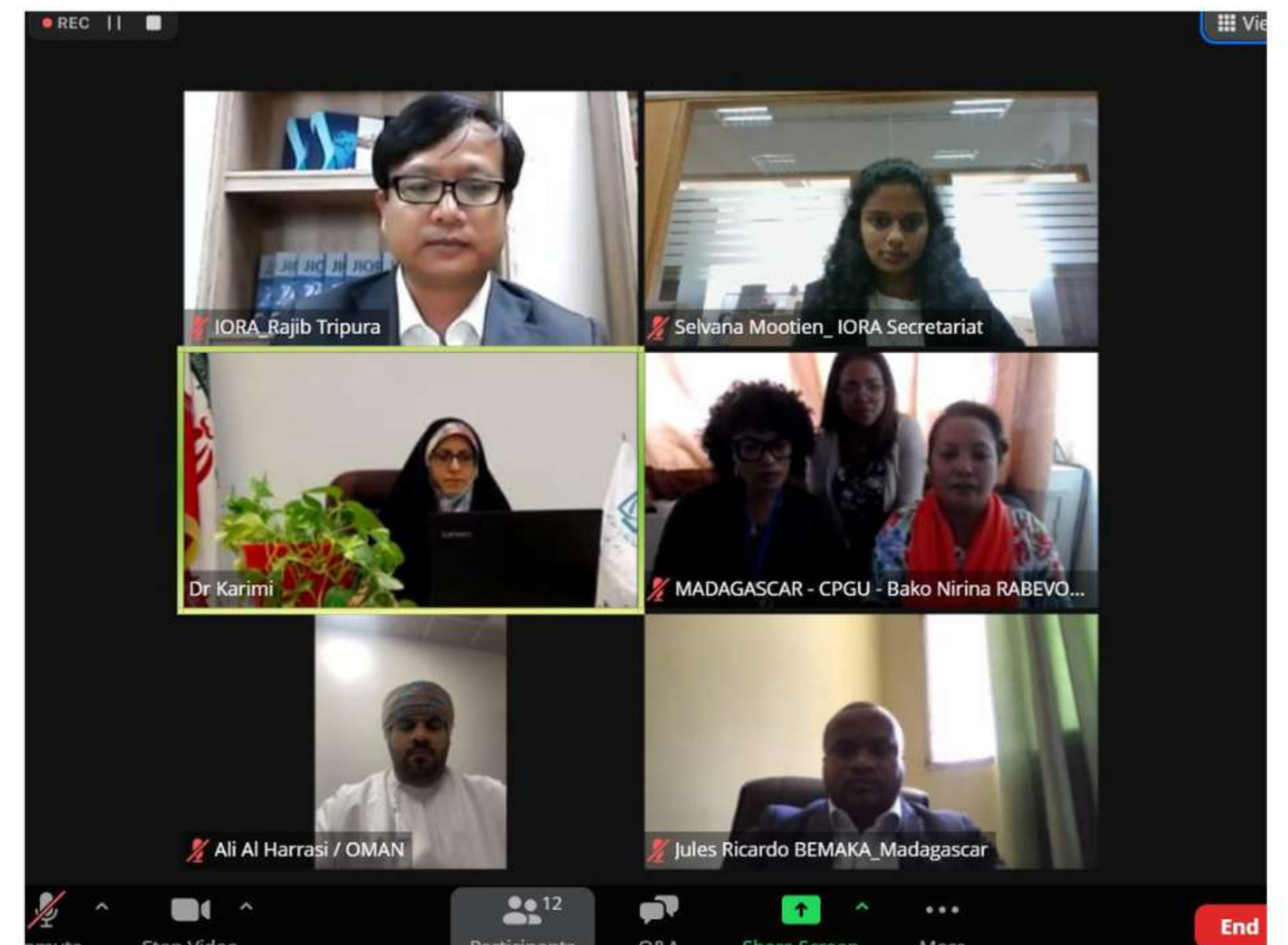


Photo: Chair of the WGWE, IORA Secretariat and participants from the Indian Ocean Region

## International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region: Collaborative Study Experience



Group photo: IORA's SG with the Australian IOR Academic Group Focal Point, Associate Professor Dr. David Mickler and a group of students

IORA's Secretary-General, Ambassador Salman Al Farisi welcomed the Australian IOR Academic Group Focal Point, Associate Professor Dr. David Mickler and a group of students from the unique annual regional collaborative study tour which brings together selected Master's students from universities in six IORA Member States: Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Mauritius and South Africa, for a 10-day short course exploring 'International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region'.

# Mission updates

## SG's visit to United Arab Emirates and Sultanate of Oman, 16-22 February 2023



*IORA's SG delivering his lecture at Omani National Defence College in Muscat*

Upon the invitation from H.E. Badr Bin Hamad Bin Hamood Albusaidi, Foreign Minister of Sultanate of Oman, the Secretary General of IORA, H.E Salman Al Farisi delivered a lecture at the Omani National Defence College in Muscat. In this speech, the SG highlighted on the role of IORA to achieve a prosperous, sustainable, and peaceful of Indian Ocean.

In-dept discussions were held between the SG and the participants on the role of IORA amidst geo-political rivalry and response of IORA towards regional conflict. The participants also raised various questions on the work of IORA in addressing the poverty, women economic empowerment, and blue economy.



Meeting with Mr Gurbuz Gonul Director of the IRENA's Country Engagement and Partnerships at International Renewable Agency headquarter



Meeting with H.E Saeed Mubarak Al Hajeri, Assistant Minister for Economic and Trade Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation



Meeting with Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Ali Shidi, Commander of the National Defence College



Meeting His Excellency Dr. Saud Bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources



Meeting H.E Mohammed bin Nasser Al-Wahaibi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman



Meeting at the headquarter of the IORA the Fisheries Support Unit, specialized agency