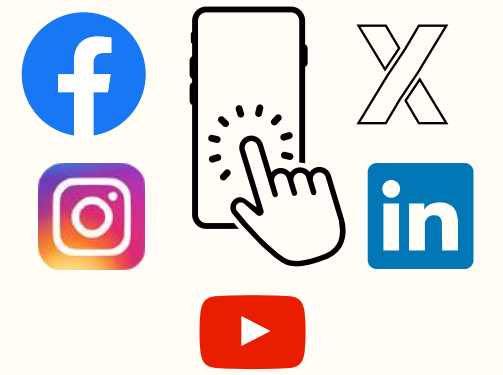


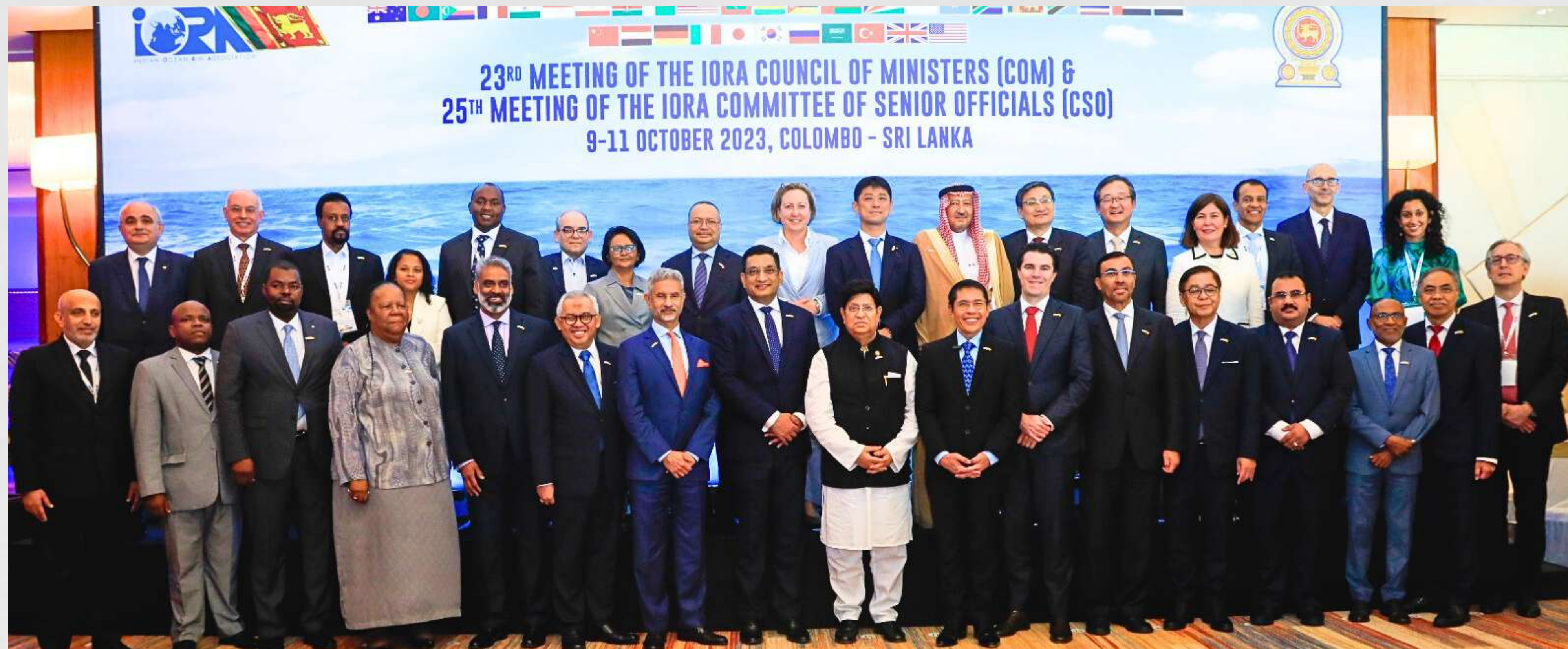
  
INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION  
**NEWSLETTER**

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## **COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' (COM) MEETING, COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**



The 23rd Meeting of COM was held on 11 October 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In the Meeting, Sri Lanka took over the IORA Chairship from Bangladesh for the period of 2023-2025, and India assumed the position of Vice-Chair for the same period. Bangladesh Chaired the Association for the last two years (2021-2023). Chaired by Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon'ble M.U. M. Ali Sabry, PC, M.P, Foreign Ministers and dignitaries from 23 Member States and 11 Dialogue Partners including Vice-Chair Hon'ble Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India and Past Chair Hon'ble Dr A. K. Abdul Momen, MP, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and Dr Salman Al-Farisi, Secretary-General of IORA participated in the COM.

Representatives from two IORA Specialised Agencies also joined the Meeting. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated for the first time as the newest Dialogue Partner of IORA. The theme of Sri Lanka for their term of Chairship is "Strengthening Regional Architecture: Reinforcing Indian Ocean Identity", aiming at promoting collaboration among IORA Member States in the region. Heads of Delegation of Member States and Dialogue partners reviewed the progress of IORA in the last one year and reiterated their commitment to work together to promote a sustainable development in the Indian Ocean region, which were reflected at the Colombo communiqué 2023 that was adopted by the Council of Ministers.

## **COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS (CSO) MEETING, COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**

On 9-11 October 2023, the 25th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials held in Colombo, which was chaired by Ms Aruni Wijewardane, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka. Senior officials of Member States discussed the topics ranging from the administrative and financial management of the organization to activities implemented by IORA functional bodies focusing on IORA priority areas.

Furthermore, the Senior Officials had the opportunity to meet with the representatives of Dialogue Partners which provided updates on their current partnerships and future plan of collaboration with IORA. Ms Aruni Wijewardane presented CSO report to the Council of Ministers on 11 October.



## **HON. M.U. M. ALI SABRY, PC, M.P, IORA CHAIR VISITS TO THE IORA SECRETARIAT, MAURITIUS**



Dr Salman Al Farisi, Secretary-General of IORA and Secretariat Staff were pleased to welcome Hon'ble Ali Sabry, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka and Chair of IORA to the premises of the IORA Secretariat in Mauritius on 17 November 2023. It is the first visit of the IORA Chair since Sri Lanka took over the chairship of IORA in October 2023. On this occasion, Hon'ble Ali Sabry addressed all the staff of the Secretariat and shared his vision for this organization as well as for the Indian Ocean region. He reiterated his commitment to make IORA an organization which will be impact driven while focusing on strengthening collaboration between Member States and Dialogue Partners. The Secretary-General gave an overview on the progress of the implementation of the decisions of the 23rd Council of Minister and 25th Committee of Senior Officials, and outlined the expected activities for the year 2024.

## **4TH ROK-IOA PARTNERSHIP SEMINAR, SEOUL, 14 DECEMBER 2023**



The 4th Republic of Korea (ROK) -IORA Partnership Seminar on "Exploring comprehensive and systematic management and response strategies for Marine Debris" was held in online and offline hybrid format. This 1,5 track forum brought together policymakers and experts from ROK, IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to share experiences, best practices, and ideas in dealing with waste segregation and plastic recycle.



## **STUDY ON "WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN TOURISM IN THE IORA REGION"**

The Secretariat is pleased to share its latest publication on "Women's Economic Empowerment in Tourism in the IORA Region". The study maps the current status and role of women in tourism in the region; identifies challenges and opportunities for women's economic empowerment in tourism; highlights existing good practices in the public and private sector across the IO region; and develops recommendations and concrete action points for taking this agenda forward within IORA. The report draws on both desk-based and primary research conducted between October 2022 and May 2023 and includes a survey sent to stakeholders across the region; two focus group workshops; and five in-depth interviews.

## ▶ WORKSHOP ON COASTAL AND MARINE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION ISSUES AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE BLUE ECONOMY



The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia and the Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia in collaboration with IORA hosted a Workshop on Coastal and Marine Protection and Conservation Issues and its importance to the Blue Economy from 31 October – 2 November 2023 in Malaysia. The workshop contributed to the implementation of Objective A3 of the Work Plan of the Core Group on Tourism (CGT) on “Encouraging the sustainable development of community-based tourism and eco-tourism” more specifically under Activity A3.1 on “Workshop to raise awareness of coastal and marine protection and conservation issues and its importance to the Blue Economy, including areas such as cruise tourism”. The overall objective of the workshop was to provide a platform for IORA member states to share scientific research findings and measures to strengthen policy, legal, and institutional framework for coastal and marine resource conservation and sustainable use. The 3-day international workshop was organised which included keynote presentations from experts on topics such as sustainable coastal and marine tourism, the vulnerability of coastal areas to climate change, the impact of jellyfish occurrences on the coastal socio-economy, and policies for coastal development.

## ▶ REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH IN THE REGION OF INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION, OMAN

In view of improving of addressing these overgrowing issues, the IORA Fisheries Support Unit (FSU), based in Oman, and the Foreign Ministry of the Sultanate of Oman, in collaboration with the IORA Secretariat hosted Regional Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health in the Region of Indian Ocean Rim Association, on 22-26 October 2023 in Oman. The workshop was attended by participants from 18 Member States, and 1 Dialogue Partner, who learnt about various aspect of aquatic animal health, including on: Fish welfare & Health; standard operating procedures for aquaculture facilities & preventive actions (regional, national and farm level); Quality Control & Hygiene; Biosecurity Guidelines and practices; audit for biosecurity; Microbial community Management; Disease treatment monitoring and legislative aspects; and health and disease management.



## ▶ DEVELOPING THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA THE SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EASTERN AFRICA (UNECA -SRO-EA), ZANZIBAR (TANZANIA)



UNECA - SRO - EA has invited IORA to participate in the validation and training workshop on the Blue Economy Valuation toolkit in collaboration with the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries of Zanzibar, held in Zanzibar on 16th to 18th October 2023. This toolkit will contribute to facilitate the understanding of the economic, social, and ecological situation in the country, in order to support the investment in the Blue Economy sector.

## ➤ WORKSHOP FOR COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNCLOS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN & MARITIME REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT



A Comparative Study on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in the Indian Ocean and a Maritime Regional Dialogue on Law Enforcement took place in Weligama Bay, Sri Lanka from 30 October to 03 November 2023 with the Support of Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in line with activities under the Workplan of the Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (WGMSS). 42 Delegates from 18 Member States (Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, France/Reunion, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, Republic of Maldives, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Republic of Seychelles, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Yemen) attended the workshop.

## ➤ MEETING WITH ACADEMIA FROM AUSTRALIA, MAURITIUS AND SOUTH AFRICA, 16 NOVEMBER 2023

A delegation led by Prof David Mickler from the Curtin University (Australia) met with the Secretariat to discuss the following issues:

- IORA University Network development
- Proposed joint Master of Indian Ocean Regionalism development
- IORA Short Course on International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region in 2024
- Australia-France Indian Ocean Research Network (AFRAN)
- Potential Indian Ocean Fellows program, e.g., Forrest Research Foundation

The delegates expressed interest to contribute to the programme of the Nelson Mandela Internship Programme (2024) and the Youth Forum.



## ➤ 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE D-8 TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND EXCHANGE NETWORK (D-8 TTEN) IN IRAN, 2-4 OCTOBER 2023

The Secretariat of the D-8 Technology Transfer and Exchange Network (D-8 - TTEN) invited the IORA Secretariat to participate in the 10th anniversary of the D-8 TTEN in Tehran, Iran, on 4 October 2023. The event brought together the D-8 TTEN Member States (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey), selected business from the respective countries, the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and the IORA.

The event was preceded by the 4th Business & Technology Meeting (BTM2023) and Mustapha Science and Technology Prize events and ceremony that were held in Isfahan, Iran, from 2-3 October 2023. Highlights of the event includes a briefing by the the Secretary General of the D-8 TTEN on the achievements and challenges of the organisations over the past 10 years and was also forward-looking, focussing on what the organisation can achieve during the next 10 years based on partnerships with like-minded organisations. This was followed by prize giving ceremony for exceptional achievements over the course of the past year as well as honouring the 3 former Secretary Generals that were all present on the occasion. The IORA participated in panel discussions on "Challenges in Technology Transfers facing Regional Organisations. The fellow panellists were the D-8 TTEN and ECO. The event culminated with the signing of the MoU on Cooperation in Research, Technology, and Innovation between the IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfers (RCSTT) and the D-8 TTEN.



**IORA Secretary-General, Dr. Salman Al Farisi delivered a lecture at the National Defence College (NDC) of the Sultanate of Oman on “IORA and its role to global development”. The lecture was attended by NDC enrolled senior staff and officials. NDC is an academic centre which offer courses on regional & international affairs, to present Oman's position as an open country that pursues dialogue for all.**



**The new Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius, H.E. Oskar Benedikt paid a courtesy call on the Secretary General of IORA, H.E. Salman Al Farisi on 26th September, at the Secretariat of IORA in Ebene.**



**Brainstorming meeting at the IORA Secretariat in Ebene, dedicated to advancing the operationalization of the MoU between IORA and Indian Ocean Commission. The joint commitment of both Secretary-General highlights the importance of diplomatic cooperation and coordinating efforts for progress.**



**Ms Vishakha Yaduvanshi, Director of Indo-Pacific Division and IORA National Focal Point of India paid a courtesy call on the Secretary-General of IORA H.E. Salman Al Farisi at the IORA Secretariat in Ebene.**



The new French Ambassador in Mauritius, H.E. Frédéric Bontems paid a courtesy call to the Secretary-General of IORA, Dr. Salman Al Farisi at the IORA Secretariat in Ebene.



IORA Secretariat attended a community engagement programme on a corporate organic farming workshop by Farmbasket where kids joined the green fun! We got valuable insights into the world of organic farming and cultivating sustainable practices.



Launching of magazine: "Promoting Blue Economy and Fisheries Management" on 7th December 2023. The magazine reflects 3 years of cooperation between IORA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France through Agence Française de Développement with the support of COFREPECHE.



SG meeting with H.E. Mr. Chung Byung-won, Deputy Minister for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea (ROK), in Seoul, ROK, 15 December 2023

## DID YOU KNOW?



On the celebration of Women's Day 2022, IORA Member States adopted the Gender Pledge which aimed at having a gender ratio between men and women at 40:40: 20 (i.e men: women: any) by the year 2030. This gender pledge is a commitment to have gender balance in delegates attendance across IORA activities, as head of delegation, in speaking roles and in managerial position at IORA Secretariat.  
So, in future IORA activities, watch out for gender balance!