



IORA

JANUARY-MARCH 2026

E-newsletter



Disaster Risk Management



Fisheries Management



Trade & Investment Facilitation



Maritime Safety & Security



Academic, Science & Technology Cooperation



Tourism & Cultural Exchanges



Women's Economic Empowerment



Blue Economy



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ACRONYMS

- AFD – Agence Française de Développement
- CDRI – Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
- CSO – Committee of Senior Officials
- DRM – Disaster Risk Management
- DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
- ECPN – Early Career Professionals Network
- EPR – Extended Producer Responsibility
- GEDSI – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
- GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
- IIHS – Indian Institute for Human Settlements
- IOC – Indian Ocean Commission
- IOM – International Organization for Migration
- IORA – Indian Ocean Rim Association
- IRIOR – International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region
- JNCC – Joint Nature Conservation Committee
- KATON – Korea Institute of Aids to Navigation
- MABIK – National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea
- NIMP – Nelson Mandela Internship Programme
- OCPP – Ocean Country Partnership Programme
- PIROI – Plateforme d’Intervention Régionale de l’Océan Indien (French Red Cross)
- PROs – Producer Responsibility Organisations
- SCF – Sub-Committee on Finance
- SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
- TIF – Trade and Investment Facilitation
- UN – United Nations
- UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- UNITAR – United Nations Institute for Training and Research
- UNIOR – Indian Ocean University Network
- UK – United Kingdom
- USA – United States of America
- WEE – Women’s Economic Empowerment
- WIO – Western Indian Ocean

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period January to March 2026, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) continued to advance its mandate through strengthened regional cooperation, strategic partnerships, and targeted initiatives across its Priority Areas and Cross-Cutting Issues. The Association's work during this period reflected a sustained emphasis on partnership-driven approaches to promoting sustainable development across the Indian Ocean region.

High-level diplomatic and institutional engagements led by the Secretary-General, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, reinforced collaboration with Member States, Dialogue Partners, and international organisations. These engagements advanced cooperation across key thematic areas, including the Blue Economy, Trade and Investment Facilitation, Disaster Risk Management, Maritime Safety and Security, and Women's Economic Empowerment. Notable developments included strengthened collaboration with the Republic of Korea under a new three-year framework on Blue Economy initiatives, as well as enhanced partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to deliver tailored capacity-building programmes for Member States. Engagements with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as continued dialogue with the United States and the United Kingdom, further reinforced cooperation on Maritime Safety and Disaster Preparedness.

IORA also deepened its collaboration with development and technical partners through targeted workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms across all its Priority Areas and Cross-Cutting Issues. These included initiatives on disaster risk management and resilient infrastructure conducted in partnership with CDRI, IIHS, AFD, Expertise France, and the UK's Ocean Country Partnership Programme. During this period, IORA also renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre). IORA advanced academic cooperation through initiatives such as hosting the first inaugural meeting of the IORA Indian Ocean University Network and promoted women's economic empowerment through partnerships and inclusive, gender-responsive approaches integrated across its regional development programmes.

Environmental sustainability and ocean governance remained central to IORA's agenda. Key progress was made in advancing the Blue Economy through participation in the South-South Ocean Accounting Exchange, supporting improved Marine Spatial Planning, Blue Carbon initiatives, and Environmental Reporting. Collaboration with UK partners and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) further underscored the role of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and Nature-Based solutions in disaster risk reduction for climate change resilience.

Institutional strengthening efforts continued through ongoing work of the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Ad-hoc Committee on the Special Fund Guidelines Review, focusing on enhancing governance, accountability, accessibility, and resource mobilisation to support effective programme implementation.

IORA DAY 2026

Commemoration of IORA Day 2026 at the Secretariat

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat commemorated IORA Day 2026 by hosting a reception on 10 March 2026 at its headquarters in Ebene, Mauritius. The event was attended by diplomats from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners, Senior Officials, and representatives of the Secretariat.



Highlights from IORA Day commemorated at the IORA Secretariat, Mauritius

Established on 7 March 1997, IORA, an Intergovernmental Organisation of the Indian Ocean region, comprises 23 Member States and 12 Dialogue Partners. Its founding vision, championed by President Nelson Mandela, emphasised regional collaboration as a foundation for peace, prosperity, and balanced economic development.

Key achievements over the past 29 years include strengthening regional frameworks through six Priority Areas: Maritime Safety and Security; Trade and Investment Facilitation; Fisheries Management; Academic, Science and Technology Cooperation; Disaster Risk Management; and Tourism and Cultural Exchanges, along with two Cross-Cutting Issues: Blue Economy and Women's Economic Empowerment.

IORA has delivered landmark initiatives, including Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Guidelines, Principle Guidelines on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing, the Strategic Framework on Marine Debris, and the Climate Change Strategic Agenda. The IORA Special Fund has supported numerous projects enhancing capacities, promoting regional collaboration, and fostering partnerships with Dialogue Partners and regional organisations. Institutional mechanisms such as the Indian Ocean Dialogue, Centres of Excellence, and Specialised Agencies continue to provide platforms for policy dialogue, research, and capacity building.

As IORA approaches its third decade, it remains committed to deepening regional cooperation, advancing practical solutions to shared challenges, and ensuring that its Member States and partners derive clear, long-term benefits from their engagement with the Association

[Click to view the video showcased during the IORA Day.](#)

IORA Day 2026 commemorated by South Africa



Highlights from IORA Day commemorated in South Africa

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), in collaboration with the North-West University (NWU), celebrated the 29th IORA Day anniversary under the theme “Strengthening Connections Amongst the People of IORA” in hybrid format on 27 March 2026.

The proceedings at the North-West University Mahikeng campus commenced with the IORA Day message from the IORA Secretary-General, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, who thanked South Africa for its contributions towards the advancement of the IORA agenda. The Secretary-General continued to highlight IORA’s achievements and emphasised the value of prioritising women and youth for inclusive and sustained regional development. The message was followed by the keynote address by the University’s Vice Chancellor, Dr. Joe Molete, and remarks by the IORA Alternate Senior Official and Acting Chief Director (DIRCO), Mr B Joubert.

IORA Day 2026 commemoration held by Tanzania



Highlights from IORA Day commemorated in Tanzania

Commemorating the 29th anniversary of IORA by Tanzania, reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening cooperation in the sustainable utilisation of Indian Ocean resources.

Tanzania marked IORA Day on 7 March 2026 in Dodoma with an engaging event that convened more than 100 participants. The programme featured a tree-planting initiative alongside physical exercise activities, reflecting a commitment to promoting wellness, environmental conservation, and collective action to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The activities were held under this year’s theme, “IORA Improves Lives.” The event was honoured by the presence of Ambassador Baraka H. Luvanda, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Environment at the Vice President’s Office, officials from several Ministries, Government Institutions, Civil Society, Media and Social Groups.

France/Réunion Commemorates Five Years as Member of IORA

On 11 March 2026, France/Réunion hosted a commemorative event at the Institut Français de Maurice (IFM) in Mauritius to mark its fifth anniversary since joining the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as a Member State.



Participants at the commemorative event marking the fifth anniversary since France/Reunion joined IORA as a Member States

The event brought together representatives from IORA Member States, Dialogue Partners, as well as international and regional organisations, fostering dialogue and strengthening collaboration across the Indian Ocean region. It also featured the dissemination of the IORA Principle Guidelines on Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, adopted at the 24th IORA Council of Ministers in May 2025. The Guidelines serve as a regional reference framework aimed at enhancing cooperation, strengthening transparency, and supporting sustainable fisheries management across the region.

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION

MOU between IORA and NAM S&T Centre

On 26 March 2026, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Science and Technology Centre for Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI) at the IORA Secretariat in Ebene, Mauritius.



H.E. Mr. Sanjiv Ranjan, Secretary-General of IORA & Mr. Amitava Bandopadhyay, Director General of NAM S&T Centre, exchanging MOU

The MOU highlights the importance of STI in advancing sustainable development and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Indian Ocean region through capacity building, research collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The renewal of the partnership established in 2019 will continue to promote joint programmes, facilitate the sharing of expertise, and support the development and implementation of STI initiatives, including training programmes, workshops and collaborative projects. The MOU amplifies cooperation between IORA and NAM S&T Centre, originally signed in November 2019. It promotes science, technology, and innovation as a foundation for sustainable development, aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SUB-COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

SCF Meeting endorses IORA Secretariat Budget 2026



SCF meeting under the Chairship of the Republic of India, with participation from Member States

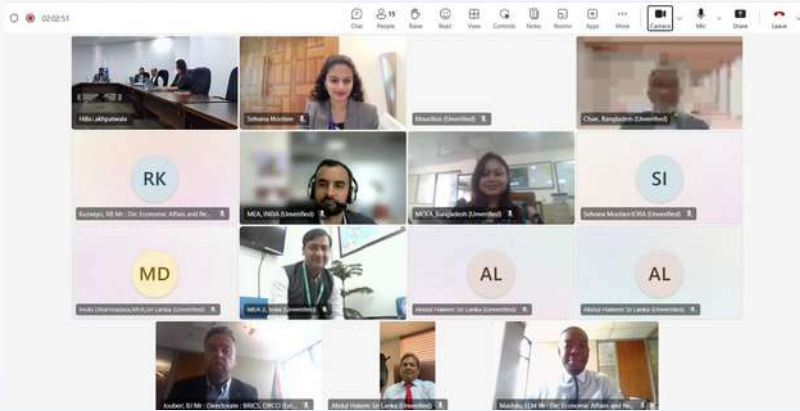
On 24 February 2026, the Sub-Committee on Finance (SCF) of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of IORA met virtually under the Chairship of the Republic of India .

The meeting was attended by representatives of IORA Member States and IORA Secretariat. Discussions were held on various issues related to financial matters and the strengthening of the IORA secretariat's institutional capacity.

SCF endorsed the budget of the IORA Secretariat for the year 2026.

REVIEW OF SPECIAL FUND GUIDELINES

IORA Holds Second Meeting of Ad-hoc Committee on Review of Special Fund Guideline



Second Meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Review of IORA Special Fund Guidelines

The Second Meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Review of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Special Fund Guideline was held virtually on 20 January 2026, under the chairmanship of Bangladesh. The IORA Secretariat facilitated the deliberations of the Ad-hoc Committee.

The Ad-hoc Committee members discussed a range of issues aimed at streamlining procedures, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and improving the accessibility of the IORA Special Fund. The discussions also focused on enhancing the effectiveness of fund utilisation for the implementation of programmes across all Priority Areas and Cross-Cutting issues.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT FACILITATION

IORA and UN Global Compact Network Indian Ocean Strengthen Private Sector Collaboration



Meeting with the team of United Nations Global Compact Network Indian Ocean by TIF Directorate

On 23 March 2026, the Trade and Investment Directorate of the IORA Secretariat met with the United Nations Global Compact Network Indian Ocean to explore avenues for strengthening collaboration with the private sector.

Discussions focused on identifying effective approaches to engage businesses in advancing both regional and global agendas. Emphasis was placed on the critical role of the private sector in driving sustainable development, innovation, and responsible business practices across the Indian Ocean region.

Increased private sector engagement and action were highlighted as essential for supporting the implementation of IORA's Action Plan, while also contributing meaningfully to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IORA participates in United Nations Global Compact Network's Indian Ocean Forward Faster 2026 event

IORA's Director for Trade and Investment Facilitation, Mr Michael Gurner attended the United Nations Global Compact Network's Indian Ocean Forward Faster 2026 event on 18 February 2026



Participants of the United Nations Global Compact Network's Indian Ocean Forward Faster 2026 event

The three-day event (18-20 February) attended by senior private sector participants from across the region discussed governance, sustainable finance, climate and environmental action, and partnerships. The dialogue highlighted a central message: the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in our region will only be possible through strong and coordinated public-private collaboration.

The event provided an opportunity to discover shared interests and potential opportunities for collaboration, including to support IORA's trade and investment objectives.

IORA Participates in UNCTAD Webinar on Trade in Services Data



IORA's Director for Trade and Investment Facilitation, Mr Michael Gurner participated in the United Nations Trade and Development Webinar on the Primer on data for trade in services and development policies—Asia Pacific, on 23 March 2026. Countries continue to face gaps in collecting, interpreting, and using statistics on trade in services, making it harder to design effective trade and development strategies.

The Primer on data for trade in services and development policies was developed to respond to these challenges.

It provides practical guidance on how to identify and use data from national, regional, and international sources, while also helping to pinpoint data gaps and capacity-building needs. The webinar emphasized how the Primer could be applied in Asia-Pacific policy settings, reflecting regional priorities and realities. For IORA's Trade and Investment Directorate, the Webinar provided an opportunity to better understand the tools and resources made available by UNCTAD while encouraging IORA Member States to engage with these helpful resources that support IORA's Trade and Investment Facilitation objectives.



Did you know?

IORA is Observer to United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), African Union (AU) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT & BLUE ECONOMY

Strengthening Ocean Governance through South–South Exchange

From 30 March to 1 April 2026, the South–South Ocean Accounting Exchange held in Bogor, Indonesia, convened representatives from 18 countries, including IORA Member States. The exchange provided a valuable platform for dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration on advancing ocean accounting practices.

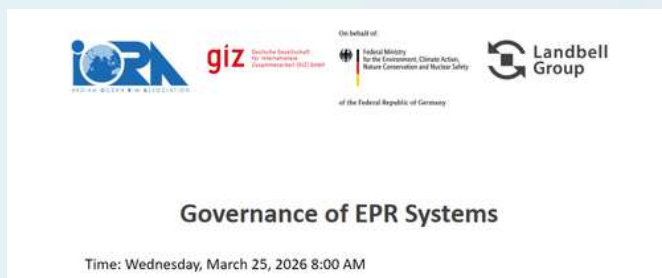


Virtual opening remarks by the representative of IORA Secretariat for the South–South Ocean Accounting Exchange

The programme enabled to have exchange of more practical and evidence-based approaches to Ocean Governance, Ocean Accounting as a valuable tool to support better policy, planning, and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources. Hosted by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia in partnership with IPB University and the Rekam Nusantara Foundation, the Exchange was supported technically by the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) Secretariat, with support from the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The programme drew on established ocean accounting methodologies to explore how data can better inform ocean governance and policy. Ms Stephanie Johannes, Director Fisheries Management and Blue Economy at IORA Secretariat virtually presented opening remarks. Ms Johannes underscored the relevance of ocean accounting in supporting evidence-based Blue Economy approaches and in helping countries respond to shared challenges, including climate change, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, habitat degradation, and marine pollution.

IORA and GIZ Advance Regional Action on Marine Litter



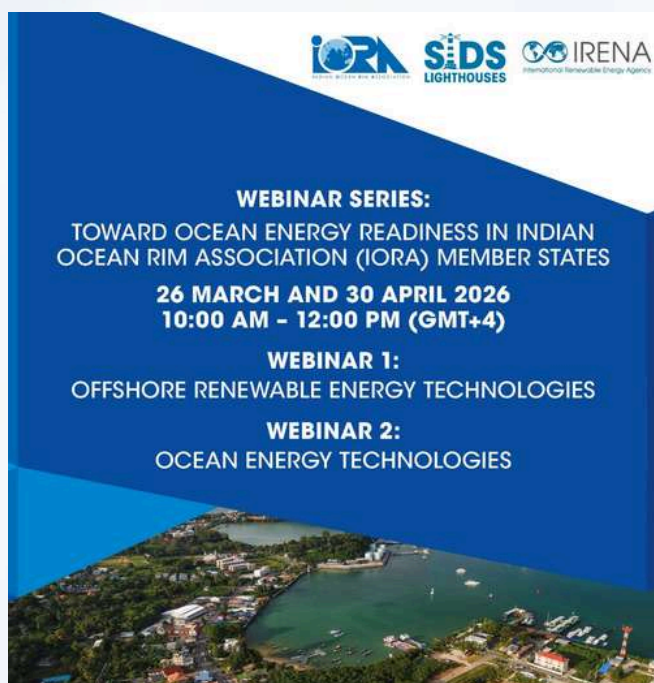
On 25 March 2026, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), in collaboration with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and with technical support from the Landbell Group, convened the first webinar of its EPR workshop series for Member States.

The session, titled “Governance of EPR Systems,” brought together policymakers, experts, and practitioners to explore the institutional and regulatory foundations needed for effective EPR implementation.

EPR is a key policy approach that shifts waste management responsibility to producers, helping improve resource efficiency and supporting the transition towards a circular economy. “Extended Producer Responsibility represents an important policy approach for addressing marine litter in the Indian Ocean region.

Through this workshop series, IORA aims to support Member States in strengthening governance frameworks, while facilitating the exchange of practical experiences and lessons learned,” said the Director for Blue Economy and Fisheries Management at the IORA Secretariat. Discussions highlighted the importance of clear governance structures, defined roles among stakeholders, compliance mechanisms, and transparency tools such as EPR registries. Participants also examined how international experiences can be adapted to regional and national contexts.

IORA and IRENA Advance Ocean Energy Readiness



IORA in collaboration with its MOU partner - International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), convened the first webinar in the series “Toward Ocean Energy Readiness in IORA Member States” on 26 March 2026. The session gathered 45 participants from 13 Member States and two Dialogue Partners, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Held under the IORA–IRENA Memorandum of Understanding and aligned with the IRENA SIDS Lighthouses Initiative, the webinar focused on offshore renewable energy technologies, including offshore wind and floating solar PV. Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening enabling policies, financing mechanisms, and data systems to support implementation.

Participants also underscored key challenges, including resilience in cyclone-prone environments, environmental and social acceptance, and opportunities for multi-use approaches such as aquaculture integration.

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Advancing Disaster Risk Reduction through Nature-Based Solutions

On 24 March 2026, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), in collaboration with the United Kingdom as one of its Dialogue Partners, and through its delivery partner, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), hosted a webinar titled “Nature’s Shield: Blue Carbon Habitats for Disaster Risk Reduction.” The session brought together 30 participants from 9 IORA Member States.

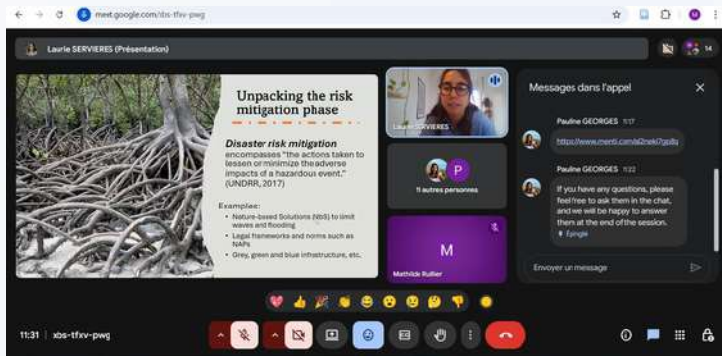


The webinar aimed to explore the role of blue carbon habitats as nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction across Member States. Discussions underscored the importance of environmental conservation and highlighted the value of regional collaboration in strengthening resilience within the marine environment. The session also provided an opportunity for JNCC and IORA Member States to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and identify potential areas for future cooperation.

Webinar on Nature-Based Solutions for advancing Disaster Risk Reduction

IORA Strengthens Disaster Risk Management Cooperation through Stakeholder Engagement Webinar Series

IORA, in collaboration with Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Expertise France, organised a two-part webinar series on stakeholder engagement in Disaster Risk Management (DRM). The series enabled participants from IORA Member States to share best practices and highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in building resilience.



Webinar Series focused on Disaster Risk Reduction

The first session, held on 10 March 2026, focused on inclusive engagement in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). It brought together 24 participants from 8 Member States and emphasised the need for collaboration among communities, civil society, governments, and development partners. Discussions highlighted participatory approaches and practical tools to address vulnerabilities and strengthen long-term resilience. The second session, held on 23 March 2026, focused on post-disaster resilience through regional cooperation. It gathered 38 participants from 11 Member States and featured contributions from PIROI (French Red Cross) and Expertise France Vanuatu. Speakers shared practical experiences and strategies, underlining the role of regional cooperation in effective recovery.

CDRI, IORA and IHS Advance Dialogue on Resilient Housing



Webinar Series focused on Resilient Housing

The second webinar on Resilient Housing was held virtually on 19 February 2026, hosted by the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IHS).

The session brought together participants from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to explore approaches to strengthening housing systems in the face of climate and disaster risks. Emphasis was placed on the importance of nature-based solutions, alongside the integration of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) considerations, as well as long-term resilience planning and governance frameworks.

These elements were highlighted as essential to addressing disruptions in coastal regions and advancing resilient infrastructure. The webinar builds on the continued partnership between the IORA Secretariat and CDRI, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in April 2022 and extended in 2025.

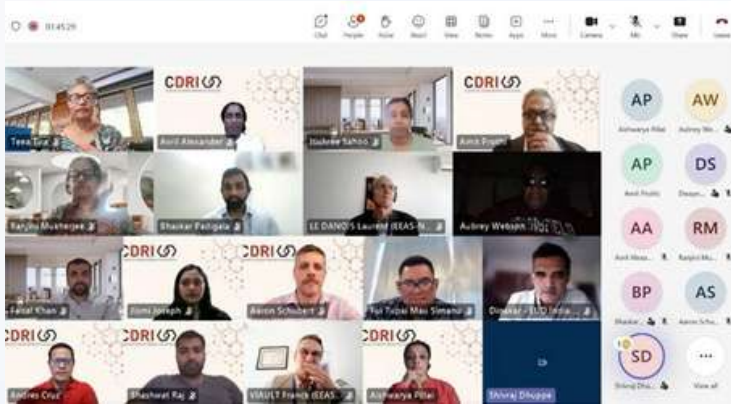


Did you know?

IORA is Steering Committee Member of Infrastructure for Resilience Island States (IRIS) initiative of CDRI, MOU partner of IORA. CDRI champions disaster resilient infrastructure for SIDS by deploying experts, sharing best practices, and providing direct funding and technical assistance through the IRIS initiative.

IORA Strengthens Disaster Risk Management Cooperation through Stakeholder Engagement Webinar Series

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) participated in the 9th Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) Steering Committee meeting on 25th March 2026 on virtual mode. The IRIS programme is one of the flagship initiatives of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).



Participants of the 9th IRIS Steering Committee meeting

The Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS) receive technical support on multifaceted issues posed by infrastructure systems to develop capacities to promote disaster and climate resilience infrastructure.

The updates on progress of various project including the projects of IORA SIDS Members States funded under IRIS Programme were highlighted during the steering Committee meeting. IORA highlighted the relevance of IRIS in advancing resilience and climate adaptation priorities for IORA SIDS.

The potential for strengthened collaboration between CDRI and IORA, particularly in scaling interventions, aligning with regional priorities, and expanding outreach through knowledge-sharing platforms such as CDRI's DRI Connect was also stressed out.

Proposed Collaboration between IORA and UNDRR



Participants at the meeting between IORA and UNDRR

An exchange meeting between IORA and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) was held on 21 January 2026 to explore a formal collaboration on Risk Management.

Deliberations are currently taking place between the two organizations to formalise the partnership.

IORA remains committed to strengthening collaboration with UNDRR to enhance disaster risk management capacities and comprehensive risk management integrating climate change adaptation across the region.

Upcoming Event

The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in collaboration with the Indian Council of World Affairs will be jointly hosting the 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD), from 07 to 08 May 2026 in New Delhi, India. The Dialogue, centered around the theme “Indian Ocean Region in a Transforming world”, will comprise six sessions focusing on Priority Areas and Cross-Cutting Issues.

ACADEMIC, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

IORAG Early Career Professionals Network Webinar Strengthens Regional Engagement

On 25 March 2026, the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) Early Career Professionals Network (ECPN) successfully hosted a webinar aimed at engaging members and emerging professionals.



The ECPN is dedicated to supporting early career professionals by fostering collaboration, promoting knowledge-sharing, and enhancing the long-term visibility of IORA across its Member States. The session featured presentations on the Network’s background, key activities, and priorities for 2026, while also highlighting opportunities available to members, including short courses, academic programmes, internships, and member-led initiatives. The strong participation reflected a growing interest in the Network and its activities.

Participants at the IORA Workshop on Enhancing Biosecurity Practices in Inland Aquaculture Farms, Padang, Indonesia, November 2025.

South Africa Hosts IORA Day Webinar on Strengthening Knowledge Connectivity Across the Indian Ocean

On 4 March 2026, the Republic of South Africa hosted a webinar titled “Knowledge Bridges to Catalyse Connectivity Across the Indian Ocean” for IORA Member States, in commemoration of IORA Day 2026.



The webinar highlighted the role of IORA in strengthening regional connectivity through knowledge exchange and academic collaboration. Key initiatives such as the Indian Ocean University Network (UNIOR), the Short Course on International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region (IRIOR), and the IORA Nelson Mandela Internship Programme (NIMP) were showcased as practical examples of bridging research, policy, and implementation.

The discussions reaffirmed that sustainable connectivity requires strong knowledge corridors, supported by physical linkages. Participants also emphasized the importance of further strengthening IORA-led initiatives to enhance cooperation and integration across the Indian Ocean region.



Did you know?

Launched during the 18th Council of Ministers’ meeting in 2018 in Durban, the Nelson Mandela Internship Programme (NMIP) to create a strong and growing base of young people in the Indian Ocean Region that understand and support the need to safeguard an Indian Ocean that is safe, secure and develops sustainably.

IORA Holds Inaugural Meeting of the Indian Ocean University Network

On 4 February 2026, the inaugural meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Indian Ocean University Network (UNIOR) was held, marking a significant step toward establishing a region-wide academic platform connecting universities across the Indian Ocean region.



Participants and speakers at the Webinar on Seawater Desalination and Multipurpose Utilization in the Indian Ocean Region

UNIOR is advancing an ambitious programme of activities aimed at strengthening research collaboration and academic exchange. Key initiatives include a monthly webinar series hosted by member universities, the launch of an Annual Collaborative Research Seed Grants Scheme, the development of the International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region (IRIOR) Short Course, and preparations for the UNIOR Forum 2026 to be held in Kenya (Mombasa and Nairobi), bringing together universities, researchers, and policy thinkers from across the region.

Universities across the Indian Ocean region are invited to join UNIOR and contribute to shaping a dynamic platform for regional knowledge exchange and collaboration. Interested institutions are encouraged to channel their registration through their IORA National Focal Points or contact unior@iora.int for further information.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

IORA Advances Gender-Responsive Approaches in Marine Pollution Response at WIO Symposium

On 21 January 2025, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Directorate led a dedicated session on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) during the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Marine Pollution Response Symposium held in Zanzibar, Tanzania.



The session featured an interactive breakout discussion bringing together representatives from 10 IORA Member States. Participants exchanged views on the importance of gender-responsive approaches in strengthening regional preparedness and response mechanisms for marine pollution incidents. The discussions underscored that inclusive approaches are essential for enhancing the effectiveness and resilience of environmental response systems across the region. This event was funded by IORA Dialogue Partner, the Government of the United Kingdom, through its Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP), and was implemented in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

ENGAGEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL



Secretary General of IORA Meets External Affairs Minister of India

On 13 January 2026, the Secretary General of IORA, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, met with India's Minister of External Affairs, Hon. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, in New Delhi.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss key priority areas for cooperation among IORA Member States, with a focus on strengthening collaboration across governments, businesses, and academia. Both sides highlighted the importance of fostering partnerships to advance regional development and address shared challenges across the Indian Ocean region.

India assumed the Chairship of IORA in November 2025 and continues to play a leading role in guiding the Association's agenda and promoting deeper engagement among Member States.



Interview with Secretary-General by BIZWEEK

"Resilience must be embedded directly into policymaking across infrastructure, planning systems, and development models," emphasised Sanjiv Ranjan, Secretary-General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), in an interview with Bizweek. Highlighting the escalating climate risks across the Indian Ocean region, he warned that delays in climate adaptation carry significant long-term costs.

He stressed the urgent need to move beyond awareness toward actionable resilience, stronger capacity-building, and enhanced cooperation among Member States. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the IORA Secretariat and translating dialogue into tangible outcomes, he noted, will be critical to addressing climate challenges, ensuring maritime stability, and unlocking the region's economic potential.

[Click here to read the full interview](#)



Strengthening Blue Economy: IORA Meets Republic of Korea Delegation

On 3 February 2026, the Secretary-General of IORA, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, met with a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, accompanied by representatives from the Korea Institute of Aids to Navigation (KATON) and the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK).

The meeting followed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between IORA and the Republic of Korea on 18 December 2025. Under this framework, KATON and MABIK will support initiatives promoting the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean Region over a period of three years. Discussions focused on the implementation of upcoming capacity-building programmes, including sustainable port operations, the development of aids to navigation, and the advancement of blue technologies.

ENGAGEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL



IORA and UNITAR Discuss Renewal of Strategic Partnership

On 18 February 2026, the Secretary-General of IORA, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, met with Mr. Rabih El-Haddad, Director of the Division for Multilateral Diplomacy at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

The discussions focused on renewing and strengthening the partnership between IORA and UNITAR, particularly in key priority and cross-cutting areas. These include Trade and Investment Facilitation, Disaster Risk Management, the Blue Economy, and Women's Economic Empowerment.

Both sides also explored the development of tailored training programmes designed to address the specific capacity-building needs of IORA Member States.



IORA and IOM Discuss Strengthened Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region

On 24 February 2026, a delegation from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), led by Ms. Alia Hirji, Chief of Mission for Mauritius and Seychelles, and Mr. Abdi Hersi, Regional Policy and Liaison Officer, called upon the Secretary-General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan.

The meeting provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on future collaboration between IORA and IOM. Discussions focused on key areas including Maritime Safety and Security, Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Adaptation, as well as identifying synergies to strengthen regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of coordinated efforts to address shared challenges and enhance resilience across Member States.



Delegation from U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy, Mauritius Pays Courtesy Visit

On 23 February 2026, the delegation of the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy, Mauritius paid a Courtesy Visit to the Secretary-General IORA, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan at the IORA Secretariat.

The meeting provided an opportunity to present ongoing initiatives undertaken by IORA and to highlight the organisation's role in promoting regional cooperation and sustainable development across the Indian Ocean Region.

ENGAGEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL



High-Level UK Delegation Visits IORA Secretariat

On 18 March 2026, IORA Secretariat hosted a high-level delegation from the United Kingdom. The Secretary-General of IORA, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, welcomed the delegation and led discussions following a presentation on IORA's Priority Areas, Cross-Cutting Issues, and ongoing activities. This was followed by an interactive exchange on strengthening cooperation between IORA and the United Kingdom.

The UK delegation included H.E. Jeff Glekin, British High Commissioner to Seychelles; H.E. Nick Low, British High Commissioner to the Republic of Maldives; H.E. Tom Blakes James, British High Commissioner to Victoria; H.E. Patrick Lynch, UK Ambassador to Madagascar and Comoros; and H.E. Paul Brummell, British High Commissioner to the Republic of Mauritius, accompanied by senior officials.



IORA Secretary-General Joins Reception Hosted by President of Mauritius

The Secretary-General of IORA, H.E. Sanjiv Ranjan, participated in a reception held in honour of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps on 7 February 2026. The event was hosted by H.E. Dharambeer Gokhool, President of the Republic of Mauritius.

His participation reaffirmed IORA's commitment to strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing diplomatic relations across the Indian Ocean region.



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