



**26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)**

**30-31 May 2024**

**At 09:30 – 17:00 SLST time (GMT+5)**

***Theme: “Strengthening Regional Architecture: Reinforcing Indian Ocean Identity”***

**Virtual via Webex**

**DECISION REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) was hosted by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in a virtual format on 30-31 May 2024. The Meeting was chaired by Ambassador S. Dissanayake, Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and was attended by representatives of IORA Member States, namely Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, French Republic on account of Reunion (henceforth France/Reunion), Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, Republic of Maldives, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of Singapore, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Kingdom of Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Yemen. The IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT), and the Fisheries Support Unit (FSU) also attended the meeting.

**1. OPENING SESSION**

**1.1 Welcome Address and Opening Remarks by Chair (Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the Chairperson's Welcome Address and Opening Remarks.

**1.2 Remarks by Vice-Chair (India)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the remarks by the IORA Vice-Chair, India.

**1.3 Remarks by the Past-Chair (Bangladesh)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the remarks by the Past Chair, Bangladesh.

#### **1.4 Outline of Arrangements and Adoption of the Agenda (Chair, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO adopted the Draft Agenda.

#### **1.5 Report by the Secretary-General (Secretariat, IORA)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the report of Ambassador Dr. Salman Al Farisi, Secretary-General of IORA.

## **2. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND BROADENING ENGAGEMENT - *Coordinating Country: Bangladesh***

### **2.1 Report: Vacancy for the position of the next IORA Secretary-General (2025-2027) (Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO endorsed the Report of the Recruitment and Selection Committee (RSC) and recommended to the COM the appointment of H.E. Ambassador Shri Sanjiv Ranjan as the next Secretary-General of IORA to assume duty in January 2025.

The CSO noted that the RSC committee will meet separately and take a decision regarding the circulation of the detailed report of the RSC to all Member States.

### **2.2 Update: Vacancy for the position of Director in charge of the Institutional Arrangements and Broadening Engagement (IABE) (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the position of the vacancy for the post of Seconded Director in charge of Institutional Arrangements and Broadening Engagement (IABE).

### **2.3 Report: Establishment of IORA Deputy Secretary-General position (Australia)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted that additional time was required for internal consultations and requested the Secretariat to recirculate the relevant documents to all Member States for input and comments.

### **2.4 Report: Virtual Meeting on Terms of Reference (ToR): Format of the Meetings of CSO and COM (Bangladesh)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Bangladesh on the Terms of Reference (ToR): Format of the Meetings of CSO and COM and requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised documents for intersessional approval.

### **2.5 Implementation of the Regulations for implementation of Article 4 (b) (i) of the IORA Charter on status of Dialogue Partnership**

#### **2.5.1 Update: Identification of Coordinating Country for European Union (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the identification of Coordinating Country for European Union and thanked Seychelles for becoming the Coordinating Country for the EU.

## **2.5.2 Update: Process for identification of Coordinating Countries for Dialogue Partners (Next round) (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO suggested that the next iteration of identification of Coordinating Countries for Dialogue Partners will be based on alphabetical order in consultation with respective Member States and Dialogue Partners.

The CSO requested the Secretariat to recirculate the revised TOR to all Member States for intersessional approval.

## **2.5.3 Report: Status of Programmes/Commitments made by Dialogue Partners (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update on the programmes/commitments made by Dialogue Partners.

## **2.6 Update: Consideration of the roadmap on IORA's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific Region (India)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by India on the roadmap on IORA's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific Region.

## **2.7 Update on the progress of the Institutional arrangements/ Programmes with other regional organisations and the UN (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the progress on IORA's engagement with its external partners (International and Regional Organisations).

## **2.8 Update on Collaboration between IORA and Other Regional/International Organizations/Institutions (Secretariat)**

### **2.8.1 International Seabed Authority (ISA)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with International Seabed Authority.

### **2.8.2 Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

### **2.8.3 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with IOC-UNESCO.

### **2.8.4 International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

### **2.8.5 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (UNECA SRO-EA)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (UNECA SRO-EA).

### **2.8.6 International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the Memorandum of Understanding (Mou) between IORA and International Solar Alliance (ISA).

### **2.8.7 Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat and Seychelles on the collaboration with Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

### **2.8.8 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the draft IORA-PIF Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

### **2.8.9 Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the draft IORA-BIMSTEC MoU.

### **2.8.10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with ASEAN.

### **2.8.11 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with GCC.

### **2.8.12 NAM Science & Technology Centre (NAM S&T Centre)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the collaboration with the NAM Science & Technology Centre (NAM S&T Centre).

## **2.9 Discussion on type or level of document for COM to adopt (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted that additional time was requested by Member States to provide inputs and requested the IORA Secretariat to circulate it to all Member States.

**2.10 Update: Consideration of endorsing the Concept Note on Review mechanism of IORA Special Agencies (Iran/ Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO endorsed the Concept Note on the Review Mechanism for Specialized Agencies.

**2.11 Update: Preparation of the Third IORA Familiarization Visit for Media Practitioners and Journalists from IORA Member States to Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Sri Lanka on the Third IORA Familiarization Visit for Media Practitioners and Journalists from IORA Member States to Sri Lanka.

**2.12 Report: Fifth Meeting of the IORA Functional Body Chairs and the Coordinating Countries, Virtual (Chair, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update from the Chair on the outcomes of the Fifth Meeting of IORA Functional Body Chairs and Coordinating Countries that took place virtually on 23 April 2024 hosted by the Chair, Sri Lanka and requested the Secretariat to circulate the report to the Member States.

**3. IORA SPECIAL PROGRAMMES**

**3.1 Update: Progress on IORA Development Initiative (IDI) (UAE)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the United Arab Emirates on the progress made on the Concept Note on the IORA Development Initiative (IDI), including their intention to host another Ad hoc Committee of the IDI in due course.

**3.2 Update: Progress on Third iteration of the IORA Nelson Mandela Internship Programme (NMIP) 2024 (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the IORA Nelson Mandela Internship Programme and requested Member States to make voluntary contributions to the Nelson Mandela “Be the Legacy” Fund as part of their contributions to IORA activities/projects and/or to the Special Fund.

**3.3 Update: Progress on The Sheikh Zayed IORA Scholarship for Humanitarian Action and Development 2024 (UAE)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the UAE that the Agreement with The Sheikh Zayed IORA Scholarship for Humanitarian Action and Development 2024 had been approved intersessionally and requested the Secretariat to proceed with the signing ceremony.

**4. UPDATE/REPORT ON THE PRIORITY AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FUNCTIONAL BODIES**

**4.1 MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY (MSS) – Coordinating Country: India**

**4.1.1 Update: Fourth Working Group Meeting on Maritime Safety and Security (MSS) (India)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by India on the Fourth Working Group Meeting on Maritime Safety and Security.

**4.1.2 Memorandum of Understanding (Mou) between IORA and Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) on enhancing Maritime Safety and Security (MSS) (India)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by India on the Memorandum of Understanding (Mou) between IORA and Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) on enhancing Maritime Safety and Security.

**4.2 FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (FM) – Coordinating Country: Oman**

**4.2.1 Update: Development IORA Guideline to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU Fishing (France/ Reunion, Indonesia, India)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by France/ Reunion and Indonesia on the Development IORA Guideline to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU Fishing, including the brief report on the Second Workshop on the Development of the IORA Guideline on IUU Fishing held in La Reunion from 2-4 May 2024.

The CSO noted the update from France/ Reunion and Indonesia on hosting the Third Workshop on the Development of the IORA Guideline on IUU Fishing in the second half of 2024 in Bali, Indonesia and it further noted that Indonesia would apply for the special fund for this purpose.

**4.2.2 Report: Activities of the Fisheries Support Unit (FSU)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the Fisheries Support Unit (FSU), including the proposal to host the IORA Aquaculture and Fisheries Business Meeting and Exhibition in November 2024, for which the FSU will apply for the special fund.

**4.2.3 Report: Activities of the Core Group on Fisheries Management (CGFM) (Oman/ Indonesia)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Indonesia and Oman on the activities of the Core Group on Fisheries Management.

The CSO thanked Indonesia, the past Chair of the CGFM, and welcomed the Sultanate of Oman for assuming the position of the current CGFM Chair and Coordinating Country for fisheries management.

**4.3 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT (DRM) - Coordinating Country: Madagascar**

**4.3.1 Update: Second Working Group Meeting on Disaster Risk Management (France/ Reunion)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by France/ Reunion on the Second Working Group Meeting on Disaster Risk Management.

**4.4 ACADEMIC, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION – Coordinating Country: Mozambique**

**4.4.1 Update: Establishment of the Research Support Unit (RSU) and the position of Policy Advisor and Research Coordinator (PARC) (South Africa)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by South Africa regarding the Establishment of the Research Support Unit (RSU) and the position of Policy Advisor and Research Coordinator (PARC) and requested the Secretariat to work with South Africa on the proposed way forward.

**4.4.2 Update: Early-Career Professionals (ECP) Network (South Africa)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by South Africa regarding the Early-Career Professionals (ECP) Network.

**4.4.3 Report: Activities of the Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the RCSTT.

The CSO also requested the Secretariat to share the report of the IORAG Chair to all Member States for consideration.

**4.4.4 Update: 2024 subscription for the Journal of the Indian Ocean Region (JIOR) (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO expressed its gratitude to Sri Lanka for funding JIOR subscriptions for 11 Member States and the Secretariat.

**4.4.5 The Establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Ocean Sciences and Environment (Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the brief by Sri Lanka on the Establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Ocean Sciences and Environment.

**4.5 TOURISM AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES (TCE) – Coordinating Country: Kenya**

**4.5.1 Update: Tourism Resource Centre (France/Reunion)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by France/Reunion on the Tourism Resource Centre.

**4.5.2 IORA Day Celebrations in Member States (Secretariat and Member States)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat and Member States on the IORA Day Celebrations.

#### **4.6 BLUE ECONOMY (BE) – Coordinating Country: India**

##### **4.6.1 Update: Fourth IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC-IV) (Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Sri Lanka on the preparations for the Fourth IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC-IV) and that they will propose new dates in due course.

##### **4.6.2 Update: Implementation on the Strategic Framework of Action on Marine Debris in the Indian Ocean (France/ Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by France on the implementation of the Strategic Framework of Action on Marine Debris in the Indian Ocean and by Indonesia on the Webinar on Marine Debris: Marine Waste Management – Policy and Best Practices.

##### **4.6.3 Update: Progress on Pilot project entitled Electricity Production using Salinity gradient of the Sea Water adjacent to the Saint Martin’s Island of Bangladesh (Bangladesh)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Bangladesh on the progress made on the Pilot Project titled “Electricity Production using Salinity gradient of the Sea Water adjacent to the Saint Martin’s Island of Bangladesh”.

##### **4.6.4 IORA Blue Carbon Hub (Australia):**

###### **4.6.4.1 Early Career Ocean Professional Programme 2024**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Australia on the Early Career Ocean Professional Programme 2024.

###### **4.6.4.2 Fifth IORA Blue Carbon Hub think tank: "Opportunities for using nature, biodiversity and carbon markets to support sustainable management of coastal ecosystems"**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Australia on the Fifth IORA Blue Carbon Hub think tank: "Opportunities for using nature, biodiversity and carbon markets to support sustainable management of coastal ecosystems" that will be held on 10-12 September 2024 in Phuket, Thailand.

###### **4.6.4.3 Workshop Series on the Biogeographic Regionalisation for the Indian Ocean (Australia)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the report by Australia on the Workshop Series on the Biogeographic Regionalisation for the Indian Ocean.

###### **4.6.4.4 Waste Segregation and Plastic Recycling course for IORA Member States (Singapore)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the report by Singapore on the Waste Segregation and Plastic Recycling course for IORA Member States held from 18 to 22 March 2024.



#### **4.6.4.5 Report: Activities of the Working Group on Blue Economy (WGBE) (South Africa, Indonesia)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by South Africa and Indonesia on the activities of the Working Group on Blue Economy.

The CSO thanked South Africa, the past Chair of the WGBE, and welcomed Indonesia for assuming the position of the current WGBE Chair and India as Coordinating Country for Blue Economy.

### **4.7 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (WGWE) - Coordinating Country: Islamic Republic of Iran**

#### **4.7.1 Report on the 9th Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWE) (Iran)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the report by Iran on the 9th Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWE) meeting held virtually on 15 April 2024.

### **DAY 2: FRIDAY, 31 MAY 2024**

#### **5. Update: Discussion on Concept Paper on Climate Change (Bangladesh/ Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted that additional time was required for Member States to consult internally to provide inputs and comments.

### **6. TRADE AND INVESTMENT FACILITATION (TIF) –Coordinating Country: Mozambique**

#### **6.1 Report of the IORBF Chair on the IORA Business Conclave, Special Fund**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the Chair of the IORBF on the IORA Business Conclave held on 28-29 May 2024.

The CSO thanked Sri Lanka and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for hosting the meeting.

#### **6.2 Update: Professional short courses on Climate Change (Australia)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Australia on the professional short courses on Climate Change.

### **7. FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

#### **7.1 Report: Sub-Committee on Finance (SCF), May 2024 (Chair of SCF, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted that additional time was required for Member States to provide inputs and comments on the report of the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Finance held virtually on 7 May 2024.

## **8. IORA SPECIAL FUND**

### **8.1 Update: Review of the Administrative Arrangements of the Special Fund (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted that the Administrative Arrangements of the Special Fund is being reviewed and that the revised document will be shared with Member States for input and comments in due course.

### **8.2 Consideration of Proposals for future funding under Special Fund**

#### **8.2.1 New Proposal(s) under IORA Sustainable Development Programme (ISDP) (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the new Proposal(s) under IORA Sustainable Development Programme (ISDP).

#### **8.2.2 New Proposal under IORA Somalia-Yemen Development Programme (SYDP) (Secretariat)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by the IORA Secretariat on the proposed workshop entitled “Building capacity in Seafood safety and quality of fisheries and aquaculture products” to be implemented under the SYDP Programme.

#### **8.2.3 New proposal: Entrepreneurship and Technology Training program (Mauritius)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Mauritius on the Entrepreneurship and Technology Training program.

### **8.3 Update on approved Special Fund projects**

#### **8.3.1 Revitalisation of Sustainable Whale Watching Network, Special Fund (France/Reunion)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by France/Reunion on the revitalisation of Sustainable Whale Watching Network.

#### **8.3.2 IORA-India Cruise Tourism Conference “Spotlight on the Indian Ocean”, Special Fund (India)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by India on the preparations of the IORA-India Cruise Tourism Conference “Spotlight on the Indian Ocean” to be held on the 13-14 June 2024 in New Delhi, India.

#### **8.3.3 Pilot Project entitled “Building Capacity of young environmental leaders across the Indian Ocean Rim to promote sustainable fisheries management”, Special Fund (Madagascar)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the report by Madagascar on the Pilot Project entitled “Building Capacity of young environmental leaders across the Indian Ocean Rim to promote sustainable fisheries management”.

**8.3.4 Project on Ocean Knowledge Education Programme to strengthen the Blue Economy concept in the IORA region – A pilot study incorporating “Sustainable Ocean Management” into the curriculum for 12 to 13 yr old”, Special Fund (Seychelles)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Seychelles on the Project on Ocean Knowledge Education Programme to strengthen the Blue Economy concept in the IORA region – A pilot study incorporating “Sustainable Ocean Management” into the curriculum for 12 to 13 yr old”.

**8.3.5 Research and Capacity Building Project in the African Diaspora on Cultural Heritage for Coastal Tourism and Climate Action in the Indian Ocean Region, Special Fund (South Africa)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by South Africa regarding the Research and Capacity Building Project in the African Diaspora on Cultural Heritage for Coastal Tourism and Climate Action in the Indian Ocean Region.

**8.3.6 IORA Business Conclave 2024, 28-29 May 2024, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Special Fund (IORBF Chair, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update of the Chair of the IORBF on the utilisation of the Special Fund on the IORA Business Conclave under the theme of “Sustaining Growth – Bridging Horizons” held on 28-29 May 2024 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

**8.3.7 Creation of an IORA Centre of Excellence for Dispute Resolution, Special Fund (Mauritius)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Mauritius on the establishment of the IORA Centre of Excellence for Dispute Resolution and request for extension until March 2025.

**8.4 Pending Accountability Report**

**8.4.1 High-Level Strategic Dialogue, 20-22 June 2023, Mauritius, Special Fund (South Africa)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by South Africa on the Accountability Report for the High-Level Strategic Dialogue.

**8.4.2 28th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG), 26,27 September 2023, Cape Town, South Africa, Special Fund (South Africa)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by South Africa on the Accountability Report for the 28th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG).

**8.4.3 Workshop to raise awareness of coastal and marine protection and conservation issues and its importance to the Blue Economy, 31 October until 2 November 2023, Georgetown Penang, Malaysia, Special Fund (Malaysia)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update by Malaysia on the Workshop to raise awareness of coastal and marine protection and conservation issues and its importance to the Blue Economy.

**9. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 24TH IORA MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (COM) AND RELATED MEETINGS (Chair, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO noted the update that Sri Lanka, as IORA Chair, will be hosting the 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) and related meetings including the 27th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in November 2024 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The exact dates will be communicated to the Secretariat and to all Member States in due course.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) (Chair, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:*

The CSO noted the brief by Tanzania on its intention to host an international workshop on “Empowering Coastal Communities through Nature-Based Solutions: Unveiling the Hidden Wealth of Blue Carbon Ecosystems Conservation in the IORA Region”.

The CSO noted the report by South Africa on the Third Working Group on Science, Technology and Innovation.

**11. ADOPTION OF THE DECISION REPORT AND CLOSING REMARKS (Chair, Sri Lanka)**

*Outcome:* The CSO agreed to adopt the decision report intersessionally and requested the IORA Secretariat to circulate the draft decision report to all Member States for feedback within one week time.

The CSO noted the closing remarks by the Chair.

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