

## **Special Session Proposal: Engagement of WIOMSA members with the South African Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (SA IORAG)**

**Contact person: Ms Nicole du Plessis**

**Email: [iora.ag.sa@gmail.com](mailto:iora.ag.sa@gmail.com)**

**Organisers: SA IORAG Steering Committee comprised of representatives from South African government departments and institutions (DST, DIRCO, DHET, NRF, SAEON, and HSRC).**

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was launched in 1997 with the broad objective to promote the sustained growth and balanced development of the Region. The Association essentially is an economic cooperative community of littoral and island States whose shores are washed by the Indian Ocean, comprising twenty one Member States and seven Dialogue Partners<sup>1</sup>.

The Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) constitutes the academic arm of the IORA and its role is to be both advisory and catalytic with the objectives to, (i) service the needs of Government and Business; (ii) promote intellectual dialogue between the participating Member States; (iii) serve as a vehicle for the development and dissemination of the Indian Ocean Rim concept; and (iv) service the region by providing co-ordinated research.

South Africa takes over Chair of IORA (Minister Nkoana-Mashabane) in October 2017 until 2019. For the same period, South Africa will also be chairing the IORAG (DST) and has established a South African Chapter of the IORAG (SA IORAG), along with working groups which focus on research themes in the IORA priority areas of: Maritime Safety and Security; Trade and Investment Facilitation; Fisheries Management; Disaster and Risk Management; Academic cooperation, Science and Technology; Tourism and Cultural Exchanges; Transformation and Gender Equality (cross-cutting theme); and Blue Economy (cross-cutting theme).

The Blue Economy theme is of particular importance as it is a cross-cutting theme within IORA and therefore a number of the other priority areas have this focus as well; globally the idea of the Ocean/Blue Economy has gained much relevance and there has been much interest around this.

There is a need to increase the African focus within IORA and South Africa seeks to engage with other East African countries to partner on common research areas. By holding an information and discussion session at WIOMSA the SA IORAG hopes to make use of the opportunity to engage with WIOMSA members.

### Special Session Agenda:

1. Welcome and Opening
2. Introduction to the SA IORAG
  - South Africa's progress in establishing working groups
  - Themes selected by the working groups within the IORA focus areas
  - Desktop studies undertaken by SA IORAG academics

---

<sup>1</sup> Member States: South Africa, India, Australia, Mauritius, Indonesia, Comoros, Iran, Madagascar, Oman, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Bangladesh, Seychelles, Malaysia, Mozambique, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Yemen, Somalia. Dialogue Partners: China, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, UK, USA.

3. Feedback on 23rd IORAG meeting
4. Presentations from other member countries on IORA interests and strategies
  - Invited speakers
5. Open Discussion
  - Possible collaboration in areas of mutual interest
  - Special project funding suggestions
  - How to improve interactions with and make use of existing organisations such as WIOMSA and IIOE2 within IORA and vice versa