

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), the University of Mauritius and the Nairobi Convention would like to extend a warm and hearty welcome to all delegates attending the 11<sup>th</sup> WIOMSA Scientific Symposium. We hope that your stay in Mauritius will be fruitful and enjoyable.

## **SYMPOSIUM VENUE**

WIOMSA's 11<sup>th</sup> Scientific Symposium will be held at the University of Mauritius, in Moka, Reduit. A number of accommodation options are available in Reduit and the surrounding area. Transport will be provided for participants staying in designated symposium hotels.

The plenary sessions, oral and poster presentations, mini symposia and special sessions will be held within the University which has the following conference rooms: the Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium, Lecture Theatre 1, Lecture Theatre 2, and Lecture Rooms G1-G6. These rooms are air-conditioned and have audio/visual equipment.

The opening ceremony and plenary sessions will be held in the Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium (POWA), one of the largest public conference halls in Mauritius which can host up to 550 delegates in a plenary configuration. The parallel sessions and mini-symposiums will be held in Lecture Theatre I and Lecture Theatre II, which can each accommodate 150 delegates, and in Lecture Rooms G1, G2, G3, G4, G5 and G6, which can each accommodate 50-75 delegates in a theatre-style configuration. The posters will be displayed at the Raised Plaza, a covered exhibition area found just outside the Lecture Rooms, next to the New Academic Complex. Exhibits will be displayed in the corridor spaces of the Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium itself during the whole duration of the Symposium. Stand up tea breaks will be partitioned into at least 5 stations just outside the Lecture Rooms except for the Opening Ceremony where some stations will be placed inside the Auditorium itself. Lunches will be served seated in a covered marquee of 550 seating capacity on the lawn of the Faculty of Agriculture. A detailed campus map outlining all the designated spaces will be provided in the symposium conference bags.

## **WHERE TO STAY**

A list of designated symposium hotels is available on the symposium website <https://symposium.wiomsa.org/accommodation/>. WIOMSA has negotiated special rates with the listed hotels; please state "WIOMSA conference" when booking your accommodation directly in order to benefit from the special rates. Participants whose accommodation is being covered by WIOMSA will be notified accordingly.

## **GETTING THERE: TRANSPORT**

Shuttles will be organized to pick up delegates on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport to the designated symposium hotels and on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2019 to the airport. Timetables for departure days will be posted at the conference notice board next to the conference

secretariat desk. The airport is approximately 40 minutes drive from the venue, during low traffic.

### ***Symposium Shuttle Service:***

Shuttles will be organized every morning at 7.30 am from the surrounding hotels, and back to these hotels at 6.15 pm.

### ***Alternative transport arrangements***

Participants arriving in Mauritius (on other dates than 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June and departing on other dates than 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2019) will need to organize and pay for airport shuttle services personally.

### ***Moving Around Mauritius***

For moving around the city, taxis are the best option and can be arranged for from the hotels and guest-houses. Designated hotels may also arrange for excursions and sight-seeing tours in buses/coaches. For taxis, most town trips range from Rs 300 to Rs 1000.

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Foreigners seeking to enter Mauritius are subject to the following entry requirements:

- A passport or travel document which is valid for not less than six months;
- Nationals of Somalia are required to obtain visas before travelling to Mauritius. Nationals of Comoros and Madagascar will get a two week visa on arrival in Mauritius. Nationals of Mozambique can stay up to sixty days without a visa. All other countries do not need a visa to enter Mauritius
- A return ticket, a letter of invitation and a hotel booking confirmation letter.

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

Travelers from yellow fever-affected countries require inoculations to enter Mauritius therefore delegates are advised to bring yellow fever vaccination cards. Please consult your physician prior to travel on other health precautions to take before traveling to Mauritius. **All participants are advised to get travel and health insurance, the conference organisers will not cover medical costs in the eventuality of illness.**

## **ABOUT MAURITIUS**

Mauritius is a tropical island of 2040km<sup>2</sup> located in the Indian Ocean 500 miles east of Madagascar. The island nation is world-renowned for its lush, tropical vegetation, sugar cane plantations, dramatic mountains, sugar-white beaches, aquamarine lagoons and exotic mix of Indian, African, British, French, and Chinese cultural influence. The country is characterized by a high level of endemism, with 39% of plants, 80% of non-marine birds, 80% of reptiles, and 40% of bat species reported as endemic, as a result of the island's location, age, isolation

and varied topography. The marine fauna is extremely rich in variety and comprises a large number of fish, shells, sea-urchins, molluscs and crustaceans. There is a wide range of marine fauna such as rays, eels, game fish, dolphins and a variety of sharks. Mauritius is almost completely encircled by one of the world's finest coral reefs.

Mauritius is a densely populated island of around 1.2 million people. It has a reputation for stability and racial harmony among its mixed population. Mauritius is known as a plural society where all the ethnic groups present: Hindus, Muslims, Creoles, Chinese and Europeans live in peace and where all the ancestral cultures have been preserved. These features make the island a unique place in the world, and the Mauritians known for their tolerance and kindness towards all people. Most Mauritians are bilingual being equally fluent in French and English. English is the official language, but French and Creole are widely spoken. Oriental languages also form part of the linguistic mosaic.

### **TIME**

Mauritius is four hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and three hours ahead of mid-European Time (2 hours difference during the winter time, and 4 hours difference during the summer time).

### **TAXES**

Value Added Tax (VAT), at the rate of 15 %, is levied on most goods and services and is included in the display price of most goods. The VAT Refund can be claimed at the MCCI Tax Refund Counter at the airport on the departure date. Visitors have to present their nationality, foreign passport number, date of departure and flight/voyage number, which will be entered on the VAT Paid Supplies To Visitor Claim Form. Only purchases from shops authorised by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) and registered with the MCCI displaying the “TAX REFUND” sign are entitled for the refund.

### **CURRENCY**

The Mauritian unit of currency is the rupee (Rs), which is divided into 100 cents (c). There are coins of 5, 10, 20, 25, 50 cents, and of 1, 5 and 10 Rupees (Rs). The bank note denominations are in 25, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000 and 2000 rupees. The exchange rate is USD 1=34 Mauritian rupees

### **COMMUNICATION**

Mauritius has the following mobile telephone companies Mokoze, Emtel and SA Orange. Local sim cards can be obtained at the airport. The symposium venue will have free Wifi services for delegates use.

## MAURITIUS TRAVEL ADAPTORS

Mauritius has two associated plug types, C and G. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins and type G is the plug which has three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern. Mauritius operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz.



## TIPPING

Tipping is not compulsory in Mauritius.

## THINGS TO DO IN MAURITIUS:

We want to bring to your attention (in case you haven't already heard) that while in Mauritius, there are amazing opportunities to enjoy the tourist activities that the magical island has to offer. There are a variety of packages available depending on your budget and how much time you can spare. Mauritius has a rich cultural and historical heritage, the vestige of its successive colonizations by the Dutch, French and British added to the influence provided by the Indian, African and Chinese people as they came into the island as workers, making the island a successful "melting pot" of ethnic diversity. The island also has a luxuriant natural heritage and a great diversity of natural fauna and flora from its rich and endemic inland tropical forests to its idyllic beaches all around the coast. Places worthy of visit include Pamplémousses Botanical Gardens, Chamarel waterfalls and Seven-Colored Earth, Grand Bassin Sacred Lake, Black River Gorges & Nature Park, Alexandra Falls, Casela Nature Park, Le Morne and Aapravasi Ghat, the latter two sites being UNESCO World Heritage Sites. More information can be obtained from <https://www.tourism-mauritius.mu>. There will be several Tour Operators listed below present at the Symposium venue from the very first day of the conference and participants are invited to liaise directly with the Tour Operators to make their bookings and arrange for transport facilities.

	Tour Operator	Trips/Activities offered
1	Mauritius Tours	La Vanille des Mascareignes Nature Park, Port-Louis, Alexandra Falls, Eureka House, Botanical Gardens, Casela Park, St Aubin, Black River Gorges, Chamarel, Grand Bassin, Aapravasi Ghat

2	Mauritours Ltd	Pamplemousses Botanical Gardens, Aquarium, Colonial House, Casela Nature Park, Inland Mauritius, Tea Route, Chamarel Waterfalls and Seven-Colored Earth, Port-Louis shopping, Cultural Day Trips
3	Summer Times	Inland Mauritius, Cycling Tour in the South of Mauritius, Chamarel, Baie du Cap, Eco-Adventure Hiking at LeMorne, Casela Adventure Park, Deep Sea Fishing, Botanical Gardens, Iles aux Aigrettes, Blue Bay Marine Park

### **EATING OUT IN MAURITIUS**

For those staying in Quatre-Bornes, there are plenty of eating options on St Jean Main Road, including typical Mauritian, Chinese, Indian and European cuisines. The Hotel/Guest House personnel will help in advising and guiding delegates for eating-out options. For those staying in Voila Bagatelle in Reduit, there is a large Food Court in the Bagatelle Mall found adjacent the hotel, serving all sorts of local and international cuisine.

### **WEATHER IN MAURITIUS IN JULY**

During July the average temperature stays around 21°C. The month is characterized by essentially constant daily high temperatures, with daily highs around 23°C to 24°C throughout the month. Occasionally temperatures can exceed 26°C or drop below 21°C only one day in ten. July officially lies within the cold season, however, it's nothing really to worry about, as the winters here are nothing like what you would experience in most of Europe. Just like the previous three months, July enjoys an average of eight hours of sunshine each day.