

Speech at Inaugural Session  
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Secretary-General, IORA

It is my privilege to welcome you to the First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference. The response to the invitation of the Government of Mauritius has been overwhelming. I also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Mauritius for the exceptional hospitality extended to us.

In the year 2000, soon after winning the elections, Sir Anerood called me (I was with the Indian High Commission at the time) and conveyed his desire to visit India at the earliest. The 10-day State Visit that followed included visits to information technology centres in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and Mumbai. The day after our return to Mauritius we visited a sugarcane field in Ebene.

The Prime Minister's determination to chart a brand new developmental path led to the creation of what we today call Cyber City. It is the same dynamism and zeal, which was displayed by the IORA Chair, Hon. Julie Bishop, Foreign Minister of Australia when she launched the Blue Economy Initiative during the IORA Council of Ministers' Meeting in Perth in October 2014.

The objective of the Blue Economy Conference is the sustainable development of the Indian Ocean, in other words inclusive economic development through regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.

The four productive and concluding working sessions yesterday on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Renewable Ocean Energy, Offshore Hydrocarbons and Seabed Minerals and Seaport and Shipping sectors have resulted in substantive recommendations which will be tabled for consideration at the Ministerial Meeting today.

I am confident that IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners will formulate a pragmatic and practical programme of action for the collective benefit of the Indian Ocean region.

I thank the Government of Mauritius for hosting the First IORA Blue Economy Conference. I would also like to mention here that the IORA Member State that lends its name to the ocean that binds us together has contributed handsomely to co-financing this Conference with the host country.

Lastly, I also thank the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Mauritius for gracing this occasion and agreeing to inaugurate the First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference.