

# Third IORA Blue Economy Core Group on “Environmental sustainability and the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean rim region”

10 – 11 April 2017, Mauritius

## Concept note

### **Introduction**

The Blue Economy is gaining increasing importance globally with the wide range of opportunities that it offers that can contribute to boosting economic development and growth. However, ocean resources are not infinite and are being exploited at a significantly high rate, which impacts on the marine environment. Apart from overexploitation of ocean resources, the impacts of climate change are putting increasing pressure on both marine and terrestrial environments, through more extreme weather conditions that also increase the likelihood of natural disasters. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are most vulnerable to climate change-driven disturbances, with millions of people who could be affected by natural hazards such as flooding, storm surges, erosion, and other coastal hazards. Therefore, there is a need for international assistance to these developing countries for implementation of climate change adaptation measures. In addition, there is also a need for better disaster risk reduction measures and actions that would assist in analysing and managing the causes of disasters, which would improve preparedness for adverse events, reduce vulnerability of people and assets, improve land and environment management, among others.

### **Proposal**

The Blue Economy Core Group (BECG) was established with Secretariat funding in 2014. The first workshop was held in Durban, South Africa from 4 - 5 May 2015, focusing on Promoting Fisheries & Aquaculture and Maritime Safety & Security Cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. The second workshop on Maritime Connectivity and Financing for Development in the Indian Ocean Rim, took place at Qingdao, China from July 13-14, 2016. Both of these workshops were well attended and have assisted in bringing to the fore important regional issues and initiatives related to these aspects of the Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean region.

The proposed third workshop of the BECG will focus on measures and actions to be taken to deal with the issues of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Several topics will be addressed, including *inter alia*: impacts of climate change on coastal environment and marine resources; approaches toward disaster risk prevention, reduction and management; collaboration to strengthen early warning systems and search and rescue through holistic approach by mainstreaming disaster risk management in educational programmes; community resilience and integration for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response; post-disaster management, construction and rehabilitation; and public-private partnership for sustainable post-disaster construction.

### **Objectives:**

- To enhance coordination and sharing of knowledge, information and best practices on Blue Economy, including disaster risk prevention, reduction and management, as well as Risk Transfer Mechanisms and community resilience in the IOR region;
- To enhance resilience of the communities to climate change-driven disasters and hazards;
- To increase public awareness on environmental sustainability and blue economy in the IOR region;
- To strengthen networking among institutions, experts and regional organisations in IOR region;
- To promote public-private partnership for the sustainable development of the Blue Economy;
- To identify potential projects of collaboration in developing the Blue Economy in the IOR.