

# NEWSLETTER

## REGIONAL INTEGRATION DIVISION

### IOC: Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles receive COVID-19 materials



In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IOC Secretariat mobilized EUR 4 M from the AFD for the provision of medical supplies and equipment to Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles. The assistance also covered for the costs of chartered flights for the timely delivery of the assistance to the beneficiaries.



Mauritius benefited of EUR 746,883 worth of medical supplies since last year, including an ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) machine for the treatment of serious cases. Additional assistance to Mauritius is in the pipeline such as the provision of a biosafety laboratory (EUR 350,000), reagents for COVID-19 testings (EUR 84,000), etc.

### IORA Disaster Risk Management Experts met for the first time



The first meeting of the IORA Expert Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) was held virtually on 19 January 2021. The meeting focussed on finalizing the IORA Work Plan on DRM and the IORA Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), aimed at developing a speedy, coordinated and effective HADR strategy within the Indian Ocean Rim region.

### IORA's 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) held virtually



The 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Dialogue was held from 2-3 February 2021 and aimed at building a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in the Indian Ocean Rim region. Professor D. Jhurry, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mauritius, made a presentation on Inclusive Public Health and Sustainable Development in the IOR region.

## IORA-Germany Cooperation deepens



GIZ has signed, on 6 January 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that extends and expands the programme of cooperation between IORA and GIZ to 30 June 2022, increasing the total value of the programme to EUR 2.195 million. The focus of the renewed programme will continue to be on Maritime Safety and Security, Disaster Risk Management and Blue Economy, along with an additional emphasis on climate-change aspects.

## SADC Protocol on Industry: Mauritius hold consultations for ratification



Mauritius signed the SADC Protocol on Industry in August 2019 and consultations are ongoing regarding the ratification of the Protocol. The Protocol aims at improving the policy environment for industrial development in the region and supports the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap.

## Mauritius becomes 10<sup>th</sup> COMESA Member State to launch 50MAWSP digital platform



Mauritius launched its 50 Million African Women Speak (50MAWSP) digital platform on 11 February 2021, becoming the 10<sup>th</sup> COMESA Member State to launch the digital networking initiative which is aimed at facilitating a dynamic and engaging exchange of ideas among women entrepreneurs

## Mauritius benefits from SADC's RVAA Programme



A sum of USD 105,000 has been allocated to Mauritius by the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme for the year 2020/2021. A 10-day Training Workshop on Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) for the Mauritius National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NVAC) Members was held in January-February 2021. The training provided the necessary orientation for the Mauritius NVAC to decide on its primary vulnerability assessment and analysis approaches and to develop an informed plan for undertaking its first VAA under the SADC RVAA System.

## Mauritius receives equipment under SADC's SARCIS-DR Project



The SADC Climate Services Centre is implementing the Southern African Regional Climate Information Services for Disaster Resilience Development (SARCIS-DR) project funded by the EU with a view to strengthening capacity of national meteorological and hydrological services to generate and disseminate climate information. As part of the project, the Mauritius Meteorological Services has benefitted from a High-Performance Computing Hardware (worth USD 18,788) comprising a Server, UPS, Network Switch and Client Workstation. Mauritius also received three Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) to the tune of USD 26,346 under the SARCIS-DR project during the year.



## Minister Ganoo highlights importance of the Indian Ocean on IORA Day 2021



Hon. Alan Ganoo  
Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. Alan Ganoo, spoke of more concrete, tangible and meaningful cooperation in the IOR region during the virtual celebrations of the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IORA on 25 March 2021. He also called for the inclusion of Health as a new Priority Area of the IORA.

## Mauritius benefits from the SADC-EU-Germany COVID-19 Response Project



As part of the SADC-EU-Germany “COVID-19-relevant Medical and Pharmaceutical Products” (CMPP) Project, Archemics Pty, a private local company has benefitted from funding assistance to the tune of € 99,996.00 to produce sanitisers and disinfectants for supply to the region. The CMPP Project aims at increasing manufacturing capacities for COVID-19-relevant items in the region, including production of personal protective equipment, sanitisers and disinfectants, ventilators and related equipment, and pharmaceuticals vital for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. The CMPP Project intervention is a component of the overall project “Support towards Industrialization and the Productive Sectors in the SADC region (SIPS), which is managed and implemented by GIZ.

## IORA finalises Maritime Safety and Security Work Plan for 2022-2026



The Second Meeting of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (WGMSS), chaired by Sri Lanka, was held on 18-19 March 2021 in an hybrid format. The WGMSS reviewed progress in the area of maritime safety and security and finalised the Work Plan for 2022 to 2026. Mauritius encouraged IORA Member States to become party to the IOC-driven MASE Agreements.

## COMESA implements Digital Financial Inclusion Program



The COMESA Business Council (CBC) in partnership with the Trade and Development Bank (TDB) convened a high level Public-Private Dialogue, under the theme “Towards the COMESA Digital Integrated Common Payment Policy for Micro Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)” on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 in Rwanda, to consider and validate the COMESA Digital Integrated Common Payment Policy and Framework for SMEs.

## Mauritius seconds Finance, Budgeting, Accounting and Human Resources Supervisor to the IORA Secretariat

Mauritius has seconded Mr. Cholakumar Ramchurn to IORA Secretariat to serve as Supervisor: Finance, Budgeting, Accounting and Human Resources. Mr. Ramchurn assumed duties at the IORA Secretariat on 04 May 2021.

## **IORA and UN Women promotes Women's Economic Empowerment**



IORA is collaborating with UN Women to strengthen women's economic empowerment and to promote the Women's Empowerment Principles in the region. The initiative is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In June 2021, the UN Women-IORA Report on "Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim: Progress and Challenges" was launched. Mauritius, together with Australia, co-chairs the IORA Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment.

## **COMESA develops new Medium Term Strategic Plan for 2021-2025**



COMESA has come up with a new five-year Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2021-2025, which will guide the implementation of COMESA projects and programmes. The new Plan will focus on Market Integration, Infrastructure/Connectivity, Gender and Social Integration taking into account the Island States priorities such as Blue Economy, Maritime Security and Maritime Connectivity. The new MTSP has been finalized in consultation with COMESA Member States and will be adopted at forthcoming COMESA Summit scheduled in November 2021.

## **SADC Council: Hon. Ganoo asks SADC to support vaccines production in Mauritius**



Participating virtually in the SADC Council of Ministers on 22 June 2021, Minister Alan Ganoo called upon SADC countries to express interest in the setting up of a biotechnology plant in Mauritius. Hon. Ganoo also advocated for a more equitable distribution of vaccines to Africa which has been allocated merely 1% of its vaccine needs.

## **Mauritius advocates for a Regional Sustainable Health Initiative at the 11<sup>th</sup> Bi-annual IORA CSO**



Eleventh Bi-annual Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)  
- 15 June 2021 -

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Mauritius participated actively in the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bi-annual Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of the IORA, held virtually on 15-16 June 2021. Among others, Mauritius pushed for an IORA Sustainable Health Initiative, a proposal elaborated by the University of Mauritius in collaboration with the Regional Integration Division which will allow IORA Member States to collaborate in the health sector, particularly with a view to swiftly respond to sudden disasters. The aim is to develop an IORA Regional Health Action Plan which provides for complementing the capacities of Member States in health diagnosis, treatment, care delivery and recovery.



## COMESA launches Online Portal for Civil Society and Private Sector



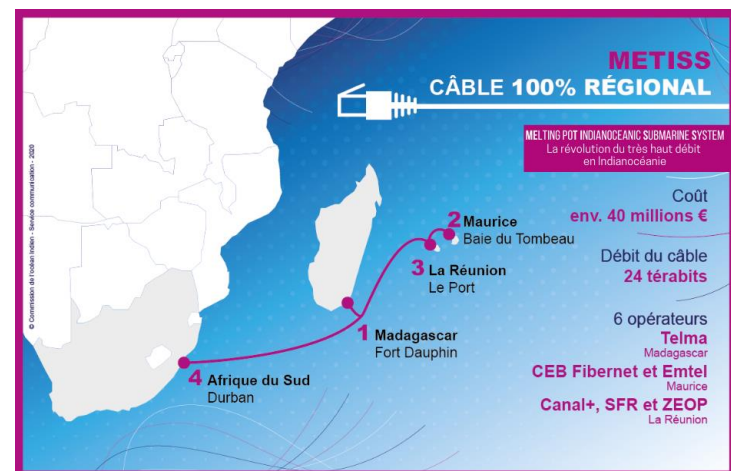
COMESA, in collaboration with the Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union and Save the Children International, has launched, on 21 May 2021, an online platform for the CSO and Private Sector which will serve as an information sharing hub to promote collaboration and partnership in the implementation of regional peace and security programmes.

## IORA re-prioritises Blue Economy activities due to the pandemic



The IORA Working Group on the Blue Economy (WGBE) held its second Meeting virtually on 12 April 2021. Member States discussed on the implementation of the WGBE Work Plan and on post-COVID strategies, including re-prioritisation of activities in this area of cooperation.

## IOC-driven METISS Cable now operational



METISS is a consortium of six regional operators. The IOC Secretariat has facilitated this project, conducting studies, involving international experts, raising awareness, and making a strong plea for regional digital connectivity.

## University of Mauritius Offers COMESA's Master of Regional Integration programme



The University of Mauritius, in collaboration with COMESA, launched a new master programme in Regional Integration in April 2021. The course is being run online and offers practical skills and tools for policy development with a view to supporting the process of deepening Regional Integration in Africa. Under the EU TradeCom II Capacity Building Programme, 3 Mauritian Nationals are being awarded full scholarships (\$ 3,417 per student) for the two-year programme.

## MCCI launches Call for Bids for IORA project on ADR



The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) launched a Request for Proposals for a study on dispute resolution in the Indian Ocean region, as part of an IORA project which aims at setting up a collaborative platform for sharing of best practices, pooling of resources and implementing joint projects in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), with the aim of facilitating trade & investment in the IORA Region. Following the call, an expert from India has been roped in for the study.

The MELtingpoT Indianoceanic Submarine System (METISS) cable became operational in March 2021, linking Madagascar, Mauritius and Reunion to South Africa.

## Minister Ganoo participates in the 35<sup>th</sup> IOC Council of Ministers



The 35<sup>th</sup> IOC Council of Ministers took place virtually on 20 May 2021, preceded by the Committee of Permanent Liaison Officers on 17-18 May. During his interventions, Honourable Alan Ganoo stressed on the need for the IOC to continue assisting its Member States in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and for their economic recovery. He also reaffirmed Mauritius' commitment towards enhancing maritime domain awareness and the need for further Post-Cotonou discussions with the European Union.

## SADC holds Extra-Ordinary Summit



The SADC Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government was held in Maputo, Mozambique on 23 June 2021. Mauritius was represented by the late Head of Mission at the High Commission of Mauritius in Maputo, Amb. Jean-Pierre Jhumun. The Summit endorsed the recommendations of the Report of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, and approved the Mandate for the SADC Standby Force Mission to the Republic of Mozambique, to be deployed in support of Mozambique to combat terrorism and acts of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. The Summit also launched the magazine "40 Years of SADC: Enhancing Regional Cooperation and Integration" which traces the journey that SADC has travelled since its formation.

## COMESA launches first Call for Proposals under RECAMP



COMESA has launched the first call for proposals under the Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Programme (RECAMP) to provide technical/financial assistance to Member States with funding from the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF to the tune of Euro 1,346,591 for the period 2020-2023.

## IOC launches regional photo contest on Climate Change



IOC, in collaboration with the EU and the OACP, launched, on 4 June 2021, a regional photo contest entitled "Islands facing climate change: challenges, impacts and solutions". The competition is conducted within the scope of the GCCA+ programme and aims at raising awareness of the effects of climate change in the islands, while also highlighting the local solutions implemented by communities, civil society or public actors. The deadline for participation in the contest is 31 August 2021.



## Mauritius attends SADC Joint meeting for Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture



The SADC Joint meeting for Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture, held virtually on 7 May 2021, approved the Regional Framework for Antimicrobial Resistance Control and the SADC Regional Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance Strategy, as well as the Guidelines on the Operations of the SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre. The meeting also directed that conservation of crop wild relatives be included among the responsibilities of National Plant Genetic Resources Centres.

## Mauritius to host SADC's CISNA Permanent Secretariat



The Financial Services Commission will host the Permanent Secretariat of the SADC Committee of Insurance, Securities and Non-banking Financial Authorities (CISNA) as a unit under its purview and a Mauritian national will be nominated to act as the Secretary General of the Secretariat until a secondment policy is formulated and approved by CISNA. CISNA was established in June 1998 as a Committee of Authorities responsible for the supervision of insurance, securities, and non-banking financial sector in SADC Member States.

## COMESA-EAC-SADC holds 33rd Tripartite Taskforce meeting



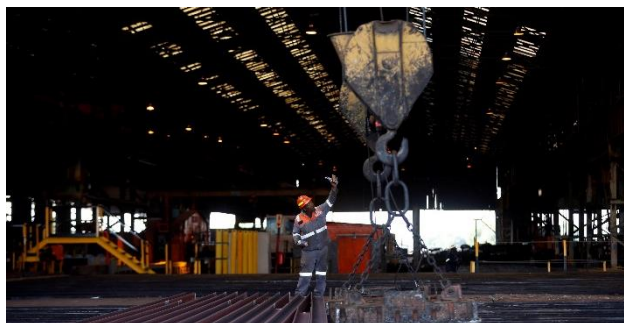
The 33<sup>rd</sup> COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Taskforce meeting was held virtually on 8 June 2021. The meeting noted that the approval of harmonised tripartite guidelines will help attain a coordinated approach to the fight against the pandemic by providing a seamless flow of essential commodities such as food and medical supplies. During the meeting, SADC handed over the rotational Chairpersonship of the Tripartite Task Force to the EAC.

## SADC Ministers of Employment and Labour met virtually



The SADC Ministers of Employment and Labour and Social Partners meeting, on 30 April 2021, reviewed implementation of COVID-19 measures by Member States so as to stabilise the economy and labour markets, and ensure safe and healthy working conditions, as well as strengthening global and regional solidarity. The meeting also considered the draft SADC Employment and Labour Policy Framework (2020-2030).

## COMESA prepares a strong pathway for Industrialization



In May 2021, COMESA approved the implementation strategy of the regional local content policy framework and the management of the Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks. These frameworks will enable the implementation of the COMESA Industrialization Strategy and Action, which was adopted by the Ministers in 2019, to guide the structural economic transformation of the region.

## Mauritius submits 7 projects under SADC's SNRL Programme



The SADC Strengthening National and Regional Linkages (SNRL) Programme, initially targeted to eight SADC Member States, has been extended to Mauritius. Co-funded by the European Union and Germany, the Programme is aimed at enhancing the capacity of SADC Member States' structures to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan priorities at the national level. The total funds available under the programme is EUR 12 million and Mauritius has submitted seven projects for funding consideration. So far, funds have been allocated for the development of a national Aquaculture Strategy by the Competent Authority Seafood for Mauritius. Training will also be given to relevant stakeholders.

## IORA and AFD signs EUR 100,000 Financing Agreement



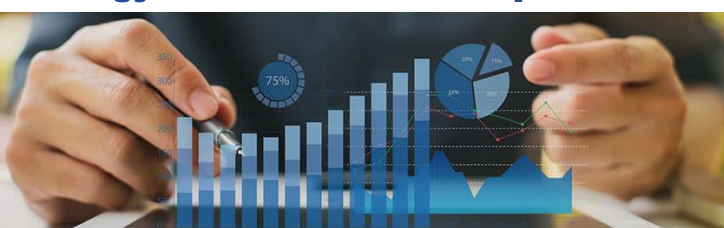
IORA and France through l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) signed a Financing Agreement in June 2021 to provide staffing and capacity building support to the IORA Secretariat to the tune of EUR 100 000. France's support to the IORA is a key component of the project to "Strengthen the Capacities of IORA in Promoting the Blue Economy and Fisheries Management", with a total value of 1 million euros over 3 years.

## SADC deploys military forces to support Mozambique



SADC has decided to deploy troops to help Mozambique defeat Islamic insurgents in Cabo Delgado. The Extraordinary Council of Ministers on 28 June 2021 agreed to finance the military intervention which is part of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security, recognized by the UN Security Council. A budget of US\$12 million has been allocated for the deployment.

## COMESA & SADC advances regional strategy for statistics development



COMESA has developed a new Regional Strategy for Development of Statistics (2021-2025) which is expected to run concurrently with the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025. SADC, on its part, has kick-started the development of a regional Protocol on Statistics.





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