



tourism

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Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meet to discuss Coastal and Marine Tourism

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#ThirdIORAMeetingofExperts – Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) have gathered in Durban, South Africa ahead of Africa’s Travel Indaba for a two-day engagement to map a way forward in advancing coastal and marine tourism in the region.

Hosted by South Africa, the two-day event will include engagements on Coastal and Marine Tourism and its potential to increase economic productivity and employment opportunities. The event will culminate in the **#ThirdIORAMeetingofExperts** who will formulate a Tourism Core Group and Terms of Reference (ToR) that will inform the implementation of tourism initiatives within the Association.

In her opening remarks, South African Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Elizabeth Thabethe, welcomed delegates and encouraged them to deliberate with a view of achieving tangible results that will contribute towards inclusive economic growth.

“We are honoured to be hosting this two-day IORA engagement amidst our preparations to receive thousands of delegates from across the world who will witness and share in our continent’s tourism success stories at Africa’s Travel Indaba 2018.”

“Our engagement aptly takes place as our country celebrates the centenary and the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela, whose vision was instrumental in the formation of IORA in 1997.”

“As we lead the formation of the Tourism Core Group, we do so in honour of the ideals advocated by Nelson Mandela in enhancing economic co-operation among the countries of the Indian Ocean Rim,” said Deputy Minister of Tourism Elizabeth Thabethe.

Tourism is the fastest growing economy that contributes to 10% of the world’s GDP, creates 1 in 10 jobs globally, and has generated over US\$ 1.4 trillion in export earnings. With the UNWTO predicting that international tourist arrivals will reach 1.8 billion by 2030, it is critical that multiple arenas such as the ocean economy are explored to grow tourism. “Tourism is uniquely positioned to yield substantial benefits for IORA Member States through enhanced tourist linkages and effective marketing.”

“We are hopeful that the establishment of the IORA Tourism Core Group will accelerate the implementation of the association’s Blue Economy initiative, and unlock the benefits of ocean-driven economic growth for the member states. While you are here please take some time to explore our beautiful country” concluded Thabethe.

Background: IORA was established in 1997 and it seeks to expand understanding and mutual beneficial co-operation through the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful coexistence, and mutual benefit. South Africa is the current chair of IORA (from October 2017 until October 2019) and it consists of twenty-one (21) Member States derived from four regions namely - Southern Africa and Eastern Africa; The Gulf; South Asia and the South Eastern Indian Ocean. IORA is currently supported by seven Dialogue Partners, namely USA, UK, Germany, Egypt, France, Japan, China.

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