



IONS 2016 SEMINAR – CONCEPT PAPERS

SEMINAR THEME: FOSTERING PARTNERSHIP IN IOR: CHARTING COURSE FOR MARITIME COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT

SESSION-1 THEME: GEO-STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK OF IOR

CONCEPTS

TOPIC 1: GEO-STRATEGIC AND GEO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF INDIAN OCEAN – TRANSCENDING BARRIERS TO MARITIME COOPERATION

Proliferation of globalization and the rise of transnationalism have bonded the human-ocean relationship more resolutely than ever before. Today, all the states across the globe commonly share many of their vested interests in the ocean, while faced with multitudes of common challenges with increasing complexities. Given, the transnational character of ocean and the interconnectedness of ocean-related affairs, these challenges are producing far reaching implications in today's interdependent world. By the same token, the transborder nature of oceans that paves the way for many opportunities also invites transborder form of non-traditional threats that are difficult for any state to handle alone, e.g. IUU fishing, piracy, smuggling, gun-running, human/drug-trafficking, etc. The oceans are also breeding grounds for inter-state rivalry and disputes over the resources they offer. Yet, the irrefutable fact remains predominant, that ensuring 'maximised' boons for one state engenders banes for the others, which in turn perturbs the entire interdependent world. Thus, in today's world, there is no alternative to inclusiveness; mutual cooperation is indispensable for attaining the desired benefits from the oceans. Given the growing strategic and economic importance of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) vis-à-vis the quantum of challenges encountered there, the need for meaningful partnership among the littorals is strongly felt by all concerned. In this backdrop, IONS 2016 seminar has been premised on fostering partnership for maritime cooperative engagements by the littorals of Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Accordingly, the seminar topics have been chosen to bring some pertinent issues under spotlight, which hinge upon cooperative engagements in the IOR. The seminar topics are distributed over five sessions, with individual session theme, e.g. strategic and economic outlook, security, cooperation, HADR, and way ahead. The seminar aims at exploring some vital grounds of cooperation in the IOR while offering a comprehensive understanding of its various dynamics, and a piercing vision through the challenges and barriers to a thriving future.



While conceptualizing any cooperative engagement, it is vital to consider the geo-strategic and economic significance of the area concerned. The geo-strategic and economic importance of Indian Ocean (IO) in terms of trade routes, living and non-living resources, demography, political footprint, dynamicity of security environment, etc have made the IO critical for the future of the world in 21st century and beyond. Hence the littorals need to work together transcending the barriers, for their own prosperity, and in turn play a dominant role in shaping the future world. The theme of the opening session of the seminar has thus been chosen as ‘Geo-strategic and Economic Outlook of IOR’ to set the scene for the seminar, with a deeper understanding of the shared strategic and economic interests of the regional and extra-regional players in IOR.

Accordingly, the icebreaking topic has been chosen as ‘*Geo-Strategic and Geo-Economic Perspective of Indian Ocean - Transcending Barriers to Maritime Cooperation*’ in order to provide a clear understanding of the significance of IO including the present trend of security paradigm in the region. Highlighting issues like “Strategic Rebalancing of the US” in the Asia-Pacific, US’s Asia-Pivot strategy and the rise of China with its increasing engagements in the IO would also be relevant. In this connection, important geo-strategic and geo-economic developments in the regions that are expected to take place in the foreseeable future, with far reaching implications on the security settings of IOR may also be given some attention. A brief deliberation on the major players’ interests in IOR and how their geo-strategic and geo-economic interests can be fostered for the overall development of the region and wellbeing of its populace would be pertinent as well. In addition to identifying the competing grounds of securing opportunities among the regional and extra-regional players of IOR in terms of trade, commerce, economic emancipation of the littorals and harnessing the ocean resources that lie above and under the sea bed, other several grounds with disputes and complexities that cannot be addressed singly by any nation may also be discussed. Subsequently, a broad perspective may be suggested explaining how to turn the existing conflicts in a dynamic security environment into mutual cooperation transcending existing barriers.



TOPIC 2: ORCHESTRATING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY IN IOR: A STRATEGIC ROADMAP

*P*roliferation of globalization and the rise of transnationalism have bonded the human-ocean relationship more resolutely than ever before. Today, all the states across the globe commonly share many of their vested interests in the ocean, while faced with multitudes of common challenges with increasing complexities. Given, the transnational character of ocean and the interconnectedness of ocean-related affairs, these challenges are causing far reaching implications in today's interdependent world. By the same token, the transborder nature of oceans that paves the way for many opportunities also invites transborder form of non-traditional threats that are difficult for any state to handle alone, like IUU fishing, piracy, smuggling, gun-running, human/drug-trafficking, etc. The oceans are also breeding grounds for inter-state rivalry and disputes over the resources they offer. Yet, the irrefutable fact remains predominant, that ensuring 'maximised' boons for one state engenders banes for the others, which in turn perturbs the entire interdependent world. Thus, in today's world, there is no alternative to inclusiveness; mutual cooperation is indispensable for attaining the desired benefits from the oceans. Given the growing strategic and economic importance of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) vis-à-vis the quantum of challenges encountered there, the need for meaningful partnership among the littorals is strongly felt by all concerned. In this backdrop, IONS 2016 seminar has been premised on fostering partnership for maritime cooperative engagements by the littorals of Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Accordingly, the seminar topics have been chosen to bring some pertinent issues under spotlight, which hinge upon cooperative engagements in the IOR. The seminar topics are distributed over five sessions, with individual session theme, e.g. strategic and economic outlook, security, cooperation, HADR, etc. The seminar aims at exploring some vital grounds of cooperation in the IOR while offering a comprehensive understanding of its various dynamics, and a piercing vision through the challenges and barriers to a thriving future.

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transcending all the barriers not only to pave the way for their own prosperity, but also to play a dominant role in shaping the future world. The theme of the opening session of the seminar has thus been chosen as ‘Geo-strategic and Economic Outlook of IOR’ with a view to setting the scene for the seminar with a deeper understanding of the shared strategic and economic interests of the regional and extra-regional players in IOR.

*E*conomic interests of nations are often mutually competing and overlapping, while the Blue Economy (BE) concept is an exception to that. The Blue Economy concept denotes improved human and social well-being through sustainable development, poverty eradication, creating sustainable livelihoods etc. for developing island and coastal states. It reinforces conservation and sustainable management of living and non-living resource of the oceans. To undertake such a large scale integration of widely diverse activities in such a vast area, mutual cooperation is a must. Hence, Blue Economy probably is the best field where cooperation among the IO littorals can be garnered without any controversy, apprehension or conflicts. However, in this case, strategic vision of individual littoral of the IOR needs to overlap and match with each other in order to develop a macro vision of Blue Economy for the entire IOR at large. Accordingly, the third topic of session 1 has been chosen to be ‘*Orchestrating a Framework for the Blue Economy in IOR: A Strategic Roadmap*’, with a view to, draw an outline of a broad framework for adopting and implementing ‘Blue Economy’ concept in IOR through multinational cooperation.