



The 10th Meeting of the Advisory Council of IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)

April 22, 2019 - Tehran - I.R. Iran

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**The 10th Meeting of the Advisory Council
IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)**
22 April 2019 Tehran – I.R. Iran





Chair:

H. E. Mr. Vika M. Khumalo, Ambassador of South Africa in Tehran and the Chairman of the 10th Meeting of IORA RCSTT's Advisory Council

Participants:

- **H.E. Mr. M. Bizmark**, Director General for Multilateral Economic Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I.R. Iran
- **Dr. Salar Amoli**
Deputy Minister for International Cooperation, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, Iran
- **Prof. Mo'azzami, Faculty Member representing Prof. A. Ashoori, President**, Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST)
- **Dr. Tahereh Miremadi**, Director, IORA RCSTT
- **The official Members of IORA RCSTT's Advisory Council:**

- Ambassadors or their representatives from IORA Member States residing in I.R. Iran, including Australia, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and two dialogue partners: Egypt and Germany
- Delegates from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of I.R. Iran
- Delegates from Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST)
- Delegates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I.R. Iran
- Experts and staff, IORA RCSTT

Observers:

- Representatives from UN-HABITAT and ISESCO
- Delegates from Sharif University of Technology, Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science (INIOA)



The meeting opened with the welcome speech of H. E. Mr. Khumalo, Ambassador of South Africa in Tehran and the Chair of Meeting. A summary of his statement is as follows:

- Welcoming to the attendees to the Meeting,
- Stating that the Meeting reflects IORA countries' commitment to create an Indian Ocean Region characterised by peace, stability and development within which to pursue the goal of (economic) cooperation for the well-being and development of the Indian Ocean Rim nations.
- Recalling the outcomes of the 18th COM and related meetings in Durban, on 2 November 2018 such as the adoption of a Special Declaration to commemorate the Mandela's centennial birthday, and the launch of the IORA Nelson Mandela "Be the Legacy" internship programme as a contribution to empowering and capacitating the youth of the Indian Ocean Region.
- Emphasizing the fact that Iran has been an important IORA Member State and is admirable for hosting the RCSTT as a Specialised Agency of IORA since 28 October 2008.
- Indicating that South Africa supports the RCSTT in Tehran to develop research, exchange experience and the transfer of technology amongst Member States of the Association.
- Pointing out that the RCSTT plays an important role in enhancing cooperation within the Science and Technology Priority Area of the Association and includes human resource development programmes, as well as supporting development of new technologies, joint cooperation.
- Appreciating the RCSTT for the events and projects that they have organised to date that include several regional capacity building programmes such as workshops, conferences, as well as training programmes for the IORA Member States.

- Indicating that RCSTT has already concluded three MOUs with China on desalination, with India on Medicinal Plants and with South Africa on the Water and Sanitation Research and Innovation amongst the IORA Member States
- Stating that the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021 calls for the strengthening of the RCSTT and support the Specialised Agency to promote science and technology in the Indian Ocean Region and trust that Member States and Dialogue Partners would work towards this objective. The Chair is looking forward to integrating RCSTT into the activities of the Working Groups that have been recently established such as the WG on the Blue Economy.

The H.E. Mr. Khumalo gave the floor to Mr. Bizmark. Mr. Bizmark highlighted the following points:



- IORA region enjoys huge potentials for economic cooperation and is able to become a more visible player in the global arena and a reliable partner for the international community.
- With the IORA Concord as the agenda for the coming years, it is expected that IORA Member States will increase their intra-regional trade and have a bigger slice of global trade. It is expected that they will experience facilitating commercial environment and flourishing tourism industry, better connectivity, improved energy cooperation, healthy environment and smooth visa regimes. On this path, it is imperative for all of IORA countries to employ their resources to help enhance institutional and operational capacities of the IORA to enable it to respond in a timely and effective manner to the needs and aspirations of Member States.

- RCSTT as a scientific and research arm of IORA, can play a pivotal role in realizing the IORA goals and objectives through efforts to support technology transfer, development and arrangement and promoting commercialization of technology and competitiveness.
- With welfare and prosperity of our people as the prime target of all the plans and activities of this Organization, the RCSTT should now focus on projects and programs in science and technology fields, which bring maximum economic benefit to our peoples and the entire region.
- While appreciating the RCSTT for the actions in the past decade, it is expected to come up with the focused agenda in line with the IORA goals.
- The Advisory Board can play an important role in orientating the RCSTT projects and programs in line with the IORA goals and objectives and provide support for RCSTT for the implementation of programs.
- Hopefully, South Africa as the founder and the current chairman of IORA is in a position to support the RCSTT to fulfil its mission successfully.
- The Islamic Republic of Iran as an active member of IORA and the host country of RCSTT, continues to provide the full support and assistance to IORA and RCSTT.

Subsequently, Mr. khumalo gave the floor to the next speaker, Dr. Salar Amoli, the Deputy Minister for International Cooperation, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. The summary of his statement is as follows:



- Thanking the Meeting organizers, on behalf of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology expressed the ministry's full support for IORA RCSTT and also its happiness of being the host of this Centre.
- He also mentioned that Iran is one of the middle income developing countries with a resource-based economy. He continued that one of our important strategies of I.R. Iran is to transfer from resource-based economy to knowledge-based economy and in this regard definitely the role of science, research and technology, and the role of universities and research centres are of great importance. One of the policies of this Ministry is to commercialize the findings of science and technology. As we require ninety-eight percent of scientific findings in the world, we intend to internationalize universities.
- He added that the bilateral cooperation and multilateral relations is definitely needed and it turns out that RCSTT is of great importance for the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. It is expected that RCSTT could help the IORA Member States in exchanging information among their universities and research centres and this is a major step toward internationalization of the universities and research centres.



Then the Chair asked Prof. Moazzami to read out the message from Prof. Ashoori the President of IROST. Some key points of the message are as follows:

- IROST as one of the leading Iranian organizations for science and technology (S&T) founded in 1980, is affiliate member of Ministry of Science, Research and Technology.
- This organization provides valuable services in fulfilling the country's scientific, technical and engineering requirements through supporting applied and developmental new technologies by exploiting qualified experts and modern equipment and facilities.
- IROST has taken major steps towards developing and enhancing scientific co-operation at international and regional level

- IROST in coordination with Ministry of Science, research and technology is the host of RCSTT. IROST, as the leading organization for science and technology research and development, deeply believes that science and technology is one of the most important channels to establish peace and security among nations.
- More than 10 years ago on 2008, the President of IROST and the secretary General of IORA signed a MOU that established Regional center for science and technology transfer. Since then, IROST has provided this center the building, most part of staffing, it also has helped RCSTT by financing, providing resource persons and logistics for most of the events that RCSTT held in Iran.
- IROST is pleased to see that RCSTT has grown into the center which connects Asia, Africa and Europe by its coordination centers and workshops on important fields of water, sanitation, medical technology in post disaster situations and medicinal plants.

- Women empowerment is one of the cross cutting issues of IORA and IROST takes this opportunity to propose the IORA RCSTT works on the important issue of women empowerment and gender equality specifically in the STEM fields.

Subsequently, the Chair gave the floor to Dr. Miremadi to present her report and Dr Miremadi asked Ms. Moradi, the Chief Coordinator of RCSTT to provide the audience with a brief report on the IORA in general and IORA RCSTT in specific. Following this introductory report, Dr. Miremadi presented her own report on RCSTT's accomplished programme as well as the future plans:



Initially, she expressed gratitude to the chair, Ambassador Khumalo, for his kind and encouraging leadership to make the preparatory process of the event possible and then explained about the mandate of the IORA RCSTT and put emphasis on the significance of the meeting and said according to RCSTT's structure, Advisory Council's role is to supervising the performance of the RCSTT, discuss its work plan and submit the proposals through the Director of the Centre to the IORA Committee of Senior Officials and Council of Ministers for adoption.

She continued since she had been recently appointed as the Director of the Centre, she created an ad hoc committee to evaluate the performance of RCSTT during the last ten years and she briefly indicated the findings of this survey as followings:

RCSTT has organized more than 20 general meetings and expert meetings, training courses and exhibitions. Nearly all the Member States have nominated their knowledgeable experts to attend the events. Accordingly, more than 300 people from the region have attended and shared their experiences and expertise with each other. All the Member states present here have contributed to the RCSTT's events, one way or another.

- This year, RCSTT has started the second decade of its activities with new strategy to support its coordination centers and build new coordination centers.
- These coordination centers are located in China, South Africa, India, in three technological fields of water desalination, water sanitation and innovation and medicinal plants.

Then she presented a concise report of the activities of these coordination centers (the full report is attached for your kind consideration).



Dr. Miremadi continued her statement with a glance at the future plans of RCSTT and explained that RCSTT is planning to establish its first coordination center in Europe in fact in Germany with the cooperation of Aachen University and as the primary outcome of this endeavor and based on the recommendation of the 20th Meeting of CSO, RCSTT has already initiated its cooperation with the Disaster Management Working Group and designed a Workshop on Biomedical-engineering and other Innovative Technologies which is to be held in November 18-19, 2019, in Aachen, Germany in cooperation with Aachen University and GIZ (the German Society for International Cooperation). Further, she announced that two more workshops will be organized in 2019 by RCSTT as follows:

- The Workshop on Effects of Climate Change on the Marine Environment of the Indian Ocean" (November 2018 in Tehran) which will be organized in cooperation with Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science (INIOA) and the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST). The IORA special fund was approved to provide partially the financing of this event.
- The Workshop on Salts and Chemicals Extraction from Saline Waters for IORA Countries (Spring 2019, I.R. Iran) to be held in close cooperation with Institute of Water and Energy, Sharif University of Technology.

At the end of her presentation, she asserted that the establishment of the coordination centers has been a creative and innovative experience for RCSTT. She appealed all the Member States and Dialogue Partners to speculate if they can create coordination centers focused on a specific field of science and technology according to the priorities and interests of their own esteemed countries to enhance scientific and technical cooperation in the IOR region.

Further, she said that in the threshold of starting new decade, RCSTT plans to establish a new vehicle for collective learning region wide in the form of STI Policy Studies Network (RPSN). RCSTT calls for the collaboration of the distinguished participants of this advisory board to help reaching out to the prestigious innovation policy research institutes and centers within their homeland.

She also invited the esteemed Member States by for example hosting some regional activities in cooperation with the Centre to pave the way for enhancing the regional cooperation among the Member States on the one side and RCSTT on the other side.

At the end, she stated that RCSTT warmly welcomes Professor Moazzami's suggestion to work on the important subject of women empowerment at the STEM fields. She emphasized that it is a very vital question and should be addressed seriously.

Finally, Mr. Khumalo took the floor and requested the attendees to provide their comments.

The Participants' Comments

- The first comment was given by Dr. Oliver Schnakenberg, Deputy Head of Mission, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. He stated that Germany as a strong supporter of multilateralism became a dialogue partner of IORA in 2015. Germany believes that regional opportunities and challenges can best be met in regional rules- based formats and supporting an organization as IORA by acting as an observer, as a consultant in certain fields of multi-interest, that is, this is not a choice but a necessity in a world that becomes interdependent every day.

He emphasized that German Government tasked GIZ, the German Society for International Cooperation, in 2017 with a two-year program to strengthen the Secretariat and accordingly the Federal Foreign Office supports this program with one million Euros.

He continued his talk about the coordination Centre, as Dr. Miremadi indicated, the German side is in the final phase of talks, scope and technicalities and it still has to be discussed the details but hopefully an MOU will be signed soon and that will be another tie between Germany and IORA in a field that is pivotal for future development can thus be established. Germany is looking forward to more future engaging with IORA and with RCSTT.



-Then, H.E. Mr. Ian D.G. Biggs, the Ambassador of Australia took the floor. He stated that chairing the Advisory Meeting (in 2014 and 2015) by his predecessors indicates that they had attached importance to cooperation with IORA and RCSTT.



Generally speaking, he indicated that his current and the potential future Governments attach extreme importance to Indian Ocean and all of the issues under this umbrella; the issues including climate change, maritime safety, promoting sustainable fisheries, women's economic empowerment, blue economy, Blue Carbon, and etc. Further, he emphasized that there is a potentiality to work with RCSTT on research and cooperative research and the Government of Australia is interested in having effective mechanism to cooperate with RCSTT within the framework of defined areas.

And he added that Australia had already worked with Sharif University on Water Management issues and maybe as a result of this meeting similar cooperation to be resumed.

Finally, Ambassador Biggs thanked the Government of I.R. Iran for facilitating and RCSTT for organizing and appreciated South Africa for leading this Meeting.

-Dr. Farhani the Acting President for International Cooperation, IROST, provided the next comment. He announced that IROST is well ready to cooperate with IORA and RCSTT in different fields of mutual interest.



For instance, Blue Economy which has been worked out by IROST and went beyond the words and has been shaped as a national project that is focused on a new approach for generating renewable and innovative environment friendly ocean resources which could be used by many IORA Member States providing them with clean biofuel energy reducing carbon emission at large and many blue-biotechnology products such as bio-fertilizers and anti-aging medicine. Moreover, he added more fields for joint cooperation with RCSTT such as Renewable Energies, Solar Energy. And on behalf of IROST, he maintained that the Organization is well ready for all kind of cooperation including organizing and hosting workshops, expert meetings and training courses in the fields such as climate change, solar energies and blue economy.

-Later, Dr. Aliasghar Alamolhoda from Institute of Water & Energy, Sharif University of Technology took the floor and explained that his Institute had been established about 52 years ago with the sole purpose of water desalination. This institute has worked in different areas such as water and waste water and drafting National Water Technology Road Map for the Iranian Vice Presidency of Science and Technology. In the past two years, he added, he had a visit to Chinese Academy of Science and to ISDMU in Tianjin and met Prof. Linmei the Director of ISDMU. The proposal to hold the Workshop on desalination in cooperation with RCSTT (the one indicated in Dr. Miremadi's report.) was rooted in this visit. So he requested all the participants from IORA Member States to contribute in the workshop especially Australia and South Africa with their great experience in desalination.

Further he indicated that the Sharif University of Technology already had good cooperation with Australian Universities on water and desalination. Referring to population growth and climate change and the vital impact of both on human life in different shapes either drought or flood, he indicated to the current crisis caused by flood in the southern parts of Iran as a tangible example. He explained that desalination can be of great help for ensuring the needed amount of water and this is what the neighbor countries in the South of Iran do and showed concern about the side effects and negative outcomes for environment and human life. He concluded that contribution from the Member States in the current projects and workshops on desalination could be very valuable and effective for all the IORA Member States.

-Then the floor was given to Dr. Piri, from National Research Institute for Science Policy of Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. He had two suggestions for the participants. First, considering his background and past experience in technology parks, he stated that the MSRT is ready and interested in collaboration with IORA Member States. He said creating a platform for active participation of private sector as knowledge based companies and establishing science parks and technology incubators in the Universities is needed for IORA countries. And second, on behalf of National Research Institute, he expressed his interest in active contribution to define the strategic policy for cooperation of IORA Member States.



And finally, the Chair, referring back to Dr. Miremadi, suggestions and appeal for closer cooperation, requested the participants to provide immediate reaction and accordingly, Dr. Mehmet Emin Akdogan Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat, took the floor and stated that UN-Habitat started to work with RCSTT about one year ago and recently the draft of a MOU for cooperation between UN-Habitat and RCSTT was cleared by The UN-Habitat Headquarters and also the MFA, I.R. Iran. He also indicated to UN-Habitat's cooperation with RCSTT in the two upcoming events in 2019 that is, the Workshop on Biomedical-engineering and other Innovative Technologies with relevance for Post-Disaster

Situations, in November 18-19, 2019, Aachen- Germany and the second, the Workshop on Implementation of Tsunami Early Warning Systems: Lessons-learnt in Indonesia.

Finally, he emphasized that UN-Habitat is ready for supporting IORA and RCSTT especially in the fields such as urban development and disaster management.

With no more comments, the Chair wrapped up the Meeting and thanked all the audience for attending the 10th Meeting of the Advisory Council of IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT).

The Meeting came to end with a group photo by all the participants.





