On the 4th of June, as part of its international World Oceans Day activities for 2020, IOI partnered with UNCTAD, FAO and UNITAR to offer an online conference “The Blue Economy and COVID-19 Pandemic: New challenges, recovery measures and resilience” to discuss the impacts of the pandemic on the Blue Economy and the Ocean. This online conference sought to provide an outlook on the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and to explore opportunities and prospects for recovery and resilience in coastal and island developing countries. The conference was also a good opportunity to identify action that partners would take to adjust the research, technical cooperation and capacity building trade-related response to the pandemic.

Awni Behnam (Honorary President, IOI) delivered a presentation during the online conference on
Capacity building for the Blue Economy in a post COVID-19 scenario. In his words:

“COVID-19 has been a wakeup call after three lost decades in multilateral cooperation for development as we enter uncharted waters of a consequential perfect storm. A storm arising from the converging challenges of global security, climate change and economic financial crisis; and added to this is the systematic erosion of rule based trading system.”

All presentations and the video recording are now available here.

The COVID-19 Pandemic – How can the IOI Community adapt and respond to the challenges and opportunities to present the IOI programmes? 

*Online meeting, 23rd June*

In these unusual times we all find ourselves adapting daily, and in many ways, to the new challenges posed by health and safety measures implemented to stop the spread of the pandemic. Many have asked how other IOI network members are dealing with the challenges of implementing IOI programmes in a shut-down world; others ask how IOI can take advantage of the opportunities and technologies that are available now to better meet our stated aims and to reach out to our ocean communities effectively. After a brief welcome from Awni Behnam and Antonella Vassallo (Managing Director, IOI), IOI Network Members expanded on their experiences and on the ways they are implementing online IOI projects, ultimately seeking to answer the fundamental questions above.

Brief presentations were given by Laura Segura Mena (IOI Costa Rica Centre), Alan Deidun (IOI Malta Training Centre), Mabel Yarhere (IOI Nigeria Centre) followed by discussions with the participation of Lamiaa Ismail (IOI Egypt Training Centre), Eduardo Marone (IOI Brazil Training Centre), Michael Butler (IOI Canada Training Centre), Qin Li and Wan Fangfang (IOI China Training Centre), Adel Regal (IOI Egypt Focal Point), Alenka Malej (IOI Slovenia FP), Evgeniia Kostianaia (IOI Moscow FP), Fahimeh Foroughi (IOI Iran Centre), Nicholas Kathijotes (IOI Cyprus FP), Sezgin Tunca (IOI Turkey FP), Victoria Radchenko (IOI Ukraine FP), Gabriel Ion (IOI Romania FP), Jai Acharya (IOI Singapore FP), Saleem Mustafa (IOI Malaysia FP), Mahin Faghfouri (President, IOI GB) and Peter Leder (Treasurer, IOI GB).

This online meeting also gave all gathered a wonderful opportunity to meet together online to exchange lessons learnt, make suggestions and discuss proposals, and most of all, to be together online at this time.
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UNITAR and the IOI sign Memorandum of Understanding

May 2020

As a first step to future cooperation, UNITAR and the IOI signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The two institutions formally agreed to seek mutually beneficial cooperation to fulfil their respective missions. UNITAR and the IOI recognized their common purpose as high standing learning, training, and capacity-building institutes. As such, the two organizations decided to actively collaborate in enhancing essential capacities of future leaders of developing countries for environmentally conscious governance. With this Memorandum of Understanding, UNITAR and the IOI aim to strengthen and equip: “A growing global network of trained and empowered leaders...with the knowledge, skills and essential attitude required for effective governance of the planet’s precious resources”.

Third Citizen Science Campaign launched by IOI Malta

June 2020

www.aliensmalta.eu

Following the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of IOI Malta’s Spot the Jellyfish campaign, which kicked off in June 2010 and the launch of the Spot the Alien Fish campaign in 2017, IOI Malta embarked on the third Citizen Science Campaign with the recent launch of the Spot the Alien campaign. Coordinated by Alan Deidun (Director, IOI Malta Centre), this campaign builds on the experience gained over a decade in citizen engagement within the Maltese Islands in order to optimise effectiveness and outreach.
The project addresses a highly topical thematic (marine alien species) which necessitates the enthusiastic contribution of the public in view of the nature of the phenomenon. The Spot the Alien campaign was launched in order to facilitate the reporting of non-fish marine alien species. The campaign launched with the publication of an appealing poster featuring a total of 24 algal, polychaete, mollusc, crustacean and echinoderm species, indicating the year when the species were first recorded in Maltese waters as well as the native range of each species.

The existing Spot the Alien Fish website (www.aliensmalta.eu) has been updated with a new module to accommodate the new initiative, whilst a new social media page has been created for the same purpose. The Spot the Jellyfish and the Spot the Alien Fish campaign social media (Facebook) boast approximate totals of 1,800 and 600 followers, respectively, with the three citizen science campaigns being regularly featured in local mainstream media (newspapers, TV and radio) portals in Malta as well.

New Chair of the Network of Directors of the IOI Governing Board

IOI is pleased to announce that Lamiaa MOHAMEDEIN (Director, IOI EGYPT) has been elected by the Directors of the IOI network of Centres to represent them in the IOI Governing Board and to step into the newly vacated post of Chair of the Network of Directors. Dr Lamiaa Mohamedein is an Associate Professor at the Egyptian National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF), Suez branch. She attended the IOI Canada training programme in 2008 and in 2014 became Director of IOI Egypt.

Our congratulations go to Dr Mohamedein. At the IOI we look forward to working together with her and the Network she represents to build on the excellent work being carried out by the IOI family all over the world. We also take this opportunity, on behalf of the Governing Board, the Network, and the Secretariat to recognise and thank outgoing representative Dr Adnan Awad for his support and invaluable and professional contributions over his tenure as Chair over these last years.
Dona Bertarelli named UNCTAD’s Special Adviser for the Blue Economy

The IOI would like to congratulate Dona Bertarelli, a long-time trailblazer in marine conservation, ocean science education and racing, on being named UNCTAD’s new Special Adviser for the Blue Economy. The IOI welcomes her nomination and remains ready to assist with promoting a sustainable and regenerative blue economy, particularly in developing countries and Small Island Developing States.

In Appreciation of Carlos Roberto Soares (1964 - 2020)

With deep regret we announce the death of Professor Carlos Roberto Soares. Sincere condolences are sent to his family, and colleagues, especially his long-time friend Eduardo Marone (Director, IOI Brazil). We carry here a short appreciation of Dr Soares from Eduardo Marone:

“A wave of sadness. On May 24, Prof Dr Carlos Roberto Soares, vice-director of the IOI Training Center for Latin America and the Caribbean and Team Leader since the beginning of our courses, died at the age of 56 from cardiac arrest. All the lecturers and colleagues, and the participants of our TCs, regret this loss, first with condolences to his family, but also with the whole community that loses an earth-bound idealist, excellent teacher, and friend. He was born in a family where culture and sciences were a common good. …… He was working hard on the organization of many of our WOD commemoration activities and all the IOI-Brazil crew honoured him not letting down his ideas, not this year, nor in the future”.

Launch of Ocean Yearbook Volume 34

Published by Brill|Nijhoff on 4th June, the Ocean Yearbook is a collaborative initiative of the International Ocean Institute (www.ioinst.org) in Malta and the Marine & Environmental Law Institute (www.dal.ca/law/MELAW) at the Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

As in previous editions, articles provide multidisciplinary expert perspectives on contemporary issues. Each new volume draws on policy studies, international relations, international law, management, marine sciences, economics, and social sciences. Each volume contains key recent legal and policy instruments.

View Volume 34 contents and flyer here: https://brill.com/view/title/57161