

G20-MOES

Official Newsletter | May 2023



Inauguration of the exhibition on India's Journey at the G20

G20 – Research and Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG)

"Scientific Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable Blue Economy"



5th RIIG Meeting

The fifth meeting of the RIIG concluded successfully in Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu on 18 May 2023. The overall theme of the RIIG under India's G20 Presidency is **"Research and Innovation for an Equitable Society"**. The two day RIIG event was jointly coordinated by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India. Participants of the meeting included over 35 foreign delegates from the G20 member countries, invited countries, international organisations, and 40 Indian experts and invitees from various scientific departments and organisations.



INAUGURAL SESSION

SHRI AMITABH KANT & SHRI PRAFUL PATEL

The meeting focussed on the fourth priority area under the RIIG **“Scientific Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable Blue Economy”**. The Diu RIIG event was graced by the presence of the Hon’ble Administrator of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Shri Praful Patel, and the G20 Sherpa for India, Shri Amitabh Kant, who welcomed the delegates to the fifth RIIG Meeting. They also called on the G20 members for enhanced cooperation through the exchange of knowledge and best practices to accelerate the development of national and regional Blue Economies. In his opening remarks, the RIIG Chair, Dr. Srivari Chandrasekhar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST) emphasised that the Blue Economy is a key agenda point for India’s G20 Presidency and that Diu was the ideal location for this meeting as it is a shining example for a sustainable Blue Economy.



SPECIAL ADDRESS

BY DR. M. RAVICHANDRAN, SECRETARY, MOES



Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), set the context for the technical discussions in his special address. He highlighted that the ocean and its resources do not recognise international boundaries and called on the collective responsibility of all countries to protect, conserve, and sustainably utilise coastal and marine resources. He stressed on the global need to transition towards a sustainable Blue Economy to mitigate climate change and achieve the goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and how collaboration between countries, industry, and local communities is key in tackling the shared challenges in the maritime domain. Dr. Ravichandran argued that one of the key scientific challenges plaguing the Blue Economy relates to the lack of information on what lies underneath the ocean surface and called for greater investments in research and exploration to understand both the economic potential as well as ecological sensitivities of the ocean. He further thanked Dr. Chandrasekhar, Secretary DST, and his team for designing the RIIG agenda and carefully selecting the sub-themes on some of the most challenging issues related to sustainable development and equitable growth.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

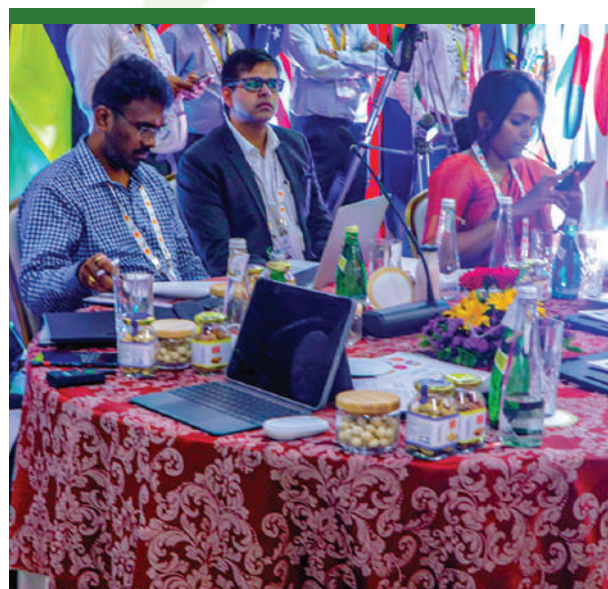
BY DR. SHAILESH NAYAK, FORMER SECRETARY, MOES & DIRECTOR NIAS

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Former Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Director, National Institute of Advanced Studies. He mentioned the significance of the current decade as the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and highlighted some of the major scientific challenges and actionable points that need to be addressed to aid in the development of the Blue Economy such as the fisheries sector, conservation of coastal and marine biodiversity, climate change, coastal and marine pollution, and harnessing of ocean-based renewable energy. Dr. Nayak mentioned allusions to ocean-related issues over the past decade in the G20 fora, such as the Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform-CORDAP (Saudi Arabia, 2020), the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity (Italy, 2021), and the Ocean 20 Launch Event (Indonesia, 2022).



Key Thematic Areas under Blue Economy

Key sub-thematic areas related to the Blue Economy, including (a) Blue Economy Sectors and Opportunities, (b) Marine Pollution, (c) Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Biodiversity, (d) Observations, Data and Information Services, (e) Marine Spatial Planning, (f) Deep-Sea Exploration, New and Renewable Offshore Energy, and (g) Blue Economy Policies and Management Strategies were discussed by the national and international delegates in the two technical sessions of the meeting. The speakers emphasised that while the global ocean and its resources hold tremendous potential for economic growth, they are under severe stress from the accelerating impacts of climate change, growing marine pollution, overexploitation, and declining biodiversity.



Understanding the Blue Economy – Science and Services

»»» 1st Technical Session



The first Technical Session focussed on the theme, **“Understanding the Blue Economy – Science and Services”**. The importance of ocean observations, data and information systems were deliberated upon, especially in the context of developing India’s Blue Economy. Moreover, the need for a better conceptual understanding of what constitutes a Blue Economy was stressed upon, as were the need to develop more holistic accounting frameworks to incorporate the value added by marine and coastal ecosystems. The case of Singapore was presented to discuss the key maritime sectors and the key drivers, including sustainability, technology and digitalisation, and resource constraints for future growth with specific emphasis on the need to build economic and climate resilience through collaborative efforts. India’s recent initiatives towards handling issue of coastal and marine pollution was highlighted, with emphasis on integrated ocean management and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). A case study of UK-India collaboration on marine pollution facilitated by CEFAS and the Ministry of Earth Sciences, through beach sampling studies and on-ground surveys, was also presented.



Blue Economy Management and Policy Perspectives

»» 2nd Technical Session



The second Technical Session delved on **“Blue Economy Management and Policy Perspectives”** of India and other member countries. Recent collaborative efforts of Norway and India (MoES) on MSP were presented, and the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation and utilising science-based knowledge for decision-making was highlighted. The crucial elements - collaborative science and technology and the development of new ocean technologies - were discussed, with respect to the designation and management of Marine Protected Areas to conserve and sustainably harvest marine biodiversity and deep-sea resources. In a similar vein, Japan’s efforts towards simple and low-cost deep-sea survey methods to explore Ecologically or Biologically Significant Sea Areas - LANDER - were highlighted. Further, the development and implementation of the Far Eastern Carbon Program was dwelt upon by Russia, with a focus on measuring the carbon absorption capacity of coastal ecosystems and the subsequent generation of carbon credits. India’s National Blue Economy Policy was discussed, emphasising the efforts undertaken towards developing an ocean accounting system in order for better estimation of the Blue Economy’s contribution to the national GDP. France’s efforts towards enhancing its scientific and technological capacities to further the Blue Economy were also presented, along with its alignment with European and international initiatives. Finally, the need to support marine scientific research and other knowledge-sharing activities was stressed upon, in order to facilitate sustainable Blue Economy practices and the development of a complex set of policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in an equitable manner.

»» Steering Research & Innovation



The experts emphasised the inherent responsibility of G20 members - representing 85% of the global GDP, 75% of the global trade, and home to about two thirds of the global population - in steering research and innovation for transforming global ocean challenges into opportunities for a bluer and better future. Considering the relevance of scientific research and innovation for sustainable and equitable development and the potential avenues for collaboration, the Troika members, Indonesia and Brazil, suggested that the RIIG could be converted to a full Working Group in future presidencies. In Diu, the RIIG Ministers' Declaration was also introduced for the first time and the G20 member countries. The Declaration will be adopted by the G20 with consensus from all member countries at the RIIG Ministerial Meeting which is scheduled to be held in Mumbai on 4-6 July 2023.



»» Fostering the Spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam!

On the side lines of the RIIG Diu meeting, the delegates were delighted to visit the Gir National Park and the famous and historic Somnath temple in Gujarat organised by the Gujarat State Government. The incredibly vivid flora and fauna of the Gir including the numerous pride of Asiatic Lions were a sight to behold for the delegates. The G20 delegates were appreciative of the devotional practice of 'Yagna' at the Somnath temple which fosters the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, echoing the theme of India's G20 presidency.



G20 – Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG), Mumbai, 21-23 May, 2023



Team MoES at the 3rd ECSWG Meeting

The Environment and Climate Sustainability Group (ECSWG) under India's G20 Presidency aims to enhance cooperation among the G20 nations to develop state of the art solutions for sustainable management of oceans and marine biodiversity conservation. The need for concerted global efforts and immediate action to address the current scenario has been consistently underscored in the meetings. In this perspective, the third ECSWG meeting was a critical step in integrating the efforts of the G20 countries, invitee countries, and international organizations towards a sustainable and resilient future.



Mega Beach Clean Up and the Ocean 20 Dialogue

➤➤➤ G20 Mega Beach Cleanup Activity Across the World

On 21 May 2023, a synchronised Mega Beach CleanUp was jointly organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) under the Blue Economy priority of the ECSWG to raise awareness about the growing problem of coastal and marine pollution and to promote robust community engagement in tackling environmental issues. The activity was conducted at over 37 beaches across all coastal states and union territories of India. 14 G20 member countries – Argentina, Australia, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States of America – and 6 invitee countries – Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, and Singapore – also conducted beach clean-ups in their respective countries. Delegates from the G20 member countries, guest countries, and international organisations participated in the main event which was held at Juhu Beach in Mumbai.



Cape Town



Mauritius



Cape Town



**Paradip Beach,
Odisha**

»» Lifestyle for Environment

The campaign was the epitome of India's efforts towards **'Swachhta'** and **'Jan Bhagidari'**, highlighting the significance of LiFE or **'Lifestyle for Environment'**. **Union Minister for Environment**, Forest and Climate Change, and Labour and Employment, Shri Bhupender Yadav, Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Ramesh Bais, and Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Eknath Shinde, participated in the event in Mumbai along with senior officials of Central and State Governments. Shri Yadav administered the pledge on keeping our oceans clean and healthy as part of the Mega Beach Clean Up Campaign.



**Juhu Beach,
Mumbai**

Following the beach clean up activity, on 21 May, the Ocean 20 Dialogue was conducted. The dialogue was jointly organised by MoEFCC and MoES to bring together international experts, innovators, community representatives, policymakers, and industry leaders, to facilitate the sharing of ideas and best practices on key aspects related to the Blue Economy.



**Diglipur Beach,
Andaman and Nicobar**



**Fort Kochi Beach,
Kochi**

»» OCEAN 20 DIALOGUE

OPENING REMARK

BY DR. M. RAVICHANDRAN, SECRETARY, MoES

Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, MoES, delivered the opening remarks wherein he highlighted the role of the ocean and its ecosystems in sustaining life on the planet, regulating the climate, and facilitating economic growth. He emphasised that 40 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) rely on healthy ocean and biodiversity, particularly SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 13 (Climate action). He added that **“progress on SDG 14 is slow and inadequate, and in 2019, it received the least funding from official development assistance providers. Within the G20, SDG 14 was the second lowest scoring goal in 2021 and there is need for collective efforts to meet these goals through national programmes of member States.”**



BY MS. RICHA SHARMA, ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, MoEF & CC



In her opening remarks, Ms. Richa Sharma, Additional Secretary, MoEF & CC, highlighted that the Blue Economy is one of the key priorities of the ECSWG under India's G20 Presidency and the Ocean 20 dialogue seeks to facilitate discussions on comprehensive and innovative solutions towards a sustainable and resilient Blue Economy. She emphasised on India's approach towards marine conservation which comprises a synergistic combination of science and technology, policy, and community involvement. She emphasised several initiatives like the coral transplantation in the Gulf of Kachchh and Gulf of Mannar, innovative Olive Ridley turtle conservation using satellite tagging, and the strategic deployment of soft solutions to combat coastal erosion that showcase India's firm commitment to preserve its marine biodiversity.



Setting the context for technical session comprising the Ocean 20 Dialogue, Dr. Srinivas, Director, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) highlighted the opportunities and challenges involved in building a sustainable and climate resilient blue economy. The technical sessions were driven through panel discussions on the cross-cutting themes of **‘Science, Technology and Innovation for a Sustainable Blue Economy’**, **‘Policy, Governance, and Participation’**, and **‘Establishing Blue Finance Mechanisms’**. Indispensable role of science advancements, innovative solutions and technological interventions in bridging the existing gaps towards achieving a sustainable blue economy were discussed during the first session. Dr. G A Ramadass, Director, National Institute of Technology (NIOT), and a panel expert during this session, highlighted the need to enhance the underwater acoustic technology for better communication and the important role of emerging technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence in facilitating advancement and sustainability in the maritime domain. Dr. Srinivas, Director, INCOIS, moderated the next session on policy, governance and participation where relevant issues including the high seas treaty, participation and sensitization of local communities, transboundary cooperation and adaptive management for building a sustainable and climate resilient blue economy were discussed. The last technical session saw experts deliberating on the need and ways for devising dependable and sustainable finance mechanisms for propelling the blue economy initiatives.



Dr. Srinivas, Director
Indian National Centre for Ocean
Information Services (INCOIS)



Dr. G A Ramadass, Director
National Institute of Technology
(NIOT)

Third Meeting of the ECSWG



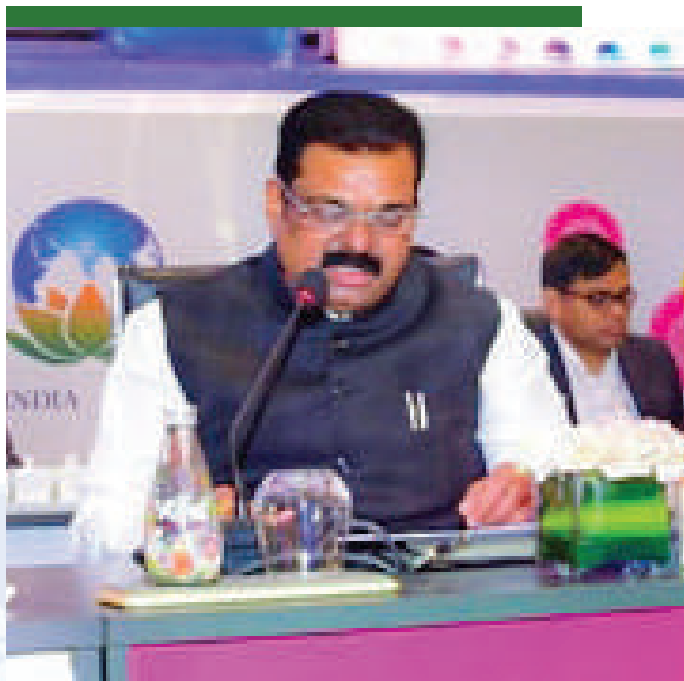
The Third Meeting of the ECSWG was held on 22-23 May 2023 in Mumbai wherein the G20 members and invited countries and international organisations came together to further the discussions on the three priority areas of arresting land degradation, encouraging resource efficiency and circular economy, and promoting a sustainable and resilient Blue Economy. The meeting saw the participation of 141 delegates from the G20 members and invitee countries along with representatives from 14 international and regional organisations.



INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY SHRI KAPIL M PATIL, UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

In his inaugural address, the Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Shri Kapil M Patil, expressed his appreciation for the great work done by the ECSWG in promoting and facilitating action on environment and climate change-related issues. He congratulated the Working Group on the monumental success of the Mega Beach Clean Up event and the Ocean 20 Dialogue.



OPENING REMARKS

BY MS. LEENA NANDAN, G20 INDIA ECSWG CHAIR AND SECRETARY, MoEF & CC



Ms. Leena Nandan, G20 India ECSWG Chair and Secretary, MoEF & CC, delivered the opening remarks, wherein she expressed her appreciation and gratitude to the delegates for actively engaging in the first two ECSWG meetings. The main agenda of the third ECSWG meeting was to engage in detailed discussions on the draft Ministerial Communiqué which covered the key priority areas of the ECSWG. Ms. Nandan urged the G20 countries for their continued participation in the Communiqué discussion to ensure inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive outcomes. The Communiqué will be adopted by the G20 at the Ministerial Meeting of the ECSWG in Chennai on 28 July 2023.

