



Second Day of International Conference Reemphasized Need to Repeat History of Maritime Trade

Shri. Mahesh Sharma, Hon'ble Minister of State for Culture & Tourism, Govt. of India, spearheaded the dialogue

Bhubneswar, 21st March 2015: In the first of its kind confluence of Indian Ocean Rim countries in India, Dr Mahesh Sharma, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture chaired the first plenary session of today, that discussed importance of historical and present linkages among IOR countries to revive relationship by facilitating dialogue. Titled **“India and The Indian Ocean: Renewing the Maritime Trade & Civilisational Linkages,”** the three-day conference is being organized by the **Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS)** jointly with **Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)**

While highlighting the need to build infrastructure to promote tourism in the country, **Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism and Culture, Govt. of India, said,** “IOR region is our prime focus as respected Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, aims to strengthen relationship within IOR region. With an aim to achieve 1% of the global tourism, the Centre has taken giant strides in last one year. We have 7500Km of coastal belt and out of that around 485Km comes in Odisha, which has a huge potential to attract tourists from across the globe hence we are promoting it by initiating various programs around spiritual and cruise tourism. In the recent union budget also, we have rolled out very prominent schemes for promoting cruise and spiritual tourism, which has not been explored in the past. These initiatives will go long way in promoting tourism around costal belt of India.”

Recently government has allocated 500 crore rupees to create five new tourist circuits India during the current fiscal. Furthermore, the Centre launched the National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY). To give a boost to religious tourism, they are to set up the national mission on pilgrimage, rejuvenation and spiritual augmentation drive (PRASAD).

On the 2nd day of the event, two parallel sessions were held, 1st session, covering three topics like Trade Linkages: Routes, Commodities and Merchants, Religion and Literature and Migration and Diaspora in the Indian Ocean Realm. Similarly the 2nd parallel session discussed on three different topics like: Maritime and Humanitarian Issues, Non-Traditional Security Issues and Resources, Climate Change and Sustainable Development.

This day also witnessed many international dignitaries from across the globe sharing their views and expectations from the conference. Just to highlight few:

Mr. Jean Francois Salles, from France, who is an archeologist by profession, said, “A famous historian of France has said that history is the answer to questions that the present brings’. When you want to answer the present, you have to go back to history and I strongly believe that relationships can be revived as it has happened in the past.”

He further added that “This conference has turned out as a great learning since it has given us a unique



opportunity to meet many people from the Indian ocean countries. Hoping that this conference will expedite the process and facilitate dialogues in the future”

Hoping from the conference to build cooperation among RIM nations, **Mr. Dennis Rumley, Professor of Indian Ocean Studies & Distinguished Research Fellow, Curtin University, Western Australia**, Said, “We need to look at security from the broader prospect of environmental, human, economic and energy etc. Need of the hour is to build greater awareness and interest to cooperate in sustainably harnessing the benefits for inclusive growth.”

Looking to explore India’s maritime culture and history, **Mrs. Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive, South African Institute of Institute of International Affairs**, said “It becomes imperative to know and learn from experiences and look forward to continuously improvise on the positive and negative aspects of connectivity among various regions”

The second day will conclude at the evening with a scintillating Odissi dance performance by Ms. Aruna Mohanty Group at Cultural program being organized at the famous Udaygiri caves. Dance was based on Seven Shades of Indian Classical Dance.

Last day of the conference is slated to witness a three parallel session on sectoral cooperation, blue economy & session on B2B and valedictory session. The concluding day will be graced by, **H.E Dr. S.C. Jamir, Governor of Odisha as Chief Guest; Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon’ble Minister of State for Petroleum; Ms. Sujata Mehta, Secretary (ER), Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India; Smt. NirmalaSitharaman, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India; Valedictory Address by Shri Manohar Parikar, Hon’ble Minister of Defence, Govt. of India**

The collaborating partners of the conference include Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA); XP Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India; Department of International Relations & Co-operation, Republic of South Africa; Kenya National Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Odisha Institute of Maritime & South East Asian Studies and National Fisheries Development Board.

About Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS)

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) is an organization promoting research and academic activities on various social and cultural issues. It has been working with academicians, students, researchers and activists on topics of historical and cultural interests. The objectives of the ISCS are to promote national and social integration as well as international understanding, preserve and arrange for documentation of national heritage including its intangible components, organize conferences, workshops, seminars, study groups to study public policies and their impact on society, grant fellowships for research and publish journals, books etc. for furtherance of the above objectives.

About Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi based autonomous think-tank under the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, is an organization that specializes in policy research on international economic issues and development cooperation. RIS is envisioned as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue and capacity building among developing countries on international economic issues. The focus of the work program of RIS is to promote South- South Cooperation and assist developing countries in multilateral negotiations in various forums. RIS is engaged in the Track II process of several regional initiatives. RIS is providing analytical support to the Government of India in the negotiations for concluding comprehensive economic cooperation agreements with partner countries. Through its intensive network of policy think tanks, RIS seeks to strengthen policy coherence on international economic issues.