

**NESA Center Maritime Series:**  
**Indian Ocean Island Region State Forum**  
**Report**

20 – 22 JUNE 2022

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

From 20-22 June, the Near East South Asia (NESACenter) Center for Strategic Studies conducted a forum focusing on the challenges facing the island states of the Indian Ocean, along with the threats facing all Indian Ocean littoral states. The event's themes including environmental security, exclusive economic zone protection, coastal and digital infrastructure development, maritime domain awareness enhancement, and how major power competition impacts regional states, among others. Participants in the forum hailed from 19 regional and non-regional states, including representatives from regional militaries, law enforcement organizations, governmental ministries, academic institutions, and international organizations.

The forum was a hybrid event to facilitate participants who could not attend in person and took place in Bangkok, Thailand. The forum is a component part of NESACenter's larger Indian Ocean and Indo Pacific-focused engagement. This series of programs has currently created over 500 alumni with a specific interest in the maritime domain and the Indo Pacific.

## THEMES/QUESTION:

The following themes and/or questions were routinely mentioned among speakers and participants during the event.

- The separation that remains between the Pacific and the IOR within the Indo Pacific concept. Despite common challenges existing in both (environmental degradation, illicit actors, etc.) and numerous efforts to counter these maritime threats, the engagement between the states of both oceans remains limited.
- The erasure or loss of distinction between traditional and non-traditional operations in the maritime domain
- How the Covid-19 era has translated into the intensification of certain maritime threats due to labor shortages, logistics hurdles, economic malaise, and overstretched state operations.
- Cascading dangers associated with environmental challenges reveals environmental security as likely the single largest challenge for the Indo Pacific and the IOR. The question becomes one of how cooperation, interoperability, and information sharing can progress through efforts like HA/DR, SAR, Fusion Centers, Counter-IUU, monitoring systems (buoys/sensors), and for forth.
- The feasibility with multilateral institutions in the IOR being able to advance maritime security and regional identification. Can ASEAN, BIMSTEC, IOC, IORA, IONS, GCC, SAARC, and other institutions create the necessary breakthrough with member states to advance regional maritime security?
- How does the capability over capacity define the IOR's security response to maritime threats in our era? The era of accumulating 'stuff' is increasingly being replaced an era designed by technical training, professional military education, and information sharing.
- The persistence of sea blindness throughout the IOR and how that impedes the political will to address the looming major threats in the maritime domain will remain an open question. Sea blindness remains common, but more energy is present in the maritime domain than in previous years.

- How do IOR actors make the distinction and operationalize the distinction between information sharing and intelligence sharing?
- What will be communication pathway of greatest reward when it comes to breaking down interagency silos, building greater trust among states when it comes to maritime operations, and effectively mixing private and public interests?
- What does the data revolution in Maritime Domain Awareness mean for the IOR? Is it a game changer for enforcement, security, and blue economic progression, or is the cart being put before the metaphorical horse? Data analytics and commercial technologies are illuminating our oceans at night, provide greater clarity through imagery, and offering up other resources that provide more data than ever before.
- How substantial a role will knowledge networks serve throughout the IOR? From environmental security to Maritime Domain Awareness to legal regimes, the ability for scholars to gain access to the policy world and for the policy world to inform academic research seems greater today than ever before.
- What will be the dimensions with the IOR of the trend to turn away from multilateralism and towards unilateralism? Is the age of continuous partnerships eroding and being replaced by temporary groupings of actors of a like mind on specific topics?
- Our era is one of major power competition that will cast a shadow over smaller states. Such an environment creates intensified problems for smaller states, but also creates more opportunity to secure a place for their agenda in international politics. “You may not have an interest in geopolitics, but geopolitics certainly will have an interest in you.”
- During this time of large threats, there is also renewed energy in innovation, experimentation, and in developing new connections among like-minded actors to bypass existing structures deemed ineffective.
- The need for regional actors, non-regional actors, and private actors to understand that efforts at greater cooperation are going to be sloppy. They will not fit nicely into existing frameworks, seams, and organizational structures. Efforts will be replicated and false starts common.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Look to information sharing advances in the maritime domain as both an example of how to implement in other sectors, as well as to place greater policymaking attention and resourcing towards existing maritime efforts that have advanced. This includes:
  - Liaison officers forward deployed to Information Fusion Centers and other regional maritime security institutions
  - Greater accessibility to digital platforms for MARSEC topics, such as SeaVision and IORIS. In addition, further advance existing efforts to bring in public sector datasets, machine learning, and technology to make such platforms more agile.
  - Greater White Hull (Coast Guard) integration into regional efforts
  - Shiprider agreements and other constabulary functions
- Major powers should turn their focus towards food insecurity in the IOR, due to logistical strain, Covid-related economic downturn, and the Ukraine War.
- Information sharing can also target lower hanging fruit – namely the necessity for regional states to have a compendium of efforts being pursued by regional and non-regional states, legal developments, international engagements/conferences, and pilot programs/experiments, to name but a few of the topics that could be included.
- Invest in efforts to democratize Maritime Domain Awareness efforts. Pushing such efforts into public spaces facilities more voices being included (coastal communities, NGOs, etc.) and undermines the silos that tend to emerge if they remain within government institutions.
- A greater regional focus on coastal infrastructure and digital infrastructure would be advantageous – and should be encouraged by regional states, NGOs, and academic communities.
- Non-regional states intensifying efforts to protect the oceanic environment need to show up to a greater degree in the IOR (in relation to lack of IOR funding from U.S. Our Ocean Conference announcement) and IOR regional states need to more overtly communicate realistic projects that environmental communities could assist with funding/expertise.

- Environmental security can be both a way for major actors to provide valued public goods to the IOR and wider Indo Pacific but could also be a means by which to develop a regional grouping of like-minded actors. This concept of environmental security should go beyond HA/DR functions and climate change. It should include everything from IUU Fishing to information sharing on oceanic ecology to transnational crime. On the academic side, it could encourage the creation of a network of experts focused on the IOR littoral and island state environmental challenges.
- Building of greater network interested in comprehensive maritime security in the IOR will be messy and all actors should accept this fact. The reason why – it provides greater opportunity for experimentation on groupings, efforts, and/or programs that can generate progress and even public goods. For instance, like-minded states gathering to help develop a stronger legal finish regarding prosecution of criminals interdicted at sea or a United States effort to link aspects of Southeast Asia and IOR efforts in partnership with regional states. This could be called the promotion of minilateralism. Given the potential groupings (if issue focused), matched with continued support for multilateralism, the outcomes could be of great help.

## WORKSHOP RECORD:

Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies

NESA MARITIME SERIES

Indian Ocean Island Forum

20–22 June 2022

Bangkok, Thailand

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The challenges facing littoral states in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) are numerous. For the island states of the IOR, the challenges are further multiplied. This program seeks to bring together IOR island states with key regional and non-regional partners to discuss how engaged parties can intensify maritime cooperation, economic opportunity, climate responses, and information sharing.

To pursue this effort, NESA is working with other elements of the U.S. government interagency and with key IOR regional leaders, experts, and security professionals. The final collection of participants will come from various backgrounds who have subject matter expertise regarding ways to move policy forward.

The program will feature several plenary sessions, but most of the workshop will be spent in small groups in a tabletop context. These small groups will address key “realms” of maritime challenges – EEZ protection, blue economic opportunities/littoral commerce, and climate protection. A second breakout session focuses on collaborative efforts we can collectively pursue upon the conclusion of the event to keep momentum on these topics.

**SCHEDULE:****Monday, 20 June 2022**

- 0900 – 0915 Introduction of Workshop  
Speaker: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter
- 0915 – 1030 1<sup>st</sup> Session: Naming the Challenges Facing IOR Island States  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter  
Speaker 1: Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar, Senior Fellow, National Maritime Foundation  
Speaker 2: Mr. Shanaka Jayasekara, Programme Coordinator (South East Asia and the Pacific), Global Maritime Crime Programme, UNODC
- 1030 – 1100 Coffee/Tea Break
- 1100 – 1230 2<sup>nd</sup> Session: Exclusive Economic Zone Security Enhancement  
Moderator: Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar, Senior Fellow, National Maritime Foundation  
Speaker 1: Mr. Kevin Duffy, CEO, Maritime Imperative  
Speaker 2: M. Raj Mohabeer, Officer in Charge, Maritime Security, Indian Ocean Commission
- 1230 – 1345 Lunch
- 1345 – 1545 3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Ocean Resources, MDA, and the Elusive Blue Economy – Gaining Momentum  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter  
Speaker 1: Ms. Njoki Mboce, Njoki Mboce & Company  
Speaker 2: Dr. Jared Dunnmon, Technical Director - Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, Defense Innovation Unit (DIU)  
Speaker 3: Mr. Andrew Howe, Program Manager, Skylight/AI2 (Digital)
- 1545 – 1550 Breakout Group Topics and Assignments
- 1550 – 1600 Coffee/Tea Break

- 1600 – 1730 Breakout Session 1: Prioritizing Challenges and the Information Hurdle
- This breakout session series will allow small groups focused on three distinct topics to debate how challenges relating to the topic should be prioritized by nation states, non-state actors, and cooperative institutions. From there, the groups shall devise a means by which to overcome the information complications of the topics themselves – specifically, how to expand the audience who engage on these issues.
- Breakout A: Climate
- Breakout B: Security and EEZ Protection
- Breakout C: Littoral Economic Development

### **Tuesday, 21 June 2022**

- 0900 – 0910 Introduction to Day 2  
Speaker: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESAs
- 0910 – 1015 Breakout Session 2: Prioritizing Challenges and the Information Hurdle, continued
- 1015 – 1030 Coffee/Tea Break
- 1030 – 1100 Breakout Session Presentations
- 1100 – 1230 4<sup>th</sup> Session: Climate Challenges, Environmental Security, and Cooperative Solutions  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESAs  
Speaker 1: Dr. Victoria Keener, Senior Fellow, East-West Center  
Speaker 2: Dr. David Brewster, Senior Research Fellow with the National Security College, Australian National University
- 1230 – 1345 Lunch
- 1345 – 1515 5<sup>th</sup> Session: Information Sharing and the Value of Data  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESAs

Speaker 1: Ms. Maisie Pigeon, Independent Maritime Security and Transnational Crime Consultant (Digital)

Speaker 2: Mr. Blake Herzinger, Non-Resident Fellow, Pacific Forum (Digital)

1515 – 1530 Coffee/Tea Break

1530 – 1700 6<sup>th</sup> Session – Perspectives on Navigating Major Power Competition

Moderator: VADM Pradeep Chauhan, Director General, National Maritime Foundation

Speaker 1: Dr. Prashanth Parameswaran, Fellow, Asia Program, Wilson Center (Digital)

Speaker 2: Mr. Raghvendra Kumar, Associate Fellow, National Maritime Foundation

1700 – 1745 Collaborations Session 1 – Designing Shared Efforts

The collaboration breakouts, the final of this workshop, focus on what the participants themselves can do to bring attention to elements in focus throughout this event. Proposals for follow-up events, new research endeavors, collaborative publications, working groups among institutions, and so on. The aim is to map and enact how the work of the week can continue in the coming months and years.

- Collaborative Group 1
- Collaborative Group 2
- Collaborative Group 3

### **Wednesday, 22 June 2022**

0900 – 0905 Introduction to Day 3

Speaker: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter

0905 – 1035 7<sup>th</sup> Session – Tools to Address Challenges and Methods to Approach Problem Sets

Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter

Speaker 1: VADM Pradeep Chauhan, Director General, National Maritime Foundation

Speaker 2: Mr. John Bradford, Senior Fellow, Maritime Security Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University

1035 – 1050 Coffee/Tea Break

- 1050 – 1220 8<sup>th</sup> Session – IOR Methodologies, Organizations, and Efforts; Evaluating what Works  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter  
Speaker 1: Ms. Giulia Nicoloso, Project Manager, EU CRIMSON  
Speaker 2: Dr. Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, Founder & President, Mantraya; Visiting Researcher, SWP, Berlin
- 1220 – 1330 Lunch
- 1330 – 1500 9<sup>th</sup> Session – How Island State Challenges Correlate with Strategic Concerns  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter  
Speaker 1: Mr. Viraj Solanki, IISS  
Speaker 2: Dr. Arzan Tarapore, Research Scholar at the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University (Digital)
- 1500 – 1515 Coffee/Tea Break
- 1515 – 1630 Collaborations Session 2 – Continued
- 1630 – 1645 Collaboration Groups Presentations and Plans
- 1645 – 1700 Final Session – Views from Plenary, Report Creation, Ideas for Generating Attention  
Moderator: Mr. Jeff Payne, NESACenter

## BREAKOUT RESULTS:

### **Breakout Session 1: Prioritizing Challenges and the Information Hurdle**

In this breakout session the plenary will be divided into three smaller groups. Each group will focus on a particular element that is tied to the security of island and littoral states. Your starting point is to list the challenges existing under the larger element. From there, your group should prioritize these challenges based upon your own metrics, which can be anything from policymaking priorities to potential scale of impact. Your final responsibility as a group is to use your prioritized list to devise a way to better communicate the scope of the challenge set to communities of interest. Your communicative approach can be whatever you deem most relevant, but you should aim for an approach that is not the default method of existing institutions, governments, or international organizations.

Each group's conclusions will be presented before the plenary. Thus, each group should designate a notetaker and a presenter. The notetaker must also send the findings of the group to the NESACenter team for use in the final report. The three groups are:

- Breakout 1: Climate/Environmental
- Breakout 2: Maritime Security and EEZ Protection
- Breakout 3: Coastal Development and Sustainability

### **Breakout Session 2: Collaboration/Designing Shared Efforts**

The collaboration breakouts, the final of this workshop, focus on what the participants themselves can do to bring attention to elements in focus throughout this event. Proposals for follow-up events, new research endeavors, collaborative publications, working groups among institutions, and so on. The aim is to map and enact how the work of the week can continue in the coming months and years.

- Collaborative Group 1:
- Collaborative Group 2:
- Collaborative Group 3:

**Group 1 Results:**

## BREAKOUT 1: CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

BREAKOUT SESSION 1: PRIORITIZING CHALLENGES AND THE  
INFORMATION HURDLE

### **CHALLENGES**

Extreme weather changes – temperature EVENT  
RISING SEA LEVELS/CHANGING SHORELINES  
Destruction of the marine ecology

\* IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER \* BECAUSE THEY ARE ALL  
INTERTWINED

## Understanding the Complexity

- All three key issues are interlinked with each other and they do not stand alone as more important than the other key issues we have highlighted. The consequences we are discussing arise from the key challenges we have come up with
- CONSEQUENCES: DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE BEING – ONE OF THE ISSUES THE COUNTRIES ARE MORE INTERESTED TO ADDRESS – AFFECTS NATIONAL INTERESTS / DESTRUCTION OF ECOLOGY: LOSS OF REVENUES FROM FISHING INDUSTRIES AND TOURISM
- CONSEQUENCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY

## POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE CHALLENGES

- Local community engagement – awareness within the grassroots, relying on local information – all politics is local – solution to complex probs – bring them down to locals
- Better communication approaches to the challenges could be directly done at a local level by engaging with the local community – raising awareness within the local community that can have an impact on policy making.
- Locals need to provide input to policy makers
- TAILOR MADE SOLUTIONS TO EACH COUNTRY BY UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES AND THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE OF EACH COUNTRY – NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL SOLUTIONS
- Establishing a data collecting interface with the local communities

**Group 2 Results:**

# Breakout Group 2

Maritime Security and EEZ Protection

## TASK

1. List Challenges
2. Prioritize Challenges
3. Communicate the Scope of Challenges

## EEZ Protection vs. Maritime Security

Definition:

EEZ Protection – Ability to surveil, detect, prevent, control, secure, react to and provide a legal finish to any maritime threat within the defined EEZ boundary.

Maritime Security - ??? (Everything else)

*Can encompass infrastructure, environment, climate, population, commerce etc...*

## Prioritized List

1. Surveillance/Detection
  - 1a. Prevent
  - 1a. Control
  - 1a. Secure
  - 1a. React
  - 1a. Legal Finish

## Regional Problems vs State Action

National Level – Political will, Institutions and Agencies, Laws, Cooperation, Resources

Regional Level – Cooperation, Information Sharing, Capacity, Capability, Training, Deterrence, Rehabilitation

International – Legal Framework, International Agreements, Information Sharing, Cooperation, Capacity, Capability, Training, Deterrence, Funding, Awareness

**Group 3 Results:**

Notes of Coastal Development and Sustainability breakout

20-22 June 2022

**21 JUNE - PRESENTATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A COASTAL COMMUNITY**

- 600 million or 10% of the world's population live in areas less than 100 metres over sea level. 2.4 billion or 40% of the world's population live within 100km or 60 miles of the coast (UN Ocean Conference 2017). This is a critically important issue at local and global level.
- We are a coastal community non-profit, and a resident of coastal city X. We are an advocate for our needs a community, city of town that has a rich history, and X million people. However, that remains vulnerable due to a lack of coastal development and focus on sustainability.
- So, we are launching a nationwide campaign for resilience.
- In our city alone with have:
  - **Infrastructure**
    - Resilience
    - Risk assessment/vulnerability
    - Building resilient infrastructure
    - Managed retreats and moving populations
    - Connectivity
  - **Fragile ecosystems**
    - Mangrove
    - Reefs
  - **Economic Impact**
    - Livelihoods

- Increasing cost of resource access
- National capital accounting
- Recovery funds/insurance
- The economic impact of damage or loss to these would cost X billion, X jobs and take an estimated X years to recover and rebuild from.
- Extreme events including hurricane X have also shown how vulnerable we are.
- In that particular case, we saw various failures of intra-government coordination. There is a need to improve that and invest for our future sustainable coastal communities.

### **CHALLENGES (RANKED)**

1. Infrastructure and ecosystems
2. Economic factors
3. Implications of extreme events
4. Intra-government coordination

### **METRICS**

- Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Population density and impact
  - Community buy-in/participation
- Data availability and gaps
- Frequency, likelihood and intensity
- Cost/benefit, including availability of labour and capital
  - Prevention/response
- Partner interest
  - Equitable assistance

- Political stability and continuity

## **NOTES OF 20 JUNE DISCUSSION AMONG THE BREAKOUT GROUP**

### **GROUPING OF THE ISSUES**

#### **1) Infrastructure**

- Resilience
  - Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (India-led initiative)
  - Military
  - Energy
  - Community
- Risk assessment/vulnerability
- Building resilient infrastructure
- Managed retreats and moving populations
- Connectivity

#### **2) Extreme events including climate, pandemics**

- Mitigation
- Preparedness (early warning systems)
- Response
- Recovery

#### **3) Intra-governmental coordination**

- Policy
- Resource sharing

#### 4) Economic Impact

- Livelihoods
- Increasing cost of resource access
- National capital accounting
- Recovery funds/insurance

#### 5) Ecosystems

- Mangrove
- Reefs

### **METRICS**

- Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Population density/impact
  - Community buy-in/participation
- Data availability and gaps
- Frequency, likelihood and intensity
- Cost/benefit, including availability of labour and capital
  - Prevention/response
- Partner interest
  - Equitable assistance
- Political stability/continuity

### **Communities of interest**

- Population
- Government

- NGOs
- Partner nations and agencies
- Adversarial actors

### **CHALLENGES (RANKED)**

1. Infrastructure and ecosystems
2. Economics
3. Extreme events
4. Intra-government coordination

### **SECOND ASSIGNMENT**

#### **CHALLENGES (RANKED)**

1. Infrastructure and ecosystems
2. Economic factors
3. Implications of extreme events
4. Intra-government coordination

### **THREE GROUPS FOR COORDINATION – will be horizontal and vertical interaction**

#### **NGOs/think tanks and civil society**

- Spreading awareness of issues related to development, spread education; make communities aware of their rights and options available to them; and advantages and disadvantages of their decisions.
- International cooperation for NGOs and think tanks, including workshops and projects, including lessons learnt and learning best practices.

- Community buy-in by building education and awareness.

**Public-private enterprise**

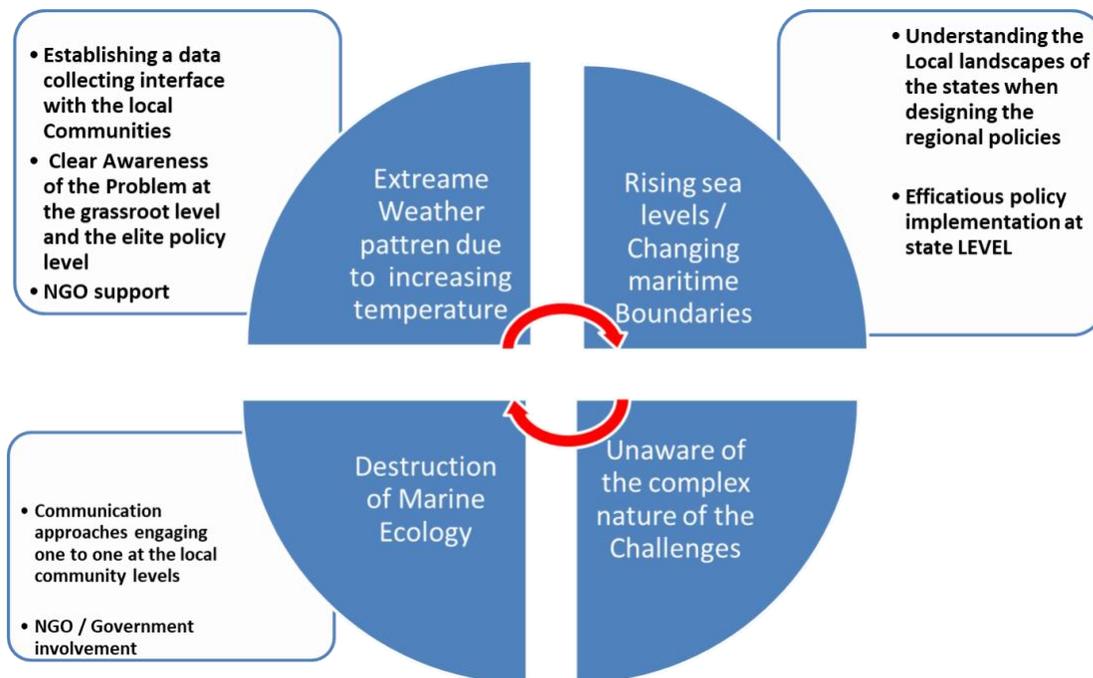
- Guidelines for resilient infrastructure and protection of ecosystems.
- Requirement for big data collection/collation to have feedback.

**Governance level**

- Issues of working with policies and legislation, with a first draft open to the public, before being putting into legislation.
- International cooperation.

**BETTER CONNECTION**

- Followed by translation/interfacing between government and private. Would have members of government, NGOs, think tanks, civil society and public-private.





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