

3rd International Indian Ocean Science Conference

11 – 15 March, Nelson Mandela University

Closing Press Statement

On behalf of Nelson Mandela University, and of the VC Prof Sibongile Muthwa and the DVC Prof Andrew Leitch - I would like to thank all local and international delegates for making the huge effort to attend the 3rd *International Indian Ocean Science Conference (IIOSC)*. We had over 100 delegates from 21 countries. With little doubt, this gathering has been a resounding success.

A major objective of this particular conference was to bring the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2) community into the WIO region so as to promote exposure and the research being undertaken by Western Indian Ocean (WIO) institutions and to promote and facilitate the building of new relationships through the vehicle of ocean science.

Dr Nick D'Adamo of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's IIOE-2 Node in Perth Australia, said "Bringing this multi-national multi-disciplinary scientific community to this part of the world was a key aspiration of the IIOE-2 Steering Committee Co-Sponsors after they learnt last year in Jakarta at IIOSC 2018 of the exciting ocean science achievements and related future plans for launching out of Nelson Mandela University and the UK/South Africa SOLSTICE programme".

The WIO extends all the way up the eastern coast of Africa, including Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, and the island states of Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius and Réunion.

The aim of the IIOE-2 is to promote the science that advances our understanding of the Indian Ocean and its role in the Earth System to enable informed decisions in support of development and the well-being of humankind.

"SCOR congratulates Nelson Mandela University for both hosting the Indian Ocean Symposium this week, and for leadership in development of Ocean Sciences both within South Africa and within the region particularly in the Western Indian Ocean. As a British Scientist, I'm delighted that Professor Mike Roberts has attracted significant UK funding to underpin this," says Peter Burkill, co-chair of the IIOE-2 programme, past president: Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research and emeritus professor, University of Plymouth, UK.

"So congratulations Mike and Nelson Mandela University for helping to realise our aim of better understanding this little studied ocean. This ocean, we now know, is important in the regulation of our climate and is of huge importance to the growing populations that depend on or are affected by the Indian Ocean."

Underpinned by the IIOE-2 sponsors - the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System (IOGOOS) and the Scientific Community on Oceanic Research (SCOR) – the conference brought together the 'Big 5' committees that do their part to steer scientific endeavours in this

ocean basin, in conjunction with the IOC Regional Committee for the Central Indian Ocean. These include:

- IIOE-2 Steering Committee
- Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System (IOGOOS)
- Indian Ocean's physical and biogeochemical monitoring network (IndOOS)
- Indian Ocean Regional Panel (IORP)
- Sustained Indian Ocean Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Research (SIBER)
- IndOOS Resources Forum (IRF)

Not only did the IIOE-2 gathering enable a South Africa-WIO showcase day, there were also nine meetings that involved discussions between the greater Indian Ocean community and WIO individuals and institutions. Feedback from these indicates a game changer with numerous promising collaborations and contributions from WIO, through a much greater awareness across local, regional, oceanic and global stakeholder scales.

From Nelson Mandela University's point of view and its vision of becoming a recognised contributor to IIOE-2 there is similarly no doubt that this has been strongly supported by hosting this conference. With the launch of the Ocean Science Conference in only September 2017 – we have already undertaken four scientific cruises and now have access to marine robotics through collaboration with our international partners. These are major challenge for universities. This has all been achieved under the IIOE-2 umbrella.

In closing and on behalf of Mandela University, we wish all the delegates safe travels back to their countries and provinces. We hope they had a memorable experience here in Port Elizabeth and that they remember Mandela University. We thank the IOC, SCOR and IOGOOS for their support in choosing us as a venue.

Professor Mike Roberts

UK-SA Bilateral Research Chair: Ocean Science & Marine Food Security

Nelson Mandela University