

International Deep-sea Macrofauna Taxonomy School Commences at CMLRE, Kochi under ISA and MoES Collaboration

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Kochi, 07 September 2026 — The Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), operating under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India, has officially commenced the five-day **“Deep-sea Macrofauna Taxonomy School: Standardizing Methodologies for Biodiversity Assessments”** in Kochi. Running from September 07–11, 2026, the prestigious capacity-building initiative is organized under the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative (SSKI) platform of the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

The program is a collaborative effort involving CMLRE (MoES), the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea (MABIK).

Inaugural Highlights and Leadership Addresses

The inaugural ceremony was graced by Her Excellency **Ms. Leticia Carvalho**, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), as the Chief Guest. Delivering an inspirational address, Ms. Carvalho emphasized the critical need to strengthen scientific knowledge and taxonomic expertise to underpin sound environmental management of the deep seabed. She underscored the role of international cooperation and standardized scientific approaches among member states, while encouraging early-career researchers to cultivate scientific excellence, perseverance, and confidence when embracing complex challenges.

Earlier, the welcome address was delivered by **Dr. R. Maheskumar**, Head of CMLRE. The inaugural session featured a comprehensive presentation on the multi-spectrum marine biodiversity research activities of CMLRE by **Dr. Senthil**, Scientist-E, CMLRE, followed by a Special Lecture on marine biodiversity studies under MoES's Deep Ocean Mission by **Dr. G. Dharani**, Scientist-G & Head of the Marine Biotechnology Division at NIOT, Chennai. The ceremony also spotlighted institutional activities and commitments under the SSKI program by MABIK, Republic of Korea, alongside a keynote address by **Dr. Baban Ingole**, former Scientist at NIO, Goa, focusing on benthic studies in the Indian Ocean.

Global Participation and Technical Scope

The training program brings together approximately 30 early-career researchers and scientists from ISA Member States within the Indian Ocean Region (IORA). Participating nations include South Africa, Kenya, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Tanzania, Thailand, Oman, and India.

Over the five-day intensive curriculum, participants will engage in:

- Specialized lectures, field visits, and benthic sample collection

- Hands-on laboratory training in macrofauna identification and result reporting
- Advanced technical instruction in traditional taxonomy, DNA barcoding, Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), and biodiversity data analysis
- Workshops on sample curation and open-access biodiversity data publishing

Guidance is being provided by eminent national and international resource persons hailing from Brazil, South Korea, Portugal, Sweden, Mauritius, Indonesia, Germany, and Singapore, alongside experts from collaborating Indian institutions and CMLRE.

Strategic Importance

Hosting this landmark ISA capacity-building program reinforces India's growing leadership in deep-sea biodiversity research. By standardizing methodologies for benthic biodiversity assessment and fostering robust international scientific partnerships, the initiative marks a significant step forward in sustainable Indian Ocean exploration and environmental governance.



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