

## **Panel: Blue Economy in South Asia: Prospects for Cooperation**

Given the rapid pace of urbanisation, climate change, population growth and other land-based issues, the focus of global policy discussions is gradually shifting towards ‘blue’ resources of the world, which if managed sustainably will have positive implications for socio-economic and environmental aspects for life on land. Despite an emerging concept, blue economy - which entails the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth and job creation - has already become a priority for the European Union and Africa’s development agenda and efforts are being made to bring other regions on board to strengthen and better manage blue economy within and across continents.

Promoting and strengthening a blue economy holds immense promise for the South Asian region as well, which is a hub of world trade and has an extensive ocean-wide network of energy supply lines. On the flipside, South Asia is faced with a multitude of socio-economic challenges and a blue economy, in this context, offers a pathway to address some of these. Against this backdrop, this panel aims to discuss sustainable exploitation of marine resources; maritime security; marine tourism; ocean governance; and the role of businesses in ocean resource management. Some of the more specific questions that will be posed include:

1. How does the blue economy concept fit into the sustainable development framework?
2. How can South Asia as a region cash-in on the benefits of the blue economy; what are the barriers in harnessing maritime resources and how to ensure good ocean governance in the region?
3. How can maritime cooperation between South Asian countries help promote employment and economic growth by fostering new partnerships, leveraging existing institutional relationships and innovative investments in a blue economy?

### **Panel Organisers:**

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