

# WIOMSA AT THE BLACK IN MARINE SCIENCE INAUGURAL RETREAT

| *By Ando Rabearisoa, Frank Mirobo and Nelly Kadagi*

The Inaugural Black in Marine Science Retreat (#BIMSWeek2023) was held in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, between November 26 and December 02, 2023. Black In Marine Science (BIMS), is a nonprofit premier organization, founded by Tiara Moore, with the vision of working to amplify Black marine scientists, spreading environmental awareness and inspiring a future of scientific thought leadership.



*Left to right: Ando Rabearisoa, Frank Mirobo, Isigi Kadagi with the BIMS chair, Tiara Moore*

**#BIMSWeek2023, a first-time professional wellness retreat, brought together over 200 successful marine scientists, to celebrate, build community and broaden the participation of people of African ancestry in marine science by creating a platform for each participant to experience self-care and share their stories.**

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) was well represented by several of its members and the countries of the western Indian Ocean region. Nelly Kadagi (Kenya) and Jeremy Raguain (Seychelles) participated in the panel discussion on Blue Economy; Frank

Mirobo (Tanzania) and Kolisa Sinyanya (South Africa) participated in the discussion on Floating in International Waters and how Marine Science can inspire the next generation of scientific thought leaders; and Ando Rabearisoa (Madagascar) discussed her research on locally managed marine areas in Madagascar. Zandile Ndhlovu, South Africa's first black female freediving instructor and founder of the Black Mermaid Foundation, gave a keynote address and showed the film she directed about her work and her dream to make the ocean more inclusive.



WIOMSA's long-standing leadership role and influence in supporting the most talented and respected marine scientists in Africa and globally demonstrates the key role of the Association as a hub for expanding the concept of diversity in marine science. There are great opportunities to collaborate with BIMS on research and science communication in the future.

*Left to right: Isigi, Kolisa, Zandile and Layla Scott*