



### **FROM THE DESK OF VICE PRESIDENT AFRICA, ASIA AND OCEANIA**

Throughout the Optimist community, sailing programmes, events and initiatives are starting to take place more and more frequently now, as parents and young sailors around the world begin to overcome the challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. It is clear to see, however, that many of our members and sailors still face issues and challenges to get back on the water.

I am certain that going forward, the International sailing events which feature the Optimist Class hosted at Bahrain, Oman, Abu Dhabi, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, S Korea, Japan, China, Seychelles, S Africa, Australia and New Zealand will once again be back on the radar and at IODA, we will continue with our focus on supporting the community.

The 2021 Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship was a week-long regatta hosted by the RVYC, Thailand's premier sailing boat club with classes and events for all ages. The event was organized by International Optimist Dinghy Association (IODA) and hosted by the RVYC in conjunction with Thailand Optimist Dinghy Academy and Yacht Racing Association of Thailand, and primary sponsor Idemitsu. After two years of preparation including onerous tasks to comply with strict pandemic control measures, the event ended in spectacular success.

The 2022 Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship scheduled at S Korea has had to be cancelled due Covid19 related restrictions and we are actively pursuing with alternate venues to host the event in the latter half of the year in a safe and fair environment.

I would also like to thank all nations that are registered to participate at the 2022 IODA African Championship being hosted by South Africa. Whilst, currently very few African MNAs have registered for the event, I hope that in the next few days many more nations will register for the event and I that we have an extremely successful IODA African Championship at South Africa this year.

Last year we introduced a series of webinars focussed on promoting greater accessibility to the sport for female participants and introduced many first-time sailors to the sport. The legacy of these webinars is already evident, with an encouraging sign of increased female membership within some clubs in Asia and Africa. We intend to continue such webinars going forward.

Oman, representing the Asian Continent has submitted a strong bid for hosting the 2024 IODA World Championships at Mussannah, Muscat. I hope that all the country representatives present at the AGM will consider this proposal favourably. Oman Sail has consistently hosted many World Class events at Mussannah and if selected, this event will also prove to be above par.

All the best and stay safe!!

\*\*\*\*\*