

Final Communiqué

14th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association Perth Communiqué 9 October 2014

We, the Ministers of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) met in Perth, Australia, for the 14th Meeting of the Council of Ministers on 9 October 2014. Our meeting was held in a spirit of openness and shared purpose.

We reaffirm our commitment to building a more stable, secure and prosperous Indian Ocean region. We will continue to advance this goal through policy discussion and the implementation of meaningful projects in IORA's six priority areas of cooperation.

We welcome the signing of the IORA Charter as a signal of our commitment to IORA and the important role it plays in fostering cooperation and closer ties across the Indian Ocean region.

The private sector, and the spirit of entrepreneurship, are essential drivers of sustainable economic growth and development. We recognise that increased trade and investment will create employment and lift living standards for people across the region, and will continue to have close regard to the views of the Indian Ocean region's business community on how best to achieve this goal.

We reaffirm our shared principles for boosting economic growth in the Indian Ocean region as articulated in our 'IORA Economic Declaration'.

We are committed to strengthening the blue economy—maritime related economic activity—as a common source of growth, innovation and job creation. Expansion of trade and investment within the region, including fisheries activities, minerals exploration, development of renewable energy and coastal tourism, will stimulate growth and improve our food and energy security.

Last year in Perth, we agreed that the empowerment of women and girls in the region is a high priority, and we committed to taking steps to implement this agenda. We are pleased with the outcomes of IORA events hosted by Australia and India respectively to advance women's economic empowerment and move towards unlocking the potential of women to contribute to the Indian Ocean's prosperity.

The Indian Ocean plays a major role in the security and prosperity of the region as a crucial conduit for global trade, with half the world's container traffic and one-third of bulk cargo traversing its surface.

We are committed to working collaboratively with the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium and other relevant organisations to address shared maritime and security challenges that threaten sea lines of communication and transportation in the Indian Ocean, notably piracy and terrorism.

We affirmed that international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the ocean, including countering piracy and armed robbery at sea.

We welcome United Nations Security Council Resolution 2125 on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia as a recognition of IORA's efforts amongst others to bolster maritime security in the region.

The recent tragic events in the airline industry have highlighted the pressing need for greater coordination and cooperation among national search and rescue services in the Indian Ocean region. We welcome IORA's Memorandum of Understanding on Search and Rescue which underscores the intentions of Member States to collaborate with each other to address similar challenges in the future.

The Indian Ocean rim faces significant risk from disasters, including tsunamis, cyclones, earthquakes and flooding. We are committed to strengthening regional cooperation on disaster risk management in cooperation with the Disaster Response Dialogue and other regional and global platforms.

Academic and science and technology cooperation is vital to building knowledge and expertise in our diverse region. We encourage greater collaboration on oceanic research and scientific cooperation, and endorse the proposed IORA Centre of Excellence on Ocean Sciences and the Environment in Sri Lanka which can play an important role in advancing this goal.

In addition, we commend the initiative of India and Mauritius in funding and hosting the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies at the University of Mauritius.

Our discussion on these several issues was informed by meetings of the IORA Committee of Senior Officials, IORA Working Group on Trade and Investment, Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) and Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG). We thank these groups for their productive contribution to the full range of IORA's activities.

We welcome the development of vision statements by IORBF and IORAG, including an intention for renewed engagement with business and academic communities. We welcome IORAG's formal association with the Journal of the Indian Ocean Region as an initiative that will foster greater academic collaboration among IORA countries.

We value the contributions and support the activities of IORA's Fisheries Support Unit and Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer in developing and delivering proposals that benefit our region in their respective areas of expertise.

Dialogue Partners play a significant role in the prosperity of the Indian Ocean region, and have a wealth of experience to share with Member States. We welcome the increased participation of Dialogue Partners in IORA activity, and encourage this to continue.

We strongly support IORA's recent efforts to extend and formalise ties with other international and regional bodies, including the United Nations and its specialised agencies, and confirm the mutual benefit of these closer links.

We recognise the excellent and tireless work of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat in taking forward IORA's goals and activities. We are pleased that Member States have come together to increase Secretariat resources for the benefit of the organisation.

We thank the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs for hosting the 14th Council of Ministers' Meeting and related meetings, and extend our appreciation for the excellent hospitality in Perth.

Perth, Australia
9 October 2014