



Quarterly  
E-NEWSLETTER

# Indian Ocean Rim Association

The Indian Ocean Rim Association is an intergovernmental organization that fosters regional cooperation among the 23 Member States bordering the Indian Ocean. Established in 1997, IORA promotes sustainable development and collaboration within the region. The association covers various priority areas, including trade and investment, disaster risk management, maritime safety and security, fisheries management, tourism and cultural exchanges and academic, science and technology .

## IORA Secretariat Hosts Farewell Lunch for Secretary-General H.E. Dr. Salman Al-Farisi

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat organized a working lunch on 11th December, in honor of the outgoing Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Salman Al-Farisi, to mark the conclusion of his three-year tenure.

The event featured a presentation by Dr. Al-Farisi, who provided a brief overview of the achievements under his leadership. He emphasized the increasing international presence of IORA, attributing it to significant milestones accomplished across six priority areas and two cross-cutting issues.

During his speech, the Secretary-General highlighted the following:

### Achievements and Partnerships

The Secretary-General emphasized progress in capacity-building initiatives, including programs on disaster risk reduction, blue economy, and climate change. Significant strides were made with the Nelson Mandela Internship Programme, the IORA University Networks, and strategic frameworks for ocean governance. IORA also expanded its partnerships, welcoming Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the EU as Dialogue Partners and signing MoUs with key organizations like ASEAN and the International Solar Alliance.

### Strengthening the Secretariat

Efforts to improve the IORA Secretariat included streamlining operations and enhancing communication through a revamped website and outreach initiatives.

These measures aimed to increase efficiency and engagement while promoting IORA's mission.

### Closing Reflections

In closing, the Secretary-General expressed heartfelt thanks to IORA Member States, Dialogue Partners, and the Secretariat team for their support during the tenure. Reflecting on the challenges and achievements, he conveyed confidence in IORA's future and the ability of the incoming leadership to elevate the organization's mission. His speech ended with a commitment to IORA's continued success in fostering regional cooperation and sustainable development.

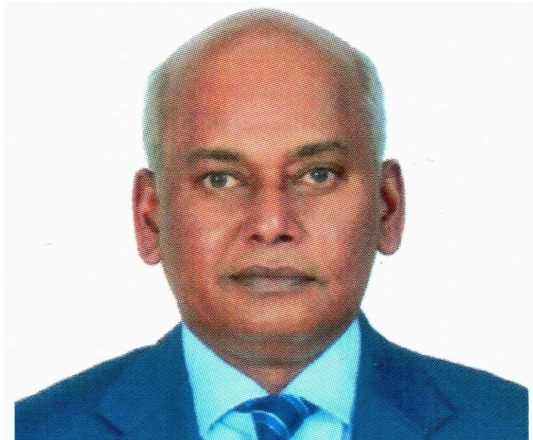
The Honourable Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hambyrajen Narsinghen, graced the occasion along with the heads of missions of IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners in Mauritius.

In his address to the gathering, the Honourable Minister reiterated the unwavering support of the Government of Mauritius to IORA. He highlighted the critical need to foster enhanced cooperation within the Indian Ocean region to promote economic growth and sustainable development.

The gathering, which included members of the diplomatic corps and IORA officials, reflected on the progress achieved under Dr. Al-Farisi's tenure and the continued commitment to regional collaboration.



## IORA Secretariat Welcomes H.E. Mr Sanjiv Ranjan as New Secretary-General



H.E. Mr Sanjiv Ranjan will assume the role of Secretary-General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) on 1st January 2025 for a tenure of 3 years .

A distinguished diplomat with three decades of experience in international relations and cooperation, Mr Ranjan is set to lead IORA's efforts in fostering regional collaboration among IORA Member States. Mr Ranjan holds a B.A. (Honours) in Economics from Delhi University and an M.A. in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1993 and has since built a distinguished career in diplomacy in multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

From 1995 to 2009, Mr. Ranjan held various diplomatic positions in Indian embassies in Madrid and Lima and at the Permanent Mission of India in New York. His tenure included significant roles in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi. He also served as Deputy High Commissioner of India to Mauritius from 2006 to 2009, strengthening ties and contributing to regional cooperation.

In 2009, Mr. Ranjan was appointed Director (North) in the MEA and, later, Joint Secretary in the Development Partnership Administration in 2012, overseeing critical projects in India's neighborhood. He was instrumental in coordinating the third India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in 2015.

His ambassadorial assignments include serving as India's Ambassador to Argentina with concurrent accreditation to Uruguay and Paraguay (2016-2019) and to Colombia with concurrent accreditation to Ecuador (2019-2022). Most recently, he has been serving as Officer on Special Duty (Secretary Rank) overseeing personnel, establishment, and e-governance within the MEA in Government of India.

Fluent in English, Hindi, and Spanish, Mr. Ranjan is renowned for his diplomatic skills and his commitment to fostering international partnerships.

His appointment as Secretary-General of IORA marks the beginning of a new chapter for the organization, which plays a pivotal role in promoting cooperation among Indian Ocean Rim Member States, Dialogue Partners and Other International Stakeholders

## IORA-ISA MoU: A Step Forward for Sustainable Solar Development



The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaborative efforts in promoting sustainable solar energy development and deployment. Signed in October 2018 at the Second IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting in Delhi NCR, India, on 3 October 2028, and extended in 2021, the MoU was renewed and signed remotely in December 2024. This agreement underscores the commitment of both organizations to advancing renewable energy solutions across the Indian Ocean region. The partnership is designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and technical resources between IORA Member States and ISA.

## IORA Hosts Third Workshop on Combatting IUU Fishing in the Indian Ocean

From 1 to 3 October 2024, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, co-hosted the third workshop on the development of IORA Guidelines for Combatting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. The event took place in Bali, Indonesia.

Building on the outcomes of previous workshops, this workshop brought together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders from IORA Member States to collaboratively strengthen regional efforts to address the growing issue of IUU fishing in the Indian Ocean.

The workshop provided a platform to:

- Finalize the IORA Guidelines for Combatting IUU Fishing.
- Explore potential activities and partnerships for the implementation of the Guidelines.

The finalized Guidelines are set to be presented to IORA Senior Officials for review and will subsequently be adopted by the Council of Ministers. This significant initiative was co-financed by the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of France through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), and IORA. It underscores the collective commitment of IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to sustainable fisheries management in the Indian Ocean region.



## Site Visits: Third IORA Workshop on Developing Guidelines to Combat IUU Fishing



As part of the Third Workshop on Developing IORA Guidelines to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF), participants joined two insightful site visits:

- Bena Port: A presentation on Port State Measures Implementation, highlighting its role in combating IUU fishing and promoting sustainable fisheries.
- Mangrove Center, Tahura Ngurah Rai: A tour of Bali's only mangrove botanical garden, showcasing its contributions to coastal protection, carbon absorption, and biodiversity.

Special thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries Affairs of Indonesia for organizing these visits, emphasizing conservation, sustainability, and the fight against IUUF.

## France Reaffirms Commitment to IORA with €3 Million Contribution

France, a proud Member State of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) since 2021, has reaffirmed its dedication to fostering a sustainable blue economy and advancing effective fisheries management in the region. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and IORA on 14th October. Through the AFD, France has pledged a voluntary contribution of €3 million over the next three years to support key initiatives, including:

- Combatting marine debris.
- Enhancing disaster risk management.
- Strengthening the IORA Secretariat.

The signatories were the Ambassador of the Republic of France to Mauritius, Mr Frédéric Bontems, the Director of the AFD, Mrs Laëticia Habchi, and the Secretary-General of the IORA, Mr Salman Al Farisi.

“The health of our oceans is integral to the well-being of our people. Marine debris, particularly plastic pollution, has become an urgent concern that transcends national borders,” Dr Salman Al-Farisi, the Secretary General of the IORA, remarked. “Through the implementation of the IORA Strategic Framework to Combat Marine Debris supported under this MoU, we will strengthen regional collaboration to combat this growing threat.”

This renewed commitment, backed by the expertise of Expertise France and collaboration with IORA Member States, underscores France’s pivotal role in advancing regional cooperation and sustainability. Together, these efforts aim to secure a brighter and more sustainable future for the Indian Ocean region.



### ROOTS OF IORA'S VISION

The Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organisation which was established on 7 March 1997.

The vision for IORA originated during a visit by late President Nelson Mandela of South Africa to India in 1995. This sentiment and rationale underpinned the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative in March 1995, and the creation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (then known as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation) two years later, in March 1997.

## IORA Strengthens Commitment to Disaster Resilient Infrastructure Through Partnership with CDRI

IORA is poised to ‘Develop Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI) in the region with the aim of preventing future risks’, as per the Workplan of the Working Group on Disaster Risk Management (WGDRM).

As such, IORA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in April 2022.

CDRI is a multi-stakeholder global partnership which aims to address the challenges of building resilience into infrastructure systems to support sustainable development.

Both IORA- and CDRI are working closely to undertake activities of the IORA-CDRI workplan. One such activity is to be part of the Steering Committee of Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS), one of CDRI’s flagship initiatives which provides technical support on multifaceted issues posed by infrastructure systems and promote disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure assets in SIDS.

IRIS has announced a second ‘Call for Proposals’ at the 4th International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4) in Antigua and Barbuda on 27 May 2024, focusing on Climate Action, Mainstreaming Resilience, and Strengthening Data for Resilient and Inclusive Infrastructure for all 57 SIDS.

The initiative aims to equip relevant government agencies in SIDS with the technical support and knowledge products needed to promote resilient infrastructure, fostering resilient economies and a secure future for SIDS.

With nearly 147 registrations, the Second Call received a total of 57 full proposals from 34 SIDS across the Caribbean, Pacific, Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

Mr Shivraj Dhuppe, Director of Maritime Safety and Security (MSS) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) has been nominated to participate in the Seventh IRIS Steering Committee Meeting, in New Delhi, India from 9-11 October 2024. The Steering Committee has one of the main roles of approving the proposals based on the recommendations given by technical advisory panels.

CDRI’s Charter lists Knowledge Management (KM) as a core function of the Secretariat. KM is critical to CDRI’s theory of change and the success of CDRI’s Strategic Work plan.

As such, Teelotma Ghoorah, Programme Officer in the MSS and DRM Directorate has been nominated to form part of the Knowledge Management Working Group which has recently been constituted at the CDRI.



## IORA Secretariat Participates in Policy workshop on Climate Change, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in the Bay of Bengal

On 24-25 October 2024, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat participated in the Policy Implementation Workshop on Climate Change, Humanitarian Assistance, and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) in the Bay of Bengal. The event, held in Bangkok, Thailand, was jointly organized by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)-India and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), in collaboration with the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

The workshop provided a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and the exchange of best practices among regional policymakers and practitioners.

Mr. Shivraj Dhuppe, IORA’s Director of Maritime Safety and Security and Disaster Risk Management, highlighted the critical need for effective disaster risk management in a world increasingly impacted by climate-related disasters.

IORA is committed to addressing the intertwined challenges of climate change and humanitarian assistance. By fostering collaboration among member states, sharing expertise, and building local capacities, IORA seeks to enhance disaster response and resilience across the region.



### DID YOU KNOW?

IORA FOCUSES ON SIX PRIORITY AREAS AND TWO CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES:

#### PRIORITY AREAS

-  Maritime Safety & Security
-  Trade & Investment Facilitation
-  Fisheries Management
-  Disaster Risk Management
-  Tourism & Cultural Exchanges
-  Academic, Science & Technology

#### CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

-  Blue Economy
-  Women's Economic Empowerment

## IORA Workshop Highlights Blue Carbon Conservation and Coastal Community Empowerment

From 21 to 23 October 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Mzumbe University, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat co-hosted a workshop in Dar Es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, focusing on empowering coastal communities through nature-based solutions (NbS) and the conservation of blue carbon ecosystems.

The participation of the fellows of the 2024 Early Career Ocean Professionals of the IORA Blue Carbon Hub was also noted. On completion of the course, participants acquired knowledge for evidence-based policy design and reform, have enhanced interpretation and analysis skills, and have explored a variety of socio-economic impacts and policy interventions to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.



## 23rd Meeting of the IORA Working Group on the Trade and Investment

The Republic of Mozambique, led by Mr. Ali Mussa, Deputy National Director of External Trade from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, hosted the 23rd Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) on 27 November 2024. The meeting was held virtually, bringing together IORA Member States for a productive discussion on regional trade and investment activities. Member States provided comprehensive updates on the status of activities under the WGTI Work Plan for 2022-2027. These updates highlighted progress in various initiatives aimed at enhancing trade and investment across the Indian Ocean Rim region. A key highlight of the meeting was a presentation by Richard Bolwijn, Head of Investment Research at UNCTAD. He led a discussion on the “Role of Trade and Investment in Supply Chain Resilience,” focusing on how trade and investment help strengthen global supply chains.





## IORA Indian Ocean University Network (UNIOR) Officially Launched

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is delighted to announce the official launch of the IORA Indian Ocean University Network (UNIOR). The landmark event took place on 15 November 2024 at Curtin University’s Mauritius campus and was officiated by IORA Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Salman Al Farisi.

UNIOR represents a transformative regional academic initiative, aimed at fostering higher education and research collaboration to address pressing sustainable development and transformation priorities.

The platform will focus on building leadership, enhancing institutional capacity, and promoting regional cooperation across the Indian Ocean. Universities interested in becoming Founding Members of UNIOR must be nominated by their respective IORA Member States or Dialogue Partners by 30 June 2025. For further details, institutions are encouraged to contact their IORA National Focal Points. The Network will formally commence its activities on 1 July 2025, paving the way for collaborative research and learning that will shape the future of the Indian Ocean Region.



## IRIOR Short Course 2024 to Strengthening Regional Academic Collaboration

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) successfully concluded the International Relations in the Indian Ocean Region (IRIOR) short course for 2024, which brought together 18 students from 10 IORA Member States: Australia, Comoros, Mauritius, Indonesia, India, South Africa, Kenya, Bangladesh, Réunion, and Seychelles. The 10-day program provided a dynamic platform for fostering dialogue, learning, and collaboration among emerging scholars, enhancing their understanding of the geopolitical, economic, and social complexities of the Indian Ocean Region. Through interactive sessions and study tours, participants engaged with critical issues influencing the region's future. The course culminated on 15 November 2024 with the highly anticipated Launch Forum for the IORA Indian Ocean University Network (UNIOR).

IORA reaffirmed its dedication to nurturing the next generation of leaders and scholars who will contribute to the collective prosperity and stability of the Indian Ocean Region.



## IORA Participates in SAREX 24, Strengthening Regional Search and Rescue Collaboration

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) participated in the Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX 24) held from 27 to 30 November 2024 in Kochi, India. Organized by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Ministry of Defence, the event focused on enhancing regional collaboration in search and rescue (SAR) operations.

The exercise featured workshops, seminars, and a sea drill showcasing advanced technologies like satellite distress beacons, drones, and remote-controlled life-saving devices. Ships and aircraft from the ICG, Navy, Air Force, and other agencies participated in mass evacuation simulations.

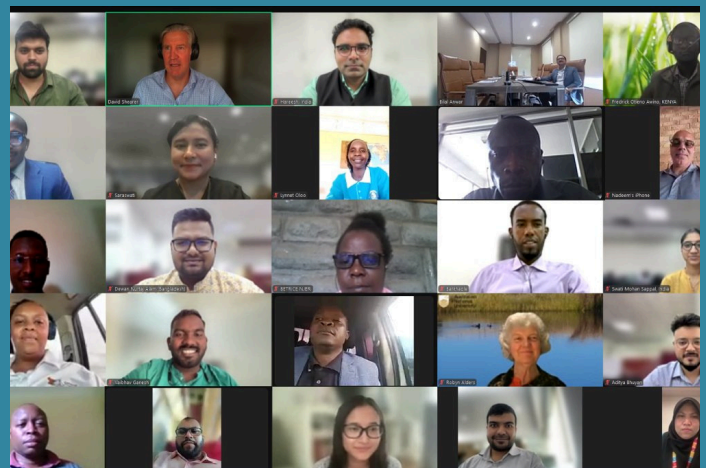
IORA’s Director of Maritime Safety and Security, Mr. Shivraj Dhuppe, highlighted the organization’s role in strengthening SAR cooperation through its SAR Memorandum of Understanding.

The event brought together 28 nations, including 14 IORA Member States and three Dialogue Partners, fostering regional unity in addressing maritime emergencies. SAREX 24 reaffirmed the importance of collaborative efforts and innovative solutions to enhance safety across the Indian Ocean Region.



## IORA Climate Change Professional Short Course Empowers Participants from Across the Region

Participants from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Somalia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka are honing their skills in evidence-based policy design and reform as part of the Indian Ocean Rim Association’s (IORA) Professional Short Courses for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. The program, delivered in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and The Australian National University, focuses on equipping participants with advanced interpretation and analysis skills to address the pressing challenges of climate change.





**Outgoing Secretary General of IORA  
pays farewell call on Foreign Affairs Minister**

The Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Dr Salman Al Farisi, paid a farewell call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr Dhananjay Ramful, on 09 December 2024 at the seat of the Ministry in Port-Louis. The aim was to take stock of various matters at the IORA and to promote greater interaction and dialogue between the IORA Secretariat and Mauritius thereby enabling concrete, valuable and meaningful cooperation. Matters of discussion comprised Mauritius's interest for the position of Vice-Chair of the IORA from 2025 to 2027 and the position of Chair from 2027 to 2029.



**Australia Reaffirms Commitment  
to IORA's Mission During Mauritius Visit**

IORA continues to play a pivotal role in addressing regional challenges and upholding rules and norms that benefit all Indian Ocean countries. As a founding Member State since 1997, Australia remains a steadfast partner in IORA's mission to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. Australia's Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Tim Watts MP, visited Mauritius and called on IORA Secretary-General Mr. Salman Al Farisi at the IORA headquarters. The visit, accompanied by Australia's High Commissioner to Mauritius, Ms. Chamley, highlighted Australia's support for IORA's leadership in fostering stronger regional partnerships.



**H.E. Salman Al Farisi Welcomes U.S. Deputy  
Assistant Secretary Joy Basu**

H.E. Dr Salman Al Farisi, welcomed Ms. Joy Basu, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs, to the IORA Secretariat on 21st November. The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation between IORA and the United States, a Dialogue Partner since 2012, to promote regional collaboration and sustainable development. Key discussions centered on maritime security, disaster risk management, and advancing the blue economy. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to tackling global challenges, including climate change and digital transformation, while fostering peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.



## **IORA Secretary-General Addresses 2024 Shenzhen Global Marine Forum**

The Secretary-General of IORA participated in the 2024 Shenzhen Global Marine Forum, joining world leaders and ocean experts to shape the future of ocean governance and sustainability, from 31st October to 2nd November. As a distinguished speaker in the session on "Improving the Efficiency and Increasing the Scope of Ocean Governance," the Secretary-General underscored IORA's pivotal role in promoting sustainable ocean practices, enhancing maritime safety, and fostering collaborative efforts for effective governance in Indian Ocean region. The forum provided a platform to exchange innovative ideas and strengthen partnerships aimed at addressing critical challenges.



## **IORA Secretary-General Welcomes Russian Ambassador to Mauritius**

H.E. Dr. Salman Al Farisi welcomed H.E. Mrs. Irada Zeynalova, the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Mauritius, at the IORA Secretariat in Ebene on 29 October. The meeting highlighted the mutual commitment to enhancing collaboration between the Indian Ocean region and the Russian Federation. Discussions focused on fostering stronger partnerships in areas of shared interest to promote sustainable development and regional cooperation. H.E. Dr. Salman Al Farisi congratulated Ambassador Zeynalova on her new role and expressed optimism about deepening ties between IORA and the Russian Federation in advancing regional peace and prosperity.



## **IORA Secretary-General Meets Chinese Ambassador to Mauritius**

H.E. Dr. Salman Al Farisi held a meeting with H.E. Zhu Liying, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Mauritius, at the IORA Secretariat on 18th October. The discussion reaffirmed the robust collaboration between IORA and China, focusing on enhancing regional cooperation and advancing sustainable development across the Indian Ocean region. They emphasized the importance of joint efforts in addressing shared priorities such as economic growth, maritime security, and environmental sustainability. The meeting underscored the long-standing partnership between IORA and China, highlighting their shared commitment to fostering prosperity.



### **Secretary-General Welcomes UK Delegates to Explore Future Regional Collaborations**

The Secretary-General of IORA, H.E. Dr Salman Al Farisi, welcomed the Deputy High Commissioner of United Kingdom in Mauritius, Goran Mandic who introduced Ms Rosanna Johnston, Indian Ocean Policy Officer, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom, Mauritius 25 November 2024.

The meeting focused on exploring future regional collaboration between United Kingdom and IORA on Maritime Safety and Security, Climate Change and Blue Economy.

The United Kingdom became a Dialogue Partner of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in 2000.



### **Secretary-General Welcomes Ambassador of Korea to Discuss Regional Collaboration**

On 29 November 2024, the Secretary-General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), H.E. Dr. Salman Al Farisi, welcomed H.E. Park Ji-hyun, the Ambassador of Korea to Madagascar and Mauritius, for a meeting focused on strengthening regional cooperation. The discussions centered on key areas of potential collaboration between Korea and IORA, including maritime safety and security, the blue economy, and women empowerment. Korea, a Dialogue Partner of IORA since 2018, is eager to enhance its engagement with the region in these critical sectors. Both parties expressed a shared commitment to addressing the challenges and opportunities that the Indian Ocean region presents.



*Season's Greetings*  
2025

As we embrace the spirit of this festive season,  
IORA Secretariat extends its heartfelt wishes to you and your family.  
May this time of year bring joy, peace, and prosperity