

**16th Meeting of the Council of Ministers
Bali, Indonesia
Thursday, 27 October 2016**

Bali Communiqué

We, the Ministers of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen met in Bali, Indonesia, for the 16th meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) on 27 October 2016. The meeting was held in a collaborative spirit and shared responsibility responding to common challenges to unleash the region's potential for a more peaceful, stable and prosperous Indian Ocean region.

We welcome the signing of the IORA Charter by Somalia and the signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Search and Rescue by Sri Lanka and Tanzania.

We note the significant progress made towards the finalization of the IORA Concord and the Action Plan developed at the three Ad hoc Committee Meetings, which took place in March, May and October 2016 respectively in Indonesia. We look forward to the adoption and signing of the IORA Concord as well as the endorsement of IORA Action Plan in 2017.

We note with appreciation the progress made in preparation for the IORA Commemorative Leaders' Summit and its related meetings to be held in Jakarta – Indonesia on 7 March 2017. We encourage Members States, Dialogue Partners, and all stakeholders to collectively cooperate and collaborate to ensure the success of the event.

We agree to hold the IORA Business Forum during the Commemorative Leaders' Summit in 2017 aiming at enhancing partnership with the private sector to ensure sustainable growth and development of the region.

We commit to deepen our cooperation with the Dialogue Partners and take note of the outcomes of the first post-CSO dialogue for which the Dialogue Partners have been constructively engaged at senior officials' level in identifying areas of cooperation as well as exploring joint projects, programmes, and capacity building activities of mutual interest.

We affirmed our commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women by adopting a Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment. We take note of the outcomes of IORA Women in Business Symposium: Implementing the IORA Women in Business Symposium (WIBS) in Jakarta, on 11-12 October 2016.

We support the deliberations held during the 18th IORA Committee of Senior Officials, the 16th IORA Working Group on Trade and Investment, the 22nd Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum, and the 22nd Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group Meeting and thanked these groups for their productive recommendations.

We express our appreciation to the IORA business delegation for their participation in the 31st Trade Expo Indonesia in Jakarta in October 2016 as a continuous effort to open business opportunities.

We take note of the outcome of the International Symposium for IORA's 20th Anniversary on "Learning from the Past and Charting the Future", that was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia on 14-15 September 2016 as well as the track-two Regional Workshop on Intersection of Culture in Indian Ocean Region held by the IORA Academic Group in Jakarta on 10 – 11 October 2016. Both forums served as an ideal vehicle to exchange views on the challenges, opportunities and the strategies on how IORA should develop its cooperation in the future.

We welcome the initiatives to promote economic cooperation and continue to explore all the possibilities and avenues to establish a work programme for enhanced cooperation.

We note the progress since our last meeting in Padang in 2015 and appreciate the success of events held in 2015-2016 and take note with appreciation of their outcomes, namely the Second Ministerial Economic Business Conference (13-14 April 2016, Dubai, UAE) and the First Free Trade Zone Authorities (19-20 May 2016, Chabahar, Iran).

We are pleased to note the increase of IORA activities under the IORA Special Fund and encourage Member States and Dialogue Partners to continue supporting the Fund. We welcome the consideration of the possibility to establish the IORA Development Fund (IDF) as a funding mechanism to support the implementation of projects, studies, and capacity building programmes.

We are encouraged by the progress made in the Blue Economy as one of the priority areas of IORA and we look forward to the convening of the the second Blue Economy Dialogue in India in November 2016, the third Blue Economy Core Group workshop and the second Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC-II) in Indonesia in 2017.

We express appreciation to the implementation of the IORA Sustainable Development Program (ISDP) in Bangladesh, Comoros, Madagascar, and Tanzania respectively. We note with interest the preparation of the second phase of the ISDP programme for LDCs as an effort to develop capacities and skill development in fostering regional economic development.

We support the ongoing efforts by the Association to pursue follow-up actions with regional/international organization as well as related organs and believe that such engagement should be continued.

We welcome the ongoing efforts to strengthen the IORA Secretariat by Member States. We wish to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General and the IORA Secretariat, as well as IORA's Specialized Agencies namely the Regional Center for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) and the Fisheries Support Unit (FSU), for their tireless efforts in supporting IORA meetings and programmes and for ensuring the smooth management of the Association.

We extend our deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia for hosting the 16th Council of Ministers Meeting and related meetings, and for the excellent hospitality extended to us in Jakarta and Bali.

Bali, Indonesia
27 October 2016