



eThekwini Communiqué

The 18th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Durban, eThekwini, South Africa, 2 November 2018

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen met in Durban, eThekwini, South Africa for the 18th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) on 2 November 2018.

We represent one of the most diverse and geo-strategically important regions of the world, with a heterogeneous mix of developed, developing, Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

The meeting was held in a collaborative spirit and shared responsibility under South Africa's theme for its Chair: *"IORA: Uniting the peoples of Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Middle East through enhanced cooperation for peace, stability and sustainable development"*.

We noted that 2018 marks the centenary of the birth of the former President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and we recognized the important role that he played in the establishment of the Association. To pay tribute to the life and legacy of this global icon, we adopted a Special Declaration to commemorate the centenary, and we launched the IORA Nelson Mandela "Be the Legacy" internship programme as a contribution to empowering and capacitating the youth of our Region.

We agreed that Bangladesh would serve as the incoming Vice-Chair of the Association when the United Arab Emirates assumes the Chair for the period 2019–2021.

We welcomed the Republic of Maldives as the twenty second member of our Association. We also approved the applications of the Republic of Turkey as the eighth and the Republic of Korea as the

ninth Dialogue Partners of IORA and look forward to their involvement in and support for the objectives and programmes of IORA.

We recognised the need for the Association and its institutions to adapt to an evolving international environment, and welcomed the adoption of a more dynamic Charter that is streamlined to respond to the changing global priorities, challenges and opportunities being confronted by Member States and the Indian Ocean Rim region.

We noted with satisfaction the progress that was made during the past year in the implementation of the Jakarta Concord and the IORA Action Plan (2017-2021). In particular we welcomed the establishment of the three new priority Working Groups on the Blue Economy, Maritime Safety and Security, and Women's Economic Empowerment, as well as the Core Group on Tourism. We have directed our senior officials to finalise and to begin the implementation of the Work Plans of these new functional bodies expeditiously.

We appreciated the hosting of the Second IORA Meeting of Experts on Maritime Safety and Security in New Delhi on 7-8 November 2017 by India. This meeting resulted in an outcome document entitled the Blueprint for Maritime Safety and Security in IORA, which reflected the proposed goals and initiatives of the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021 for promoting Maritime Safety and Security in the region.

We welcomed the organisation of the First IORA Familiarisation Visit for Journalists and Media Personnel by India for IORA Member States, at New Delhi, on 12-17 November 2017 and recommended that this kind of outreach be undertaken regularly. South Africa offered to host the next familiarisation visit in 2019.

We noted with appreciation the hosting of the Workshop on Marine Aquaculture and Fish Health Management on 23-28 November 2017 at Situbondo, Indonesia.

We welcomed South Africa's hosting of a technical workshop to support institutional strengthening of the Secretariat that took place on 20-21 March 2018 in Mauritius. The implementation of the recommendations and outcomes of the workshop will serve to improve the capacity and efficiency of the Secretariat in supporting the activities of IORA Member States going forward.

We welcomed the outcomes of the Indian Ocean Conference on Blue Carbon that was held on Perth on 19-23 March 2018. This provided IORA countries with an opportunity to share experiences and ideas on the tremendous possibilities presented by the Blue Economy.

We noted with appreciation South Africa's convening of the Fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) that was held in Durban on 1-2 August 2018, in conjunction with the 24th meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) meeting. The institutionalisation of the IOD and the ongoing work of the IORAG strengthen the role of academia in promoting academic, science and technology cooperation in IORA.

We reiterated our desire to enhance cooperation in the area of trade and investment facilitation. To this end, we requested our senior officials and business communities to prioritise the convening and revitalisation of the IORA Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) and the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) as soon as possible.

We expressed our appreciation and congratulations to Australia and Mauritius for convening the First IORA Ministerial Conference on Women's Economic Empowerment in Balaclava, Mauritius on 28-29

August 2018. We welcome the adoption of the *“Balaclava Declaration on Women’s Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality as a Prerequisite for Sustainable Development”* which has affirmed that gender inclusiveness, gender equality, and the rights of women and girls are essential for strong sustainable and balanced growth.

We expressed our appreciation and congratulations to South Africa for hosting the Second IORA Tourism Ministerial meeting in Nelson Mandela Bay on 21-23 October 2018. We welcome the adoption of the *Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism Declaration* and the establishment of the IORA Core Group on Tourism which provides a common vision for promoting cooperation in making the tourism sector an engine for economic and social development and growth in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

We expressed our appreciation and congratulations to India for hosting the Second IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial and Experts Meetings on 2-4 October 2018. We welcomed the *Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in the Indian Ocean Region* which calls for collaboration among IORA Member States in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in the Indian Ocean littoral states, development of a common renewable energy agenda for the Indian Ocean Rim region and promote regional capacity building.

We look forward to the convening of the Third Ministerial Blue Economy Conference (BEC–III) in Bangladesh in 2019.

We welcomed the recent signing of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between IORA and the following institutions: the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in India; the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) in India, the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC) in Indonesia, as well as between the IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CSIR-CIMAP) in India, and the Water Research Commission (WRC) in South Africa. We welcomed the imminent signing of an MOU with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

We welcomed the Sultanate of Oman signing the IORA Charter; Bangladesh and Mozambique in signing the IORA MoU for the promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); and Mozambique and Somalia in signing the IORA MoU for the Coordination and Cooperation of Search and Rescue Services in the Indian Ocean Region.

We welcomed the progress being made in deepening and broadening IORA’s engagement with its Dialogue Partners through the adoption of the Declaration on Guidelines for Enhancing Interaction with Dialogue Partners in IORA. The Declaration recognises that the IORA Dialogue Partners will strive actively to cooperate and support the Association’s priorities. In this regard, we expressed our appreciation to Germany for financial support for the strengthening of the IORA Secretariat, cooperation with the United Kingdom in promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment, the ongoing financial support from China to the IORA Special Fund, along with a first-ever contribution to IORA from the United States of America.

We also extended our support for continued engagement with the United Nations and its specialised agencies, as well as other regional institutions and we welcomed the convening of the IORA-FAO workshop on Effective Fish Trade and sustainable development for Small Island Developing States in Seychelles on 27-29 August 2018.

We thank the IORA Secretariat for the outstanding work and diligent efforts in helping us to advance IORA's aims and activities, as well as the IORA Specialised Agencies, namely the Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) and the Fisheries Support Unit (FSU), for their tireless efforts in supporting IORA.

We extend our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of South Africa for successfully hosting the 18th Council of Ministers and its related meetings, and for the excellent arrangements and hospitality extended to all delegates.

2 November, Durban, eThekwin