

13th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association

Perth Communiqué

1 November 2013

We, the Ministers of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) met in Perth, Australia, for the 13th Meeting of the Council of Ministers on 1 November 2013. Our meeting was held in a spirit of collegiality and common endeavour.

2. We welcome the adoption of IORA as the new name for our organisation, known formerly as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORARC). This as an important step signifying our renewed resolve to strengthen our Association and its work.
3. Our discussion followed productive meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials, Working Group on Trade and Investment, IOR Business Forum and IOR Academic Group. We thank these groups for their valuable contributions, which shaped the direction of our dialogue.
4. We reaffirm our shared interest in the stability, security and prosperity of all countries of the Indian Ocean rim and our commitment to enhancing cooperation to deliver sustained economic growth and broad-based and balanced development in this strategically vital region.
5. IORA is the lead body for promoting regional collaboration across the Indian Ocean rim. We will take forward IORA's role in addressing the development, security, resource and environmental challenges that face our region through policy-oriented consideration of opportunities and risks and high-quality projects in the six priority areas we identified at our meeting in Bengaluru in 2011.
6. We wish to broaden and deepen efforts through IORA to bolster maritime security and safety, particularly in light of continued threats to maritime commerce, and freedom of the high seas, consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS); as well as on the safety of sea farers. We look to the upcoming Indian Ocean Dialogue in India to explore, inter-alia, concrete options to enhance counter-piracy cooperation, including through improved maritime information-sharing arrangements and stronger national legal capacity and laws.

7. We welcomed work through the Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control to develop stronger port state control measures in IORA Member States in order to enhance the safety of shipping across the Indian Ocean.

8. We encourage Member States to implement fully their obligations under the *Safety of Life at Sea Convention* and the annexed *International Ship and Port Facility Security Code* through domestic implementation of these instruments.

9. There is much potential for IORA to build cooperation among Member States and others in disaster response and risk management, including by drawing on 'best practice' models developed in other regions and through other organisations. This includes natural and other disasters especially in the maritime domain, particularly including tsunamis, as well as activities such as search and rescue and response to oil spills.

10. All IORA Member States have a stake as invited participants in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). We consider it important that IORA's work on maritime security and safety and disaster management align with and complement possible IONS initiatives in these areas, including in information-sharing and other activities with both civilian and non-civilian dimensions.

11. We are focused on increasing trade and investment intra-regionally and further afield. This is central to IORA's purpose. Regional trade facilitation and customs simplification are important areas of ongoing cooperation. We encourage further such work among IORA Member States to promote economic integration and development in the Indian Ocean region.

12. We strongly encourage private sector involvement in IORA activities to enhance regional trade and investment, and commit to developing business-friendly initiatives to address issues related to energy security, food security, tourism and infrastructure. We also recognise the opportunities offered by the ocean ('blue') economy.

13. We support work to address needs in fisheries management and aquaculture and artisanal fishing, and underscore the need to combat illegal fishing. We reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful, productive and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, as outlined in our 'Perth Principles' Declaration, and aim for IORA to do more in this field.

14. More can also be done in IORA to foster collaboration and build capacity in areas of oceanic research. We endorse work undertaken in IORA to strengthen ocean monitoring and forecasting and seasonal climate forecasting capacities and knowledge of climate change adaptation practices.

15. The second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2), planned for 2015 on the 50th anniversary of the original expedition, will be a unique opportunity for regional collaboration in research, training and capacity-building. We support this important scientific endeavour to enhance our understanding of the Indian Ocean.

16. We also support efforts to better connect existing academic and other research institutions in the Indian Ocean region, including through exchanges and joint projects. Through such efforts, IORA can help to foster nodes of excellence and understanding in areas of common interest.

17. We value the cooperative contributions of IORA's Fisheries Support Unit and Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer in developing and delivering proposals to the benefit of members in their respective areas of responsibility.

18. The Indian Ocean rim is marked by great diversity in cultures and societies. Closer people-to-people links, including through tourism, education and business, will contribute to greater cohesion and sense of regional identity. IORA should play a part in building these connections, for economic and wider benefit.

19. We will work together to ensure that the people of the Indian Ocean region have access to the best possible levels of education. The empowerment of women and girls in the region is a high priority for IORA.

20. We welcome the important contribution made by IORA Dialogue Partners, and invite their involvement across our six priority areas of activity, including the possibility of a formal post-meeting dialogue between IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to strengthen awareness of opportunities for mutual engagement.

21. In addition, we agree on the value of extending IORA's ties with other international and regional bodies, to build synergies and maximise the prospects for capacity-building and exchange of experiences, and to avoid duplication of effort.

22. We will continue to refine IORA's working practices and meeting arrangements so that Member States work together as productively as possible at all levels, ; and that every opportunity is afforded for input by business and academia. We encourage thematic experts from Member States and Dialogue Partners to collaborate in IORA's six priority areas.

23. We will ensure IORA's work program is pitched strategically to focus on issues of interest across the membership. The IORA Special Fund must be better utilised to support projects that advance meaningful practical cooperation in the six priority areas. We encourage Member States to draw on the Fund to take forward initiatives that enjoy wide support and will deliver widespread benefit.

24. We recognise the strong contribution made by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat in advancing IORA's aims and activities. We invite all Member States to consider what more could be done to strengthen the Secretariat and enhance its capabilities.

25. We convey our deep appreciation for the leadership India has provided as Chair for the past two years and welcome Australia to the role. We affirm support for the new Chair and look forward to continued leadership from the new troika of Australia, India and Indonesia.

26. We thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia for hosting the 13<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers' Meeting and related meetings and extend our appreciation for the excellent hospitality and arrangements in Perth.

Perth, Australia

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