

**Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
The 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers**

**THE COLOMBO COMMUNIQUE
21st May 2025**

We, the Ministers and the Heads of Delegations of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA); Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Union of Comoros, French Republic (on account of Reunion henceforth France/Reunion), Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, Republic of Maldives, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of Singapore, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Kingdom of Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Yemen met on 21st May 2025 for the 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM), convened virtually and hosted by Sri Lanka as Chair of IORA.

1. We reaffirm our shared commitment to the IORA goals and objectives enshrined in the Charter, and to the vision of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indian Ocean region.
2. We represent a strategically significant region, home to diverse cultures, ethnicities, and traditions, comprising of nations at varying stages of development, united in solidarity as an organization committed to regional cooperation and progress.
3. We acknowledged the role played by Sri Lanka during its Chairship in advancing key initiatives at IORA and strengthening further regional collaboration.
4. We appreciated the notable contributions of the TROIKA, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as the Chair, the Republic of India as the Vice Chair, and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, as the Past Chair.
5. We expressed our gratitude to H.E. Dr Salman Al Farisi, former Secretary General of IORA for his exemplary leadership and dedication that has significantly strengthened regional cooperation, and we wish him continued success in his future endeavours.
6. We warmly welcomed H.E. Ambassador Sanjiv Ranjan as the new Secretary-General of IORA as of 1st January 2025, and look forward to working with him to address contemporary challenges, strengthen the IORA Secretariat and elevate IORA's progress to new heights.

7. We appreciated the efforts by the IORA Member States in hosting several events related to the organization's key focus areas and looked forward to the positive impact of these activities on regional development and cooperation.
8. We noted with satisfaction that the IORA Day was commemorated under the aegis of Sri Lanka's Chairship in Colombo in March 2024, under the theme "Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generations" and welcomed the participation of over 800 school children whereby the importance of preserving oceans' health for future generations was underlined.
9. We also acknowledged and appreciated the efforts made by other IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners in celebrating the IORA Day on 7th March annually. Their continued commitment ensures this special day remains meaningful within the IORA Community under a shared theme.
10. We congratulated the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for successfully organizing the first ever IORA Business Conclave 2024 under the theme "Sustainable Growth – bridging Horizons" from 28th to 30th May 2024 in Colombo on the side lines of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) which brought together over 200 IORA regional business leaders, industry experts, and professionals including 70 international business persons from the IORA region. The Conclave paved the way to strengthening collaborations between business communities and focused on emerging areas gaining global prominence such as ICT, Agriculture, Logistics, Tourism and Renewable Energy and Medium Enterprises development and Women Entrepreneurship. We strongly supported public-private partnerships in IORA to promote regional trade and ease of doing business.
11. We appreciated the range of initiatives progressed to strengthen shared interest in maritime safety and security, including to enhance information sharing, promote dialogue and cooperation between maritime agencies, and build capacity through training and workshops.
12. We reiterated our commitment to gender equality, and women's economic empowerment which remains a cross-cutting issue in IORA and welcomed further initiatives in this regard.
13. We appreciated the conclusion of series of Workshops on Developing Guidelines to Combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, carried out by Indonesia and France/Reunion since 2023. We acknowledged

that IUU fishing poses a serious threat to marine ecosystems and livelihoods and we welcomed the initiatives of Indonesia and France/Reunion in formulating the guidelines. We noted with satisfaction that the guidelines deliberated at the workshop integrating Member States' views and inputs were adopted at the 24th Council of Ministers Meeting reflecting IORA's commitment to addressing IUU fishing, sustainable marine fisheries and striving for a future of complete elimination of IUU fishing in the Indian Ocean Region. We also commended the activities carried out by other member States to combat IUU fishing.

14. We welcomed the official launch of the Indian Ocean University Network (UNIOR), on 15th November 2024, at Curtin University's Mauritius campus, promoting research and academic collaboration for sustainable regional development. This network brings together universities from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to drive increased collaboration on research by universities in the Indian Ocean region.
15. In response to the impacts of climate change, we emphasized the importance of a regional approach and the value of cooperation among IORA Member States in working together to address the growing threat of climate change to the region's stability and prosperity. We commended Bangladesh for her leadership for developing IORA's Climate Change Strategic Agenda with the support of the IORA Secretariat and with valuable inputs of the IORA Member States.
16. We expressed our condolences following the recent devastating earthquake affecting Thailand and stood in solidarity with the affected families.
17. We condemned all terrorist attacks, in particular the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, India, and expressed our deepest sympathies to the victims and their families. We called for the continued cooperation amongst IORA Member States, reiterating the commitments made in the Jakarta Declaration on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, of March 2017.
18. We also expressed our deepest sympathies to those who have been affected by the devastating blast at Bandar Abbas Port of the Islamic Republic of Iran on April 26, 2025.
19. We welcomed the European Union as the 12th Dialogue Partner of IORA, marking another significant step in strengthening cooperation across and beyond the Indian Ocean.

20. We commended Sri Lanka for hosting the Fifth Meeting of the IORA Functional Bodies, Chairs and Coordinating Countries (FBC-CC) virtually on 23rd April 2024, reviewing progress under the 2nd IORA Action Plan (2022-2027) and for appraising the progress of all activities under the IORA priority areas and cross-cutting issues.
21. We thanked all Functional Bodies for their productive contribution to the full range of IORA's activities. We expressed our appreciation to the Chairs of the Functional Bodies and the Coordinating Countries for their continued commitment in advancing the objectives of the Action Plans.
22. We noted the progress made on the implementation of the "IORA Vision 2030 and Beyond", agreed by Ministers at the 23rd Council of Ministers in Colombo on 11 October 2023. We called upon all Member States to continue the implementation of its activities, which will help ensure the ongoing effectiveness and relevance of IORA.
23. We valued the support of the Dialogue Partners in sharing technical expertise, resources and reiterated the importance of continued cooperation for actionable, future oriented initiatives.
24. We encouraged Member States to utilize the IORA Special Fund to implement programmes under priority areas, promoting human resources development and regional prosperity.
25. We welcomed signing of the MOUs between IORA and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Sub Regional Office for Eastern Africa (UNECA SRO - EA) and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). We acknowledge the renewed/ extended MoU with the Agency Française de Développement (AFD), International Solar Alliance (ISA), and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
26. We appreciated the activities by the IORA Specialized Agencies and supported their enhanced contribution to the IORA objectives.
27. We extended our appreciation to Member States for their collaboration and also acknowledged the IORA Member States who have seconded officials to the IORA Secretariat and encouraged Member States to provide further support to assist the Secretariat in fulfilling its mandate efficiently and effectively.
28. We recognized the valuable contributions made by Member States during the deliberations at the 27th Committee of Senior Officials meeting virtually hosted by Sri Lanka from 19th to 20th May 2025.

29. We acknowledged the dedicated efforts of the Secretary General and the Secretariat staff in supporting the successful execution of meetings, activities and projects.
30. We expressed our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for hosting the 24th Council of Ministers' Meeting, the 27th Committee of Senior Officials' and for ensuring the smooth conduct of proceedings and productive deliberations.

Colombo, Sri Lanka

21st May 2025