



PRESS RELEASE

INDIAN OCEAN DIALOGUE 2026, NEW DELHI

9 May 2026—The 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue 2026 (IOD 2026) - a 1.5 track flagship initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was hosted by the Republic of India, the IORA Chair (2025-2027). The event was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Government of India, in collaboration with IORA Secretariat, from 7-8 May 2026 in New Delhi. The theme of IOD 2026 was “Indian Ocean Region in a Transforming World”.

The IOD 2026 featured speakers from various disciplines, including senior government officials, policy makers, diplomats, defense officials, academics, and Think Tanks from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners of IORA.

In his welcome remarks, H. E. Amb N.J. Gangte, Acting Director General, ICWA, underscored the significance of the Indian Ocean Dialogue as a flagship platform for fostering inclusive, Rules-based International Order, highlighting India’s commitment, under its IORA Chairship, to a safe, secure and stable maritime domain guided by the MAHASAGAR vision and strengthened through partnership, multilateralism, and sustainable development.

H.E. Amb Sanjiv Ranjan, the Secretary-General of IORA, underscored that the ongoing transformations in the Indian Ocean region necessitate strengthened collective action, with Member States working together to promote cooperation, uphold international law, and ensure a secure, stable and prosperous region.

H. E. Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India in the keynote address underscored that in an increasingly uncertain and interconnected global environment, the Indian Ocean region requires strengthened collective action, with IORA serving as a vital platform to promote cooperation, uphold international law, and advance a secure, stable, and resilient maritime order.

In his Special Address, H.E. Mr. Dhananjay Ramful, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration, and International Trade, Republic of Mauritius, called for enhanced collective action, with IORA serving as a key platform to advance peace, maritime security, and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Region.

Further, H.E. Mr. Waleed Mohammed Al-Qadimi, Hon'ble Minister of State, Republic of Yemen, highlighted Yemen’s commitment to the security and stability of the Indian Ocean, stressing the need for collective action to protect international shipping lanes.

The IOD 2026 deliberated on various contemporary Global and Regional issues like: Maritime Safety and Security; Blue Economy; Disaster Risk Management; Economic Trade and Investment; Climate Change and Science and Technology Development; and Women Empowerment.

The deliberations on ‘Maritime Safety and Security’ highlighted the growing volatility in the Indian Ocean region, driven by ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia, with implications extending beyond the Gulf to maritime security, trade, and critical supply chains, including energy, food, and fertilisers. The participants underscored the rise of diverse maritime threats such as piracy and smuggling, pressures on the rules-based order, and the emergence of a more multipolar regional landscape, while emphasizing the need for enhanced cooperation, capacity building, adherence to international law, and strengthened coordination among stakeholders to ensure safe and secure seas for all.

The session on ‘Blue Economy’ emphasized the importance of a rules-based order in the Indian Ocean Region and underscored the Indian Ocean is a primary source of livelihood for littoral and Rim States, while noting challenges such as overexploitation of marine resources, governance gaps, limited financing, and capacity constraints. The participants emphasised for the need to balance economic gains with environmental sustainability, ensure equitable distribution of benefits, invest in reskilling and upskilling, and strengthen regional cooperation and policy alignment to realize the full potential of the Blue Economy.

The session on ‘Disaster Risk Management’ emphasized that the Indian Ocean region, while offering immense potential, remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters intensified by climate change, with significant impacts on infrastructure, economies, and livelihoods. The participants underscored the urgent need for disaster-resilient infrastructure and a shift from response and relief to long-term resilience, through strengthened institutions, improved governance frameworks, mobilisation of global and regional financing, community-based disaster risk management, and decentralised response capabilities, alongside enhanced regional cooperation and information sharing.

The ‘Economic Trade and Investment’ session highlighted growing protectionism, geopolitical tensions and disruptions in one part of the region have wider ripple effects on trade, connectivity, and supply chains. The deliberations emphasized the importance of maintaining a rules-based, open and secure trading system, strengthening multilateral cooperation, and enhancing supply chain resilience, while underscoring the particular vulnerabilities of small island states and the need for collective approaches, diversification, regional integration, and sustainable investment to ensure long-term economic resilience and growth.

The “Climate Change and Science and Technology Development” session highlighted the accelerating impacts of climate change in the Indian Ocean region, such as sea level rise, ocean acidification, and increasing cyclone intensity, as witnessed by coastal communities and supported by scientific evidence. It was underscored that the role of science and technology, including remote sensing and monitoring systems, in generating evidence, while pointing to gaps between policy and practice, particularly in early warning systems where awareness and preparedness at the community level remain limited. The discussion emphasized that countries of the Global South are disproportionately vulnerable and inadequately supported, calling for greater international cooperation, enhanced climate finance, and stronger integration of science, policy, and community action to build climate resilience in the region.

The deliberations on Women Empowerment underscored that the Indian Ocean is a lifeline sustained by women, who play a central role in its economic, social and environmental systems, yet remain underrecognized and underrepresented in decision-making. The participants emphasized the need to move from participation to influence, inclusion to leadership, and

policy intent to measurable outcomes by integrating women’s traditional and lived knowledge into system design, improving access to finance and resources, particularly in rural and vulnerable sectors, and addressing structural inequalities. The discussion also highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change and disasters on women, the importance of inclusive data and narratives, and the need to reimagine societal norms, including masculinities, to ensure that women’s empowerment is central to building a resilient, equitable, and sustainable Indian Ocean region for all.

The Valedictory remarks were delivered by H.E. Mr. Mohammed Nasheed, former president of the Republic of Maldives and H. E. Kumaran Periasamy, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, India and called for collaborative efforts for addressing the challenges for Sustainable Development in the Indian Ocean Region.

H.E. Mr. Mohammed Nasheed underscored that the rapidly shifting global order and conflicts in West Asia are increasingly impacting the Indian Ocean region, highlighting the need for regional security cooperation, climate adaptation through cost-effective nature-based solutions, sustainable economic practices, and urgent debt restructuring to ensure resilience and stability among island and littoral states.

H.E. Mr. Kumaran Periasamy underscored India’s central and enduring stake in the Indian Ocean region, highlighting the need for strengthened regional cooperation, adherence to international law, and revitalization of IORA through concrete initiatives, capacity-building, and inclusive partnerships to ensure a free, open, secure and prosperous maritime region amid evolving geopolitical, economic and environmental challenges.
