

INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)

THE 23rd MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THE COLOMBO COMMUNIQUÉ 2023 11 OCTOBER 2023

1. We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation 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 gathered on 11th of October 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka for the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM), hosted by Sri Lanka as the Chair of IORA.
2. We reaffirmed our commitment to the IORA goals and objectives enshrined in the Charter, as well as the commitments made by previous Council of Ministers' Meetings.
3. We welcomed the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as the Chair and the Republic of India as the Vice-Chair of the Association for a period of two years from 2023 to 2025. We pledged our support to Sri Lanka as the Chair of IORA to lead a vibrant and purpose-driven Association which fulfils its mandate to benefit all Member States and their peoples under the theme "Strengthening Regional Architecture: Reinforcing Indian Ocean identity".
4. We acknowledged the constructive contribution made by Bangladesh during its Chairship (2021-2023) including streamlining financial management of the Secretariat. We welcomed Bangladesh's active role in advancing the activities of the Association, including agreeing on the IORA Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and the creation of the IORA Development Initiative (IDI).
5. We acknowledged the valuable contributions made by Troika members, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates and welcomed the Republic of India as the new member of the Troika. We committed

ourselves to working closely with the Troika to ensure enhanced cooperation amongst IORA Member States.

6. We emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of the IORA Secretariat to support Member States in addressing complex and multidimensional challenges in the future.
7. We welcomed and appreciated the role of South Africa and the Secretariat in co-hosting and co-chairing the High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25 Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal from 20 – 22 June 2023 and the related strategic side-event, IORA's Africa Member States and the IORA Indo-Pacific Outlook meeting held from 23 – 24 June 2023 in Mauritius. The Dialogue was a useful opportunity to review IORA's achievements during the past 25 years. We agreed to the "*IORA's Vision 2030 and Beyond*" and the implementation of the recommendations of the Vision.
8. We welcomed the adoption of the IORA's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (IOIP) by the 22nd Council of Ministers in Dhaka on 24 November 2022. We appreciated India's initiative to formulate a Roadmap for the implementation of IOIP, in partnership with Member States, Dialogue Partners, as well as regional and international organisations. We noted further discussions at the HLSD on "*IORA's Africa Member States and the implementation of the IORA Outlook on the Indo-Pacific*".
9. We thanked those Member States and Dialogue Partners that led practical activities since the 22nd Council of Ministers Meeting in November 2022. We especially commended the hosting of events related to this year's IORA Day celebrations on 7th March 2023. We encouraged Member States and Dialogue Partners alike to continue to promote the annual IORA Day.
10. We welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the 11th Dialogue Partner of the Association. We look forward to Saudi Arabia contributing positively to IORA in accordance with the Charter's principles and objectives.
11. We appreciated the efforts of Dialogue Partners to enhance their collaboration with IORA. To strengthen the relationship, we agreed some IORA Members will serve as Coordinating Countries for Dialogue Partners.

12. We thanked the Functional Bodies' Chairs and Coordinating Countries for their leadership of their respective work plans and noted the progress made on the implementation of the 2nd IORA Action Plan (2022-2027).
13. We appreciated the activities by the IORA Specialized Agencies and supported their enhanced contribution to the IORA objectives, including through an effective review mechanism.
14. We noted with satisfaction cooperation with other regional organisations and the United Nations, including the Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre), International Seabed Authority (ISA), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), International Solar Alliance (ISA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (UNECA SRO-EA), and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).
15. We welcomed IORA signing MoUs with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC of UNESCO). We looked forward to finalising MoUs with Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Information Fusion Centre- Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).
16. We took note of Bangladesh's initiative to develop IORA's climate change strategic agenda to address urgently climate change, undertake actions that will deliver concrete impact, and agree to carry out a mainstreamed and integrated approach across all IORA priority areas and cross-cutting issues.
17. We recognized the proactive efforts of the Secretary-General and his efficient team at the Secretariat in supporting the projects and activities of the Association.
18. We acknowledged with appreciation the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host a Leaders' Summit of IORA in Colombo in 2024 to reflect on the Way Forward for the Indian Ocean Rim Association towards and beyond 2030.

19. We extended our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the excellent arrangements for the 23rd Council of Ministers' and 25th Committee of Senior Officials' meetings, as well as for the warm and generous hospitality extended to the delegations.

Colombo, Sri Lanka

11 October 2023