

Statement by Ms. Julian Evans, Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank the Government of India for their kind invitation to be here today. And may I add my congratulations to HE Mr Salman Khurshid on his assumption of the post of Minister of External Affairs of India?

Since the meeting Chair has mentioned cricket perhaps I can say that we of course hope, and expect, that our team will indeed have a very pleasant stay on Indian shores.

I am conscious that I am occupying an awkward position here in that I am almost the last speaker standing between delegates and their lunch, so I will be brief.

The United Kingdom is proud to be a dialogue partner in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation

The British Indian Ocean Territories remain an important reason for UK interest in the working of the Association. As does the trade and security partnerships that the UK has with members of the Association. A strong and cooperative Indian Ocean community is in all our interests. The UK supports the Association taking incremental and practical steps toward greater regional cooperation based on shared values and norms.

India's chairmanship has given purpose and direction to the Association. The UK supports the six priority areas of cooperation identified at the previous conference in Bengaluru. We are confident that Australia will continue this good work in identifying the areas where cooperation can take advantage of the opportunities and address the challenges.

One such challenge is piracy. We are working closely with partners in the region, whether that be through our bilateral support to the Seychelles in tackling the symptoms of piracy – where I know that India is also closely involved – or through our support to UN agencies delivering on the ground in Somalia to help tackle the root causes of piracy.

We continue to take a leading role in international efforts, including through the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, which has over 65 participating nations and more than 25 international organisations represented, many of whom are also members of the IORARC

This collaborative approach has produced results. The reduction in pirate activity that we have witnessed in the last 12 months, and which other delegates have mentioned, is testament to the enduring commitment of the international community to tackle piracy and its causes head-on.

We recognise that the work of the international community has been effective because it has been coordinated, and in close cooperation with regional partners. We therefore encourage the Association to continue to coordinate its efforts with relevant international and regional organisations.

The United Kingdom will remain committed to supporting our partners in the Indian Ocean community.

Thank you.