

IORG OBSERVER REPORT BY PROFESSOR DENNIS RUMLEY TO IOR-ARC
GURGAON, FRIDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2012

Thank you Mr Chairman for this unique opportunity to address this important gathering.

As many of you will know, the Indian Ocean Research Group (IORG), which is a social science policy-oriented research network, and which was founded in Chandigarh in November 2002 (it is our 10th Anniversary next week), became an official Observer to IOR-ARC at the meeting in Sana'a in Yemen in 2010.

I would like to raise three principal issues very briefly on IORG activities, past, present and proposed.

1. General Indian Ocean Research Dissemination and Publication

Since becoming an Observer, IORG has launched its flagship Journal, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, (JIOR), (<http://www.informaworld.com/rior>), which is published twice a year by Routledge in the UK, and the Journal is now in its third year of publication.

It may be of interest for delegates to know what the policy themes have been of the issues of the Journal to date:

- (i) Maritime security in the IOR (June 2010),
- (ii) IO climate change (Dec 2010),
- (iii) Geopolitical orientations of IO states (June 2011),
- (iv) the changing role of external powers in the IOR (Dec 2011),
- and (v) IO regionalism (June 2012).

The issue in press is on the theme of piracy in the IO (Dec 2012).

In the next 12 months, we hope to take JIOR to the next level, especially by revising the Editorial Board and by including new items of interest to IOR-ARC members, including regular Reports and Commentary in IO policy issues and on meetings such as this.

We are completely open to suggestions that members might wish to make about possible future themes, issues and format of the Journal. For example, major speeches by member states on IO regional issues are always welcome additions. Please contact me direct if you have any ideas, questions or concerns.

For our part, we will continue to explore new research areas in the form of themed Journal issues on regional topics of common concern, plus Conferences and book publications over the *next* 10 years.

IORG is strongly committed to the long-term expansion of an Indian Ocean network of Centres and Scholars in order to expand the scope for research and teaching collaboration in the Region.

2. Building an Indian Ocean Region

This is one of IORG's principal research projects, and, among other things, is concerned with facilitating a sense of "IndianOceanness".

IORG has been very fortunate during this Gurgaon meeting to work closely again with our Kenyan colleagues and others from the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) to finalise the arrangements to hold a major international Conference in Nairobi in July 2013.

The theme of the proposed Conference is 'The political economy of maritime Africa in the IOR' and is a revision of a proposal which we introduced and which was approved at the IOR-ARC meeting in Bangalore in November 2011.

We would like to take this opportunity of sincerely thanking the Kenyan delegates at this meeting for taking the lead on this important issue and for helping to reformulate and improve the original proposal.

We would also like to sincerely thank all of the original 'donor' states – Australia, India, Sultanate of Oman, South Africa and Sri Lanka – for their vision and assistance and for their continued support.

Some of the issues which will be discussed at the Nairobi meeting are outlined in my very brief essay in the Commemorative Magazine produced for this IOR-ARC meeting. However, in brief, the Nairobi Conference will be organised around three principal themes:

- (i) Africa's perception of and linkages with the IO;
- (ii) Indian Ocean state linkages with Africa; and,
- (iii) Future opportunities to develop stronger linkages.

We intend to send out the First Circular for this meeting to all IOR-ARC Academic Focal Points by early January 2013. However, if any member would like to know more before then, please do not hesitate to contact me direct by email.

3. Possible future IORG functions for IOR-ARC

Third, and finally, the Indian Ocean Research Group remains open to any suggestion on how we might contribute further to the enhancement of the goals of IOR-ARC. Please get in touch with me if you have any ideas or comments on this issue.

Thank you Mr Chairman

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