



IORA Declaration on Tourism

Seychelles Declaration

Declaration of the Indian Ocean Rim Association on shared principles for innovative, developmental and sustainable tourism in the Indian Ocean region.

Beau Vallon, Seychelles

21 November 2014

WE, the Tourism Ministers and representatives of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (hereinafter referred to as “IORA”), Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Seychelles, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Thailand, attended the First IORA Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Beau Vallon, Seychelles on 21 November 2014;

- **RECOGNIZING** the role of tourism and travel in promoting sustainable development, economic cooperation, cultural exchanges and connectivity among IORA Member States and agreeing to set “Tourism and Travel within IORA” as the theme of this Ministerial meeting;
- **REAFFIRMING** IORA’s role as an epicentral regional forum which connects countries with significant economic, cultural and historical differences bordering the Indian Ocean Rim;
- **ENCOURAGING** IORA Member States to discuss the necessity of enhancing the capacity of tourism coordination mechanisms in the Indian Ocean Rim;
- **RECALLING** the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted at the thirteen General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation held on 27 September to 01 October 1999 in Santiago, Chile, and at the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on “Tourism for a sustainable future” held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20 June 2012;
- **REINSTATING** IORA’s commitment to develop a common vision in making the tourism sector an engine for economic and social development in the region;
- **RECONFIRMING** IORA’s belief in promoting innovative and sustainable tourism in the Indian Ocean Rim Region;
- **COMMITTING** to an optimization of benefits for tourism from the ocean resources under the aegis of the IORA Indian Ocean Blue Economy concept;

- **REITERATING** IORA's cooperation and engagement with Dialogue Partners, relevant international and regional organizations, the private sector, and civil society in delivering the targeted tourism objectives;

HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

That the Member States of IORA are guided by the following principles in our shared goal to foster profitable, sustainable and developmental tourism in the Indian Ocean region, and recognise that:

- The numerous facets of Indian Ocean rim region tourism should be developed and optimised in a sustainable way: adventure tourism, business tourism, coastal tourism, cruise tourism, safari and wildlife tourism, medical tourism, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, underwater tourism, youth tourism, spiritual tourism, among others.
- Developments in the tourism industry would be in keeping with the environmental rules, regulations and requirements of our Member States and UN/ international organizations.
- The need to establish an IORA Tourism Core Group in order to enable it to undertake comprehensive tourism research, monitor trends in tourism and travel in the region and to promote tourism as a key instrument to drive economic and social growth. Shared tourism knowledge and research should be encouraged in order to anticipate new innovations, trends, opportunities and challenges in the regional tourism sector.
- IORA Member States should attach higher importance to the tourism and travel industry and encourage closer regional cooperation through appropriate tourism coordination mechanisms in order to increase the competitiveness of the region.
- Cultural exchanges between Member States, which would open communication channels and promote a common regional sense of belonging, should be encouraged in order to optimize the development of a cohesive regional tourism sector.
- The fostering of tourism in the region would lead to a direct increase in trade, foreign exchange income, an inflow of foreign direct investment, job creation, poverty alleviation, infrastructural upgrade and overall social development.
- The development of Indian Ocean tourism would generate entrepreneurship opportunities and contribute to poverty alleviation, especially among women.
- The need to simplify visa requirement to encourage more people to travel within IORA Member States and to increase intra-IOR region tourism and consequently, promote economic and social development.
- Improving sea and air connectivity amongst Member States is mandatory for growth of the tourism sector, especially for the small island states.

- The Indian Ocean Blue Economy promises development in various marine sectors and should enhance the potential for tourism activities and services in the region.
- The need for private sector engagement and Public-Private Partnerships in enhancing productivity and competitiveness of the tourism sector.
- Joint marketing efforts such as travel fairs and workshops could be used to raise the tourism potential and profile of the Indian Ocean Rim region.
- Developing Member States and showcasing an attractive investment climate would attract foreign investment that would contribute to the expansion of the Indian Ocean Rim tourism facilities and infrastructure.
- The necessity to enhance relevant capacity building among the developing Member States in order to help them to achieve sustainable tourism development.
- Tourism and hospitality training dispensed to the youth and women would empower them to integrate this labour-intensive service sector, and hence alleviate unemployment.
- Established tourism destinations should assist emerging tourist destinations in the region to optimise their tourism potential.

ADOPTED by the Tourism Ministers and Senior Officials of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association on 21 November 2014 in Seychelles.