SECOND I.O.R.A. MEETING OF EXPERTS FOR MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY

(7-8 November 2017, New Delhi, India)

To be hosted by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

The Indian Ocean is outlined by countries from the three continents of Africa, Asia and Australia and some island-nations in the Asia-Pacific. These countries have different histories, cultures, political systems and security concerns. What they share in common is the vast Indian Ocean, which has been a facilitator of contacts between them since the dawn of civilization.

The Indian Ocean is viewed as an increasingly significant arena for global trade and security. Maritime trade routes in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) account for one-third of the world's bulk cargo traffic, two-thirds of global oil shipments and carry half of the world's container ships. Imperatives of the Blue Economy have further enhanced the importance of the Indian Ocean to the IOR littoral states, which can boast of a high concentration of rapidly growing economies. These economies are expanding at all levels – bilateral, regional and multilateral – and benefiting from the phenomenon of globalization. With the rising prosperity of its rim states, the IOR has potential for substantial increase in intraregional commercial connectivity. However, safety and security matters in the maritime arena are also evolving along diverse lines.

Traditional security risks from pre-existing international tensions, and political instability in a few littoral states remain serious challenges to maritime stability in the region. The threat from piracy continues to linger and has an adverse impact on the safety of shipping in the region. Threats from piracy, armed robbery at sea, terrorism, arms smuggling, drugs, human-trafficking and illegal immigration are the non-traditional security concerns in the region. Other concerns include climate change, environment pollution, natural disasters and crimes in the fisheries sector such as IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing. Thus, as the developing economies in the region are at the cusp of vital economic transition that remains critically dependent on a stable maritime environment, there is a compelling case for envisioning a cooperative structure for effective ocean governance and security in the region.

"Maritime Safety and Security" was adopted as one of the six priority areas of IORA during the 11th IORA Council of Minister (COM) meeting in India, in November 2011, because of the critical economic and strategic relevance of a stable maritime environment in the IOR. During the deliberations of the 15th Bi-annual Committee of Senior Officials (CSOs) meeting in May 2015, a meeting of experts on Maritime Safety and Security was instituted for detailed examination of various recommendations on the subject. Accordingly, the *First IORA Meeting of Experts on Maritime Safety and Security* was held in New Delhi on October 13-14, 2015. Some recommendations of this meeting are reflected in the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021 in the form of proposed goals and initiatives for "Promoting Maritime Safety and Security in the Region". The Action Plan, an outcome of the first IORA Leaders' Summit held in Jakarta in March 2017, has a comprehensive vision as it refers to clear short, medium and long term goals for Maritime Safety and Security.

PROPOSAL

The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is to hold the "Second IORA Meeting of Experts for Maritime Safety and Security" on November 7-8, 2017 at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

The Meeting is to be conducted along the following sessions:

i)   Maritime Safety and Security Challenges in the Indian Ocean Region
ii)   Geostrategic Cooperation: An Indian Ocean Architecture
iii)   Inclusive Approach to Maritime Domain Awareness
iv)   Regional Legal Framework for Maritime Governance
v)   Creating Synergy in Capacity and Capability Building; and
vi)   Concluding Session: Outcomes and Deliverables.

The proposed event will consist of an interactive two-day workshop wherein Experts from IORA Member States would avail of an opportunity to discuss existing Maritime Safety and Security issues and deliberate on the application of best practices to successfully manage these challenges. In addition, the Meeting would examine proposals/recommendations from the IORA Member States regarding new areas of concern and measures for further enhancing cooperation in Maritime Safety and Security in the region. The Meeting will be based on a participatory approach in order to enrich the discussion.

OBJECTIVES

Maritime Safety and Security is not only a law enforcement and governance issue but a critical precondition for enhancing opportunities for potential economic growth and development. It is envisaged that presentations and discussions would result in practical recommendations that IORA Member States may consider for future direction.

The objectives for the Meeting are:

- To discuss security dynamics and requirements of the various dimensions of traditional and non-traditional security challenges in the Indian Ocean region.
- To identify hurdles in maritime cooperation and coordination among concerned agencies; and suggest feasible options to address these challenges.
- To enhance the capacity of maritime law enforcement officials in managing preventive and responsive measures to protect the maritime domain against threats and unlawful acts.
- To explore partnerships between IORA and existing maritime security fora.
- To review the existing mechanisms for maritime dispute settlement and the possibility of setting up a legal experts group of the IORA.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is envisaged that the "Second IORA Meeting of Experts for Maritime Safety and Security" will result in the creation of an Outcome Document: **"Blueprint for Maritime Safety and Security in IORA**" which will identify governance, surveillance, and preventive as well as protective measures to deal with threats in the domain of Maritime Safety and Security in the IOR.

This document would help to provide guidance for actual implementation of goals in the IORA Action Plan for 2017-2021 and may be developed further to construct a template for the substantive working of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security.

It would, therefore, help to further the following:

- A better understanding of prevalent security challenges in the IOR.
- Sharing of useful experiences through interactive discussions on the identification of best practices.
- Sharing of information for potential trainings and capacity building programmes for Maritime Safety and Security.
- Suggestions for better ocean governance and better coordination between organizations and actors responsible for the IOR.
- Concrete suggestions for coordinated action, including possible joint programs/projects/trainings among IORA Member States to combat piracy, IUU fishing, and illegal trafficking in drugs, humans and arms, etc.
- Strengthening of a shared identity in the IOR.

****