

THE 15TH INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

PADANG COMMUNIQUE

23 OCTOBER 2015

We, the Ministers of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen met in Padang, Indonesia, for the 15th meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) on 23 October 2015. The meeting is held in the spirit of openness and a common purpose to strengthen cooperation with the objective of ensuring sustainable and balanced economic development, security and prosperity of the Indian Ocean Rim for the socio-economic well being of the peoples in the region.

We welcome Indonesia as the Chair and South Africa as Vice Chair of the Association for the period 2015–2017. We note that Indonesia will adopt “Strengthening Maritime Cooperation in a Peaceful and Stable Indian Ocean” as the theme of its chairmanship. We assure Indonesia of our full support and cooperation to ensure the success of IORA during its tenure as Chair.

We welcome the candid discussion and exchange of views among Ministers as they deliberate on priority issues of common interest. We therefore underscore the benefit of the Ministerial Retreat Session during our annual meetings, and for a formal post-meeting dialogue between IORA Members States and Dialogue Partners to strengthen mutual cooperation in the IORA priority sectors.

We recall that the membership of Somalia has been approved in Perth at the 14th COMM last year. Due to Somalia’s inability to attend the 15th COMM in Padang, COM agrees to mandate the Secretariat in facilitating the signing of Somalia’s membership intersessionally.

We welcome the retreat session between IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners as an important avenue for exploring synergies for IORA’s programmes and for possible future cooperation.

We express support for Indonesia’s initiative toward an IORA Concord for adoption at an IORA Summit in March 2017 in Indonesia to deepen the existing intra-regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean, on the occasion of the IORA’s 20th anniversary.

We commit ourselves to supporting and developing the IORA Concord in accordance with the ‘Decision on the Establishment of the Ad-hoc Committee on the IORA Concord’.

We reaffirm our commitment to develop a seamlessly and comprehensively connect and integrate Indian Ocean Region toward sustainable and balanced economic growth as articulated in our ‘IORA Maritime Cooperation Declaration’.

We also reaffirm our commitment to the importance of women’s economic empowerment as an effective driver of economic growth and development. We will continue to pursue its implementation as a cross-cutting theme across IORA’s key priority areas.

We welcome the convening of the first IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference, which was held in Mauritius on 3 September 2015. The Conference signal the firm commitment of Member States to strengthen partnerships, collaboration and networking among stakeholders in the Indian Ocean region toward the Blue Economy and its related sectors.

Aim at promoting oceanic research and scientific cooperation, we reiterate our support for the second International Indian Ocean Expedition IIOE-2 from 2015-2020 as a comprehensive and critical research project for future cooperation and collaboration within IORA region.

We welcome Madagascar and the Kingdom of Thailand in joining the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the Coordination and Cooperation of Search and Rescue Services in the Indian Ocean Region.

We welcome the deliberations held during the 17th IORA Committee of Senior Officials, the 15th IORA Working Group on Trade and Investment, the 21st Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum, and the 21st Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group Meeting that together sent a strong message that cooperation amongst the forums needed to be interlinked to maximise benefits for our peoples.

We express appreciation for the participation by IORA business delegates in the IORA Pavillion during the 30th Trade Expo Indonesia in Jakarta.

We note the views expressed by the invited business representatives that the business communities play an important role in the growth of trade and investment in the region.

We welcome the convening of the 2nd Ministerial Economic and Business Conference (EBC-II) in Dubai, UAE, on 11-13 April 2016.

We acknowledge the potential of IORA's Sustainable Development Programme for strengthening the capacities of the less developed IORA countries, and in fostering regional cooperation among IORA Member States, especially with a focus on employment generation and poverty eradication.

We express appreciation for efforts aimed at enhancing IORA's visibility at the international fora and within the Indian Ocean region.

We welcome IORA's efforts to formalise ties with the United Nations (UN) and its related organs including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), and other international organisations particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the African Union (AU).

We commit ourselves to strengthening the IORA Secretariat and commend the seconding of officials from Member

We welcome the Federal Republic of Germany as the seventh Dialogue Partner of IORA and look forward to its deeper involvement in the initiatives and undertakings of IORA.

We express appreciation for Australia's leadership to the Association as IORA Chair for the year 2013-2015.

We thank the Secretary-General of IORA and the IORA Secretariat, as well as IORA's Specialised Agencies, for their tireless efforts in supporting IORA meetings and programs.

We thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for hosting the 15th Council of Ministers Meeting and its related meetings and express appreciation of the excellent hospitality extended to us in Padang and Jakarta.

Padang, Indonesia
23 October 2015