

6th INDIAN OCEAN DIALOGUE, 2019

Delhi Consensus

1. The 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) was held in New Delhi, India on 13 December 2019. The Dialogue was hosted by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi and the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, with the support of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Secretariat. The Dialogue was attended by 210 government officials and representatives of think tanks and civil society from Member States of IORA (Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE and Yemen) and Dialogue Partners (Egypt, France, Germany, Italy and Turkey). The Dialogue was graced by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and India as well as the Secretary General of IORA.
2. The Dialogue was held on the theme of 'Indo-Pacific: Reimagining the Indian Ocean through an Extended Geography'. The main sub themes were: 'Indo-Pacific: Seamless and Collective'; 'Maritime Connectivity and Infrastructure', and 'Delivering Public Goods at Sea'.
3. Participants noted the importance of an inclusive Indo-Pacific region underpinned by respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the equality of all countries, irrespective of their size and strength. They welcomed ASEAN's adoption of its Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, which enshrines similar principles for engagement in the region.
4. Participants agreed that cooperation and mitigation of challenges in the Indo-Pacific region should be based on international law including those under the Charter of the United Nations and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.
5. It was noted that a number of countries and institutions have adopted their own Indo-Pacific frameworks with principles for guiding cooperation and IORA should continue to develop and contribute its own perspectives on the region.
6. Member States noted the value of cooperation between countries and major stakeholders of the Indian Ocean Region in promoting a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific in the common pursuit of progress, security and prosperity based on mutual understanding and cooperation. As such IORA is of the view that in the evolution of the Indo-Pacific concept no IORA sub-region should be excluded.
7. Acknowledging the criticality of maritime infrastructure as an enabler of global connectivity, it was noted that the Indian Ocean Region offers considerable scope for further enhancement in connectivity infrastructure, including port development. They resolved to cooperate in an economically tenable and sustainable manner to enhance connectivity through infrastructure projects. The participants agreed to develop a roadmap for developing mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral engagements among Member States towards this end. In view of the ongoing digital revolution, participants focused on the need to harness opportunities in fast-tracking mutual growth and development, including building Smart Ports.

8. Participants noted ICWA's interest to host meetings with IORA partners to build a common understanding through various workshops and meetings that seek to take forward ideas and suggestions emerging during the 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue.

9. It was noted by participants that all the IORA Member States have been witness to major natural and human-induced calamities. They are also directly impacted by climate change and rising sea levels. The participants agreed to strengthen joint platforms that will be able to deliver public goods with regard to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR). They noted the need to set up more Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) related Information Sharing Centres (ISC) / Information Fusion Centres (IFC) for wider exchange and sharing of information for promoting maritime safety and security.

i) Re-defining the role of the Blue economy in the IORA Member States and the search for approaches for Blue economy on various sectors including trade, tourism, transportation infrastructure, maritime security and utilization of natural resources.

ii) Explore the possibility of harmonizing IORA Member States' national policies for harnessing, conservation and utilization of natural resources.

10. The participants agreed on the need to build technical expertise which will strengthen maritime capacity building and lead to developmental cooperation for building a safe, secure and stable maritime domain. Participants recognized the need for collective efforts at capacity building to enhance understanding of international laws, especially UNCLOS 1982. ICWA's proposal to work towards this end along with IORA Member States and other expert institutions was noted.

11. The participants reiterated the importance of mutual trust, respect, dialogue, cooperation, peace and prosperity and resolute commitment to international law to develop cooperation on maritime issues in the Indo-Pacific. There was an acknowledgment of the need to build an understanding based on the rich common heritage and ancient wisdom of the peoples of the region.

12. The participants emphasized the need for continued exchange of ideas of the present Dialogue and welcomed UAE's offer to hold the 7th Indian Ocean Dialogue in 2020.
