



**INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)**  
**THE 21<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**  
**THE DHAKA COMMUNIQUE**  
**17 NOVEMBER 2021**

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Union of Comoros, French Republic on account of Reunion (henceforth France/Reunion), Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, Republic of Maldives, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of Singapore, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Kingdom of Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Yemen met on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 for the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) which was convened in hybrid format and hosted by the Chair, Bangladesh.

We welcomed People's Republic of Bangladesh as the Chair, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as the Vice Chair of the Association for the period of 2021 to 2023. We vow to work closely with Bangladesh in its quest to make IORA a more vibrant platform and to ensure inclusive development of the region through enhanced cooperation.

We commended the theme selected by Bangladesh for the period of its Chairship: "Harnessing the opportunities of Indian Ocean sustainably for inclusive development". We conveyed our support to Bangladesh to actualize their overarching vision during their Chairship.

We acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the UAE during its Chairship (2019-2021) and the role they played as Chair to uphold the spirit of the Association amidst the pandemic. We commend the UAE for hosting the IORA Virtual Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials and Dialogue Partner Engagement on COVID-19.

We also acknowledge and commend South Africa for their proactive role and noteworthy contribution as an important member of TROIKA.

We reaffirm our utmost solidarity and unwavering commitment in supporting the IORA to play a pivotal role to promote inclusive development in the Indian Ocean through constructive dialogue and concerted efforts. We endeavor to address challenges and key issues facing our region, including recovery from the unprecedented COVID-19 impact.

We appreciate the Ministerial 'Strategic Dialogue' held between IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners. We acknowledge that such platforms are conducive for enhanced engagement of Dialogue Partners and strengthened cooperation between Member States and Dialogue Partners to fulfill the Association's goals and to overcome the Indian Ocean's critical challenges. We noted the suggestions of the Dialogue Partners and assurance of their support regarding the recovery from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize the constructive and interactive role of the Member States during discussions in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Committee of Senior Officials in Dhaka. We commend their contributions to the Association despite during the pandemic times.

We commended Sri Lanka, the Vice-Chair, for its Chairing the Ad-hoc Working Group (AhWG) for reviewing the eligibility criteria and selection process for the post of Secretary-General. We also commend the members of the Recruitment and Selection Committee (Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, South Africa and UAE) for their effort to interview and recommend a candidate for the post of Secretary General. We congratulate H.E. Salman Al Farisi (Indonesia) for being

selected as the Secretary General of IORA. We believe that under his leadership IORA will be more vibrant regional organization.

We welcomed the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for promoting resilience of new and the existing infrastructures to reduce and eliminate climate and disaster risks within the Indian Ocean Region.

We conveyed our appreciation to Dr. Gatot Hari Gunawan for assuming the position of Acting Secretary General at a critical time.

We noted the significant progress in the implementation of the First Action Plan (2017-2021). We commended Bangladesh for spearheading the drafting of the Second Action Plan (2022-2027). We are confident that the Second Action Plan will guide and propel IORA towards its vision. We pledge to achieve the deliverables in the Action Plan through concerted effort.

We committed to further discussions to develop a statement to help guide IORA's engagement and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region including with other regional organisations as soon as possible.

We noted with satisfaction the guidelines for strategic management and criteria for Dialogue Partners. We hope that these guidelines will pave the way for cooperation with and support from the Dialogue Partners to the fullest extent.

We welcomed the Russian Federation as the 10<sup>th</sup> Dialogue Partner of the IORA. We believe that Russia will make noteworthy contributions towards bolstering IORA's regional agenda in accordance with the IORA Charter's principles and objectives.

We also welcomed Mr. Sheikh Fazle Fahim from Bangladesh as the Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF). We believe that under his able and dynamic leadership, IORBF will facilitate the promotion of the trade and investment agenda in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

We appreciate the role of IORA's Functional Bodies in advancing the actions in their respective work plans despite the pandemic. We welcomed the establishment of the Working Group on Disaster Risk Management (WGDRM), tourism platforms (digital or otherwise) for sharing of best practices and the upcoming workshop on the opportunity to develop and adopt common IORA guidelines to prevent entry of IUU fisheries products within IORA Member States' supply chains. We believe that these will add value to IORA's objectives and regional priorities.

We took note of revised IORA Staff Regulations and Financial Regulations. We appreciate the efforts for organizational restructuring to strengthen the IORA Secretariat.

We recognized the importance of streamlining decision-making processes through necessary administrative sub-structures, which will enhance efficiency and improve IORA's ongoing operations.

We appreciated the training programs conducted in the field of Geospatial Information Technology (GIT), Ocean Data Management, Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal Risk Reduction, Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP), Women in Tourism, Rewriting Business Strategies for the Global Pandemic for Women-led Businesses, Project Management and Coastal Desalination Intake and Brine Disposal System-Planning, Design and Implementation as part of capacity building initiatives in the Indian Ocean Region. We look forward to future training programs including on Earth Observations and Search and Rescue.

We also noted the IORA Guidelines for Human Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). We believe that the guidelines for HADR will play an important role in Disaster Risk Management cooperation.

We also noted the revised administrative arrangements for the IORA Special Fund. We suggest prudent and strategic utilization of the Special Fund in order to have a sustained impact on the Capacity Development of the Member States.

We recognize the effort of the Secretariat in supporting the projects and activities of the Association.

We extend our appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for arranging the 21<sup>st</sup> Council of Ministers' (COM) and 23<sup>rd</sup> Committee of Senior Officials' (CSO) meetings in hybrid format amidst the pandemic. We consider it a gesture of commitment to strengthening solidarity. We also express gratitude for the warm hospitality extended during the hosting of the 21<sup>st</sup> of the Council of Ministers (COM) and Related Meetings in Dhaka.

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**17 November 2021**