



High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25- Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal

Mauritius

20-22 June 2023

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MAURITIUS

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The establishment of IORA on 7 March 1997 opened a new chapter for socio-economic cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. Since then, IORA has established itself into the apex regional organisation in the Indian Ocean region, stretching from the Southern and Eastern coasts of Africa running up to the Gulf, South and Southeast Asia and including Australia in the Eastern Indian Ocean.

Over the past 25 years, IORA has developed into a more mature and focused organisation. The Jakarta Concord adopted at the first IORA Leaders' Summit in 2017 outlines the core objectives to be achieved in the six priority areas and the two cross cutting issues. These are Maritime Safety and Security, Trade and Investment Facilitation, Fisheries Management, Tourism and Cultural Exchanges, Disaster Risk Management, Academic Science and Technology Cooperation, Blue Economy and Women's Economic Empowerment.

Key achievements of the Association include:

- Deliverables of the Working Groups and Core Groups
- Institutionalising of the Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting and the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)
- Consolidating and focussing the work of the Specialised Agencies
- Strengthening engagement with Dialogue Partners
- Adoption of the IORA Outlook on the Indo-Pacific
- Institutional strengthening of the IORA Secretariat
- Introduction of the Nelson Mandela "Be The Legacy" Internship Programme in honour of the legacy of the founding father of IORA

IORA is now operating in a context of increased geopolitical, environmental, and economic challenges. The Indian Ocean maritime domain remains strategic and is critical to the global trade architecture, with sea lanes that have been contested for centuries. The east-west divide has become increasingly pronounced in almost all multilateral and plurilateral fora, and this divide is reflected in the current geopolitical contestation.

Such developments have the potential to transform the way States cooperate within IORA. Member states and Dialogue Partners have come to represent the international community in a complex and diverse manner. This wide-ranging representation is managed by the IORA Charter which requires that all Member States conduct their affairs through consensus-based decision making and cooperation. Non-interference in the domestic affairs of any State is a

fundamental principle of the IORA and the decorum of the organisation has been managed through these basic principles.

In light of this strategic context, it was agreed at the November 2022 CSO and COM, that the Secretariat will convene a strategic review exercise in March 2023, which has since been rescheduled to 20-22 June 2023. South Africa was tasked to provide a concept note for consideration and application to guide the discussions.

This concept note reflects that to further realise the potential of the IORA is critical to assess and review activities, policies, and procedures to chart a renewed way forward towards its diamond jubilee. It is proposed the exercise focus on the next five years and inform the development of the 'IORA Vision 2030 and beyond' document to set out the strategic direction of the Association.

Adoption of IORAs Indo-Pacific Outlook, revised Dialogue Partner regulations, and Climate Change as a cross cutting issue in November 2022 are key areas requiring strategic consideration. These areas present new opportunities to bring Member States and Dialogue Partners together in line with IORA's charter and promote cooperation and mutual prosperity.

It is envisaged that the exercise will be inclusive of all stakeholders involved in IORA. These include but are not limited to Member States, Business Forum, the Academic Group, the Dialogue Partners, and Specialised Agencies. The attached draft agenda sets out the proposed sessions. Some sessions are only open to Member States, alternative discussion sessions will be developed at these times for other stakeholders.

PROPOSAL

IORA's Silver Jubilee (25-Year Anniversary) provides an opportunity for the Association to reflect, review and plan for the future of the Association. In this regard, IORA Member States are invited to participate in the High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25-Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal planned for 20-22 June 2023 at the IORA Secretariat in Mauritius.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOGUE

An objective of the proposed Dialogue will be to reflect and review the past 25-years of IORA, acknowledge successes, address challenges and assess implementation of outcomes. The focus of the dialogue will be forward looking, with senior officials able to engage in frank strategic discussions to determine the future direction of the Association given the importance of the Indian Ocean in the highly polarised and evolving global geo-political and geo-economic architecture.

The Dialogue will be structured into reflection, vision, strengthening and outcome segments.

Reflection

Reflecting on the achievements and challenges of IORA's first 25 Years and what this means for future cooperation with respect to:

- IORAs Priority Areas and Cross-cutting Issues
- Specialised Agencies (Regional Centre for Science and Transfer of Technology and Fisheries Support Unit)
- The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) and the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG)
- Dialogue Partner Engagement

Vision

- Discussing IORAs Indo-Pacific Outlook and the steps to be taken to advance practical cooperation
- Assessing Climate Change, its impact on the region and IORA's strategic response
- Identifying ways to foster practical cooperation between Member States and Dialogue Partners

Strengthening institutional and management arrangements

- Reflecting on the existing formulation of CSO and COM and orienting the agenda to allow for greater strategic engagement.
- Reviewing and assessing areas of the secretariat that need to be strengthened including financial administration.

Outcome

- Summarising Member State discussion and key reflections on the High-Level Strategic Dialogue to inform development of a zero draft for 'IORA Vision 2030 and beyond'.
- Presenting the summary by Member States from the High-Level Strategic Dialogue and engaging Dialogue Partner on feedback from the forum.

ENVISIONED OUTCOMES OF THE DIALOGUE

Provide inputs to develop a zero-draft document on 'IORA Vision 2030 and beyond' based on the perspectives of the High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25-Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal for consideration of the CSO/COM.

HOST

The High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25-Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal will be co-hosted by South Africa, Ambassador Anil Sooklal, and the Secretary-General of IORA, Ambassador Salman Al Farisi in Mauritius.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The participants of the High-Level Strategic Dialogue are expected to include the Senior Officials of the Member States and Dialogue Partners. Delegations will be limited to two persons per Member State and Dialogue Partner. In addition, members of the IORBF, IORAG, Specialised Agencies and IORA observers will be invited to attend.

The Member States that will chair sessions are expected to do so at senior official level or appoint a sufficiently senior representative.

FUNDING

The funding for the High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25-Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal will be sourced by a voluntary contribution from Member States and Dialogue Partners. A Special Fund application will also be made to provide up to fifty percent of required funds.

HOSPITALITY

It is envisioned that local hospitality (ground transport, accommodation and meals) will be provided to all Heads of Delegation of Member States as well as for IORA Specialised Agencies and selected academics (up to 10) and business leaders (up to 5). In addition, airfares for economy travel of Heads of Delegations from Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (Seychelles, Madagascar, Comoros, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Tanzania, Somalia, Yemen and Bangladesh) and select members of the IORAG and IORBF will also be subsidised to ensure adequate representation.

DRAFT AGENDA / PROGRAMME

High-Level Strategic Dialogue on IORA's 25-Years – Reflection, Review & Renewal

Date: 20-22 June 2023 TBC

Venue: Mauritius

Platform: (In-Person, some potential hybrid sessions TBC)

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PARTICIPANTS
DAY 0 (19 June, Monday):		
All day	Arrival and Registration	All MSs and Stakeholders
Afternoon/evening	Optional casual arrival event	Optional for all MSs and Stakeholders
DAY 1 (20 June, Tuesday):		
INTRODUCTORY SESSION		
09h00 – 09h20	Opening and Welcome Co-Chairs (South Africa and IORA Secretariat)	All MSs and Stakeholders
09h20 – 09h30	IORA Strategic Future Direction – Overview and purpose of the High-Level Strategic Dialogue (South Africa)	All MSs and Stakeholders
09h30 – 09h45	Photo Session	All MSs and Stakeholders
09h45 – 10h15	Morning tea	All MSs and Stakeholders
REFLECTIVE SEGMENT		
10h15 – 12h15	<p>Reflection on the achievements and challenges of IORA's first 25 Years and what this means for future work.</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p><i>How has IORA delivered on its mandate per the IORA Charter?</i></p> <p><i>What more could be done to promote cooperation under the priority areas, cross cutting issues and the role of the specialised agencies, IORBF and IORAG in achieving on the objectives of the IORA Charter?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Brief introduction by Session Chair (South Africa) Representatives of each functional body & specialized agency are invited to share their perspectives. 	All MSs and Stakeholders

	3. Open discussion for MS & DP 4. Wrap up by Session Chair (South Africa)	
12h15 - 13h15	Lunch	All MSs and Stakeholders
VISION SEGMENT		
13h15 – 15h15	<p>Discussion on the Implementation of the IORA Indo-Pacific Outlook</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p><i>“The IORA Indo-Pacific Outlook is about bringing countries together, both Member States and Dialogue Partners. What areas for cooperation and concrete actions could be supported by Member States and Dialogue Partners to implement IORA’s Outlook on Indo-Pacific?”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief overview on the IORA Indo-Pacific Outlook by Session Chair (India) 2. MS and DP are invited to share their views. 3. Wrap up by Session Chair (India) 	All MSs and Stakeholders
15h15 – 15h30	Coffee break	
15h30 – 17h00	<p>Discussion on Climate Change as a cross-cutting issue in IORA</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p><i>What are the expected impacts of climate change in the Indian Ocean Rim region?</i></p> <p><i>What are common priorities and challenges of MSs?</i></p> <p><i>How can MSs and DPs cooperate through IORA to add value to their strategic response to Climate Change?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief overview on Climate Change as a cross-cutting issue in IORA by the Session Chair (France) 2. MSs and DPs are invited to share their views. 3. Wrap up by Session Chair (France) 	All MSs and Stakeholders
19h00-21h00	Evening Reception and programme to be determined by the IORA Secretary General	All MSs and Stakeholders
DAY 2 (21 June, Wednesday):		
09h00 – 11h00	<p>Discussion on Dialogue Partner Engagement</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p>	All MSs and Stakeholders

	<p><i>“How do the DPs envision their contribution following the adoption of the DP regulations?”</i></p> <p><i>“How do Member States envision engagement with DPs following the adoption of the DP regulations?”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction and overview by the Session Chair (Indonesia) 2. DPs invited to share their views. 3. MSs invited to share their views. 4. Wrap up by Session Chair (Indonesia) 	
11h00 – 11h15	Coffee Break	
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL & MANAGEMENT SEGMENT		
11h15 – 13h15	<p>Reflect on the existing formulation of IORA Meetings:</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How can the CSO and COM agenda allow for greater strategic reflection (with reference to TOR on Format of CSO and COM Meetings).</i> - <i>How can the Meeting of the Chairs of IORA’s Functional Bodies become more interactive and effective?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction by Session Chair (UAE) 2. Discussion on each question by MSs 3. Wrap up by Session Chair (UAE) 	Member States only
13h15-14h15	Lunch Break	
14h15 – 15h15	<p>Discussion on Research Support Unit (RSU) in IORA Secretariat</p> <p>Guiding Question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How can the IORAG support the Research Support Unit to enhance IORAs work (with reference to the TOR for the RSU).</i> - <i>How can IORAG and RSU develop the IORA early career professionals’ network?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction by Session Chair (Australia IORAG focal point) 2. Discussion on each question by MS 3. Wrap up by Session Chair (Australia IORAG focal point) 	
15h15 – 15h30	Coffee break	

15h30 – 17h30	<p>Strengthening IORA Secretariat Corporate Services Guiding Question:</p> <p><i>To what extent can corporate service systems be adopted?</i></p> <p><i>What further considerations are required and what are the next steps?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction by the Session Chair (SG) 2. Presentation on recommendations from the review of the corporate service systems. (Consultant/Director Corporate Services) 3. MS are invited to discuss. 4. Wrap up session by the Session Chair (SG) 	
DAY 3 (22 June, Thursday):		
OUTCOME SEGMENT		
09h00 – 11h00	<p>Member State discussion and key reflections on the High-Level Strategic Dialogue to inform development of a zero draft for 'IORA Vision 2030 and beyond'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief introduction on development of a zero draft for 'IORA Vision 2030 and beyond' by the Session Chair (Bangladesh) 2. Session Chairs summarise the key reflections from each session. 3. Member States are invited to comment. 4. Wrap up by the Session Chair (Bangladesh) 	Member States only
11h00 – 11h30	Coffee Break	
11h30 – 12h30	<p>Presentation of Member State reflections on the High-Level Strategic Dialogue and development of the of a document 'IORA Vision 2030 and beyond'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation by the Session Chair (Sri Lanka) 2. Dialogue Partners are invited to comment. 3. Wrap up by the Session Chair (Sri Lanka) 	All Member States and stakeholders
12h30 – 13h30	Lunch	
Afternoon	Departure	All MSs and Stakeholders