



1. Hosted by the Observer Research Foundation with support from the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, The Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) was held in Cochin, Kerala, from 5-7 September 2014. The Dialogue saw the participation of 67 officials and representatives from think tanks and civil society from 24 countries that are Member States and Dialogue Partners of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
2. The participants discussed six broad themes—the geopolitical contours of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), maritime security challenges, strengthening regional institutions, information sharing, cooperation in disaster relief and management, and economic cooperation.
3. The rule of law and deliberative dispute resolution should get due importance in addressing maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean (IO). IORA may facilitate the creation of a necessary framework for this purpose.
4. The strategic and foreign policy communities, as well as civil society groups, must actively contribute to the emergence of a vibrant Indian Ocean community engaged in open-ended regionalism. The IOD will help evolve a shared perspective for addressing challenges facing the Indian Ocean Region.
5. The inclusion of representatives from the business community can strengthen the Indian Ocean Dialogue and help explore emerging opportunities for economic integration in the region.
6. Given the large complementarities among IORA members, key impediments in the realm of trade and investment should be identified, prioritised and addressed. In this context, the Working Group on PTA may be encouraged to take proactive measures for accelerating region-wide trade and investment linkages.



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7. The need to create greater scientific innovation networks across the region was emphasised. These networks could help create domain awareness (across sectors), as well as greater capacity across the region to respond to a wide spectrum of traditional and non-traditional concerns and opportunities.
8. The participants of the IOD noted that the ongoing evolution in Great Power relations and the rising economic and strategic capabilities of regional states are transforming the Indian Ocean littoral. They noted that the region's resources and rapid economic growth are once again bringing the Indian Ocean region to the centre-stage of world affairs.
9. The participants expressed a strong conviction that regional cooperation is absolutely critical for the management of new geopolitical challenges and the creation of an environment conducive to peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean.
10. The participants discussed the question of maritime piracy and terrorism and the critical importance of intelligence sharing and trust building between governments to cope with these challenges. The Dialogue urged the development of necessary capabilities, legal frameworks and wherewithal to tackle these challenges.
11. There is an urgent requirement to address the special needs of the island states, whose economies rely entirely on the waters around them but which may not have the capabilities to address these problems, including those arising from piracy at sea.
12. The participants acknowledged that coastal and maritime development based on specific national priorities can be complemented by intra-region international development cooperation models that offer developmental and infrastructure finance.
13. The IORA may consider creating a regional approach to both the post-2015 development goals and the post-Kyoto climate treaty. "Sustainable use of oceans and marine resources" have a direct impact on



peoples of the region, and an IORA perspective would be useful. The region is also vulnerable to the intensification of the impact of climate change, and the countries of the region must take necessary measures to build climate resilience. These may include greater experience sharing, along with access to domain knowledge and capabilities that already exist or are developing.

14. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has emerged as a useful forum for broader security cooperation in the IOR. There should be greater synergy between IONS and IORA in addressing the maritime security challenges in the region.
15. The Indian Ocean Dialogue may be institutionalised as an IOR Forum to develop wider thinking on different aspects of regional cooperation and complement discussions on the appropriate cooperation mechanisms of IORA.
17. The IORA may consider elevating their discussions from the ministerial level to the summit level, in order to enhance and accelerate regional cooperation and strengthen regional institutions.
18. There should be stronger South-South cooperation in the region. The IORA should help develop the ethos for inclusive development cooperation within the region.
19. The participants acknowledged the need to strengthen the role of the IORA Secretariat.
20. The participants also acknowledged the need to create broad-based efforts to build regionalism in the IOR. Nodal agencies dealing with identified challenges should be created across the Indian Ocean. These might include a Climate Change Centre in Bangladesh, a Disaster Management Centre in Indonesia, etc.
21. The need for economic development and prosperity for the peoples of the entire Indian Ocean region was emphasised, taking into account the vast potential that exists. It was noted that, *inter alia*, the



experience gained through successful cooperation mechanisms and economic partnerships may be utilised for the development trajectory of the IOR as a whole.

22. The region is now the venue for several proposals for mega-trans-border projects, whose early implementation could transform the economic future of the region.
23. Natural and manmade disasters have a huge negative impact on the economic growth of the region and must be addressed through appropriate capacity-building initiatives in the field of disaster risk mitigation and management.
24. The IORA must focus on early implementation of practical proposals for regional cooperation. The focus must be on projects that can make early and substantive impact on the lives of the peoples of the region and generate much-needed popular support for regional integration.

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