

**25 YEARS OF INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION:
“Working towards a Prosperous, Sustainable and Peaceful
Indian Ocean Region”**

**Presentation by Dr Salman Al Farisi
Secretary General of IORA**

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Geo-strategic importance of the Indian Ocean Region
2. The Establishment of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
3. Successes of IORA after 25 years
4. Challenges & future of IORA

GEO-STRATEGIC & ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE



- **A third of the world's population** (2.6 billion people)
- **80 percent of the world's seaborne oil trade** passes through the Indian Ocean choke points:
 - Strait of Hormuz (40%) linking to the Persian Gulf
 - Strait of Malacca (35%) linking to the Pacific Ocean
 - Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (8%) linking to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Heavy international maritime traffic that includes **half of the world's containerized cargo & one third of its bulk cargo.**
- Produces **goods and services** worth over \$1 trillion with intra IORA trade around \$800bn.

GEO-STRATEGIC & ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE (cont)



- An estimated **40% of the world's offshore oil production**, and rich in heavy **minerals**, and **offshore deposits** with nodules containing nickel, cobalt, and iron, and massive sulfide deposits of manganese, copper, iron, zinc, silver, and gold present in sizeable quantities on the seabed.
- **One-fifth of the global fish production**, with capture fisheries amounted to 21.8 million tonnes representing 22% of world total capture production in 2018.
- The combined area is of IORA Member States, EEZ is estimated at around 28 million sq. km and poses significant challenges in fisheries monitoring.

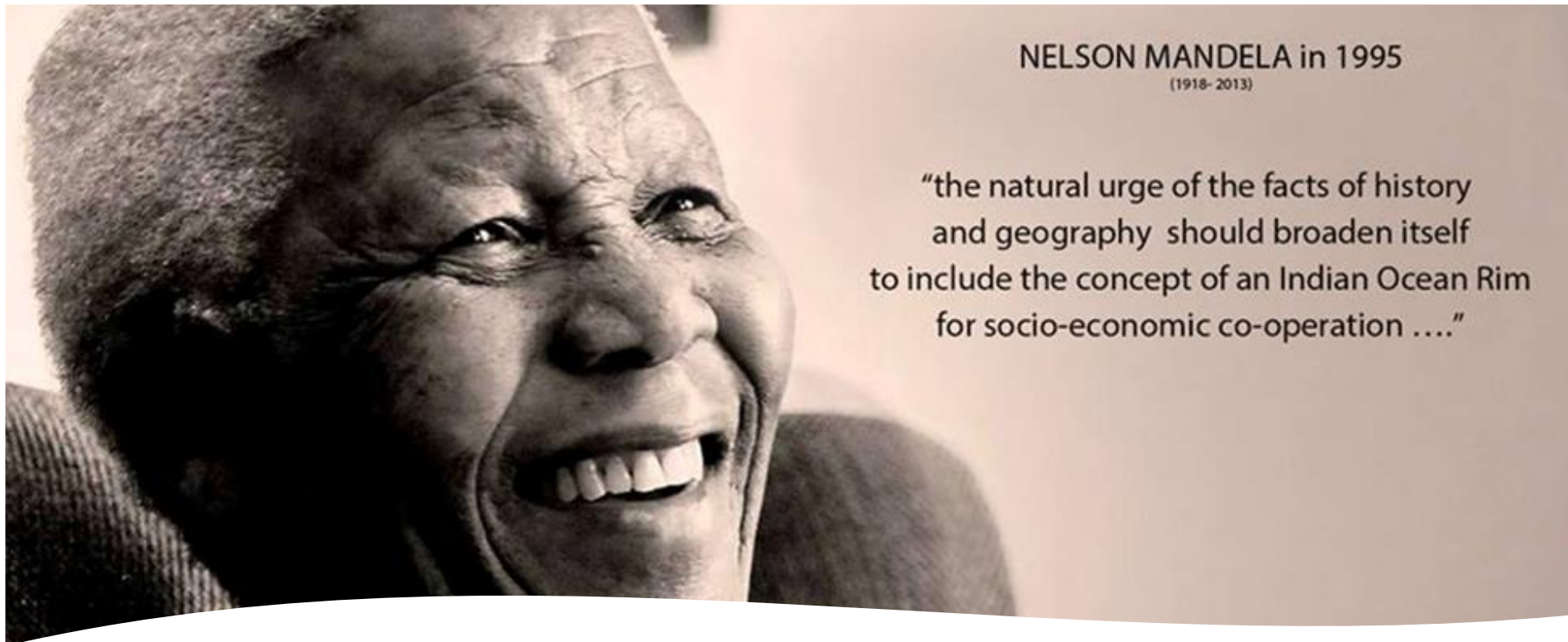
WHAT IS IORA –

Apex
International
Regional
Organization
in the IOR

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an inter-governmental regional organization consisting of Sovereign States of the Indian Ocean Rim

IORA was formerly known as Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)

Aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region



The vision for IORA originated during a visit by late President Nelson Mandela of South Africa to India in 1995



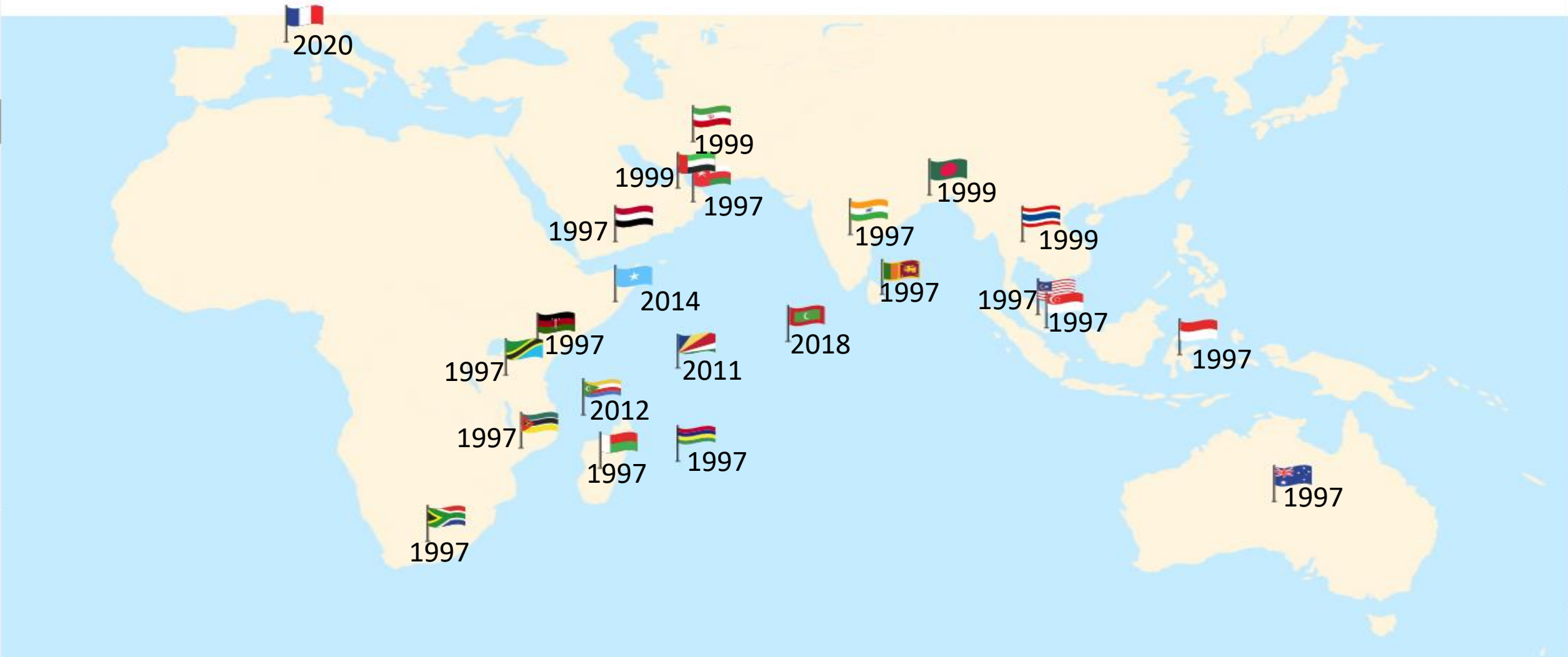
In March 1995, Mauritius convened a meeting with representatives from Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore, and South Africa (M7) and on 7 March 1997 in Mauritius the Association was formally launched with 14 Member States

IORA CHARTER

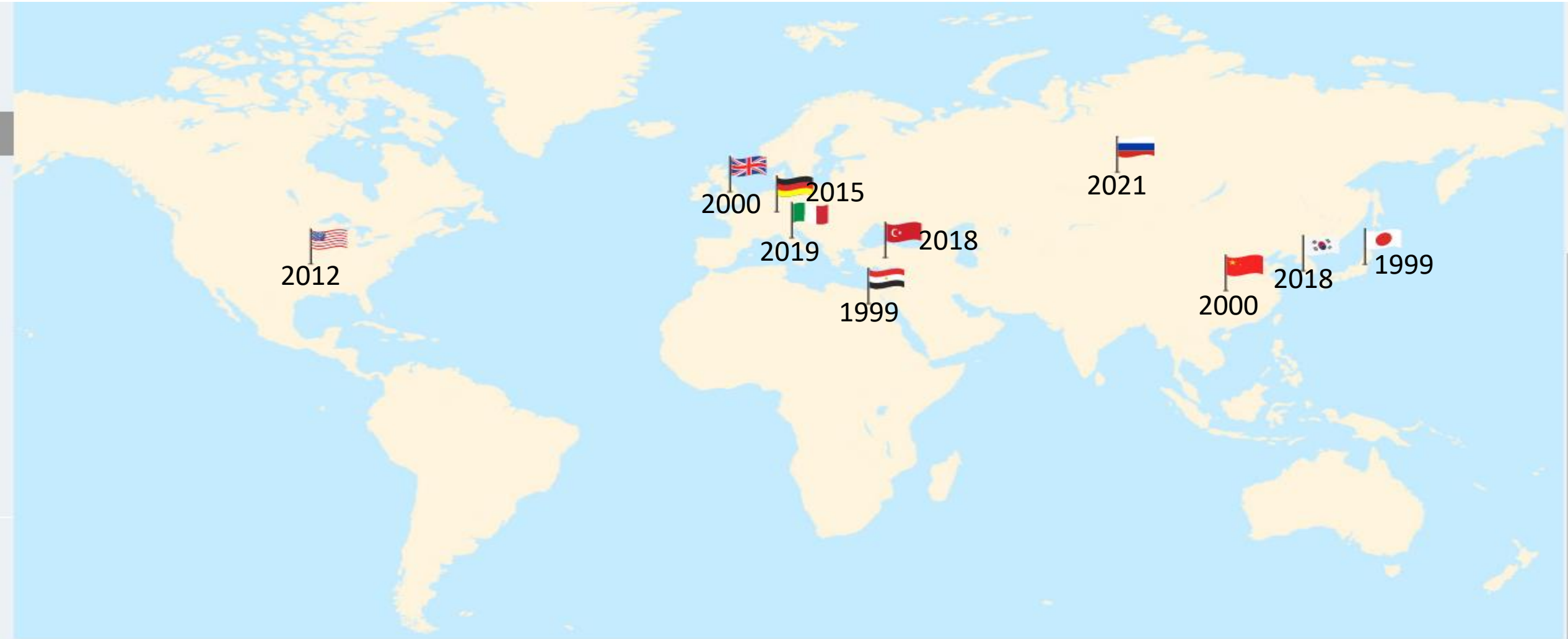


- ❖ Overarching objective is to promote sustained growth and balanced development of the Indian Ocean region and to create common ground for regional economic cooperation
- ❖ Seeks to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial co-operation through a **consensus-based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach**
- ❖ Adapting to change - Amended in 2010, 2014 and 2018

MEMBER STATES : 23



DIALOGUE PARTNERS: 10



IORA GOVERNANCE



- ❖ Apex body: Council of (Foreign) Ministers (COM) – meets annually in October/November
- ❖ Heads of State have met in 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia, to commemorate 20th anniversary & adopted Jakarta Concord
- ❖ Implementation of decisions taken by the COM: Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) – meets bi-annually in June/July and with the COM in October/November
- ❖ TROIKA (Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair) Meets in the period between the meetings of the COM and CSO as often as mutually decided

AGENCIES AND OBSERVERSHIPS

Specialised Agencies of IORA

- ❖ The Fisheries Support Unit (FSU) – Oman (2003)
- ❖ The Regional Centre for Science and Transfer of Technology (RCSTT) – Iran (2008)

Observers to IORA

- ❖ Indian Ocean Research Group (IORG)
- ❖ Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)

IORA Observers to

- ❖ UN Conference on Trade and Development (2014)
- ❖ UN General Assembly (2015)
- ❖ African Union (2015)

IORA SECRETARIAT



- ❖ The Secretariat manages, coordinates, services and monitors the implementation of IORA policy decisions and work programs
- ❖ Member States initiate projects and activities under the IORA Action Plan & drive implementation through functional body work plans
- ❖ Located in Mauritius and overseen by a Secretary General (SG), appointed by COM for 3-year term, renewable once - H.E. Dr Salman Al Farisi (Indonesia)
- ❖ SG is supported by Seconded Directors & experts from Indonesia (Director), South Africa (Director), India (Director & expert), Bangladesh (Director), Australia (Director), and France/Reunion (expert)

Chair (12)	Year
Mauritius	1997 – 1998
Mozambique	1999 - 2000
Oman	2001 - 2002
Sri Lanka	2003 – 2005
Iran	2006 – 2008
Yemen	2009 – 2010
India	2011 – 2012
Australia	2013 – 2014
Indonesia	2015 – 2017
South Africa	2017 – 2019
UAE (Past)	2019 – 2021
Bangladesh (Current)	2021 – 2023
Sri Lanka (Upcoming)	2023 - 2025

Bangladesh Chairship 2021 - 2023



6 PRIORITY AREAS & 2 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES



Maritime Safety &
Security



Trade & Investment
Facilitation



Fisheries Management



Disaster Risk
Management



Tourism & Cultural
Exchanges



Academic, Science &
Technology



Blue Economy



Women's Economic
Empowerment

FUNCTIONAL BODIES



To strengthen and promote sectoral activities in the Association

1. Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG)
2. Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF)
3. Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI)
4. Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWEE)
5. Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (WGMSS)
6. Working Group on Disaster Risk Management (WGDRM)
7. Working Group on the Blue Economy (WGBE)
8. Working Group on Science Technology & Innovation (WGSTI)
9. Core Group on Tourism (CGT)
10. Core Group on Fisheries Management (CGFM)

IORA SPECIAL FUND



- ❖ The Special Fund was established in 2008
- ❖ A mechanism to disburse financial support to government endorsed public and non-profit organisations of Member States, Specialised Agencies and other entities.
- ❖ Applicants can draw funds from the Special Fund up to a maximum of 50% of the total project cost.
- ❖ Least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) can apply for up to a maximum of 90% (limited to max. US\$ 80,00) for 1 project per year under the IORA Sustainable Development Programme (ISDP)

SUCSESSES OF IORA

- 25 Years as the Apex international regional organisation of the Indian Ocean region
- Charter and the consensus model has been successful in keeping the region together and engaged - bilateral issues and tensions have not been a divisive factor.
- Growth of Member States (7 to 23) and Dialogue Partners (10)
- High level political endorsement - Jakarta Concord developed with priority areas and cross cutting issues with 5-year Action Plans for implementation
- Developed solid and focused institutional mechanisms (Functional Bodies) to pursue priorities and cross cutting issues
- Secretariat financial and administration reforms & strengthening programmes (ongoing)

CHALLENGES & FUTURE OF IORA (1)



- Raise the profile of IORA globally – still not well known globally
 - ✓ 25th anniversary is an opportunity to raise profile
 - ✓ Academic community needs to get more engaged and writing about IORA's successes and challenges
- Need for greater high level political support for IORA as the pre-eminent organisation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)
 - ✓ Leaders need to reference and profile IORA more at highest level
 - ✓ More active and greater contributions needed from Dialogue Partners – performance has been uneven

CHALLENGES & FUTURE OF IORA (2)



- IORA needs to respond to global challenges and issues
 - ✓ Indo-Pacific concept – vision being developed
 - ✓ Climate Change – elevating the issue
 - ✓ COVID-19 and future global health pandemics – new area
- Need for more people-centred and concrete development projects Vs workshops and seminars
 - ✓ IORA Development Initiative being developed (Bangladesh)
 - ✓ More focus on support for building the capacity of LDC s and SIDS
 - ✓ Special Fund access & disbursement needs to be ramped up, esp. for LDCs and SIDS

CHALLENGES & FUTURE OF IORA (3)

- Role of the business community in IORA needs to be strengthened
- Need for greater financial resources mobilised for IORA, including for the strengthening of the Secretariat
 - ✓ Increase in financial contributions to provide financial stability and predictability
 - ✓ Strengthen staff capacity and skills
 - ✓ More secondment/recruitment of country experts in priority areas & cross cutting issues to strengthen the IORA Secretariat substantively

Thank You !

-  <https://www.iora.int/en>
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/indian-ocean-rim-association/>
-  <https://www.instagram.com/ioraofficial/>
-  <https://twitter.com/IORAofficial>
-  <https://www.facebook.com/IORAofficial>
-  https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkk_Zi07LEHFe3W7GEYkr3w

