



Report on 24th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG)

Durban, South Africa

Friday, 3 August 2018

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* attached separately

Report of the 24th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG)

Durban, South Africa
Friday, 3 August 2018

PREAMBLE

The 24th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) took place at the Garden Court South Beach in **Durban, South Africa** on **3 August 2018**. The Meeting was chaired by Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller, Executive Director at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the Chair of IORAG and was attended by representatives of IORA Member States namely **Australia, Bangladesh, Union of Comoros, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Madagascar, Malaysia, Republic of Mauritius, 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 and Kingdom of Thailand**. The **Republic of France and Federal Republic of Germany** also attended the meeting as Dialogue Partners. In addition, the **Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)**, as a specialised agency of IORA, as well as the **Chair in Indian Ocean Studies** and the **Indian Ocean Research Group (IORG), Observer, and WIOMSA** also attended the meeting. The list of delegates is annexed as **Document No.IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.1**.

1. WELCOME TO IORAG 2018

1.1 Welcome Address and Presentation of the IORAG Chairperson's Report

Dr Narnia Bohler-Muller, Chair, Executive Director, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) extended a warm welcome to all distinguished participants to the 24th IORAG meeting. She reported on the accomplishments that have taken place since South Africa took over as Chair of IORA in October 2017. She stated that South Africa has demonstrated its commitment in implementing the flagship initiatives in the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021, especially with reference to the reform of the IORAG and she encouraged delegates to assist IORA in implementing the initiatives mentioned in the Action Plan. The Chair also highlighted the institutionalisation of the Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) to an annual mechanism for multi-sector and 1.5 track engagement for the further strengthening of IORAG and provided the report of the Dialogue which was held back-to-back to the IORAG meeting. In addition, as part of the strengthening and improving the coordination and performance of the IORAG, she made reference to the successful pilot Outreach Programme the Chair conducted in Mauritius, Tanzania and Seychelles to strengthen academic participation in IORAG and to encourage more academic engagement with IORA in the region. South Africa introduced the model of the management of their participation in the IORAG, through the South African Chapter of the IORAG and invited the three countries to introduce a similar model. The visits to these countries were very successful and it is being considered to rollout this initiative to other Member States in the region in due course. Other developments which she highlighted included the Conference on Blue Carbon, the need to have an evaluation process for

the acceptance of IORA Centers of Excellence and the launch of the Blue Economy Handbook. The full report of the Chair's welcome address is attached [Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.2](#).

Outcome: The IORAG noted the Chairperson's Report.

1.2 Remarks by the Secretary-General, IORA

Dr Nomvuyo N. Nokwe, the IORA Secretary-General, conveyed her gratitude to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the South African Chapter of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (SA-IORAG) for the excellent arrangements made for the 24th IORAG meeting in Durban. She highlighted on the importance of the Institutional Reform of the IORAG which remains an important body of IORA enhancing its sustainable development. She stressed the importance of formulating an appropriate, workable and distinct strategy to take the IORAG forward for meeting the shared aspirations of peoples in the region and its challenges. The full remarks of the IORA Secretary-General is attached [Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.3](#).

Outcome: The IORAG noted the remarks of the Secretary-General, IORA.

1.3 Outline of Arrangements and Adoption of the Agenda

The Group adopted the Agenda of the IORAG with the inclusion by Indonesia of a new item under **Any Other Business** entitled a: "Study on the Future of IORA under dynamic global changes: a recommendation for policy makers". A copy of the Agenda is annexed as [Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.4](#).

Outcome: The Agenda was adopted by the IORAG with the inclusion of a new item under Any Other Business entitled a "Study on the Future of IORA under dynamic global changes: a recommendation for policy makers".

2. SPECIAL PROGRAMME

2.1 Consideration of the outcomes of the Fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue, Durban

The Chair opened the floor for comments on the outcomes of the Fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) that took place on 1-2 August 2018 in Durban. Comments were received from Sri Lanka and Singapore. A copy of the final outcomes is annexed as [Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.5](#).

Outcome: The IORAG noted the outcomes of the fifth IOD and approved these outcomes for the consideration of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).

2.2 Institutional reform of the IORAG and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Standing Sub-Committee

South Africa informed the Meeting that it has received inputs from the Member States on the two documents namely; the Institutional Reform of IORAG and the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Standing Sub-Committee.

Based on the inputs received by Member States on the ToR for the Standing Sub Committee, South Africa formulated a layout that included South Africa as Chair of the Sub-Committee with the current Troika and

previous chairs, Australia and India, leading on the areas identified for reform i.e. (a) Establishment of National Academic Groups and Focal Points (b) Centers of Excellence (CoEs) Sub-committee (c) University Mobility Sub-committee (d) Special Fund Sub-committee (e) Peer review mechanism for the project proposal linked to the Special Fund and Criteria for participation in the IORAG Activities. A meeting was held on 31 July in Durban where a discussion took place on the above and included South Africa, Indonesia and Australia. At this meeting two additional areas were included in the reform process, i.e. the role of the CIOS in the IORAG and enhancing the role of the Dialogue Partners within the IORAG. Other Member States are now invited to indicate their interest in participating in the various sub-committees.

India required clarity on the flagship initiatives referred to under Academic, Science and Technology in the IORA Action Plan and the activities of the Working Group (WG) on IORAG. Any duplication should be avoided, and the formulation of the TOR for IORAG needs to be developed.

The Chair clarified that no TOR has been drafted for IORAG since 1997 when the Association was launched. The TOR would focus on the establishment of the Sub-Committees which would be required to manage the reform process of the IORAG. However, TORs have been drafted for the three new WGs mentioned in the Action Plan. It is not creating a new body, but rather reforming the current IORAG.

South Africa confirmed that three WGs have been identified in the Action Plan and there is no mention made of the creation of a WG on Academics, Science and Technology. The reform process that they are proposing should consider a new organisational structure for the IORAG. The Special Fund application may not always be beneficial to all Member States and it was therefore recommended that the academic proposals forwarded be academically reviewed by the IORAG. Approval of the applications for academic/research is to be based on this review.

Kenya referred to the five areas of reform that have been proposed. Kenya recalled the decision of the last CSO meeting held in Durban in October 2017 and recommended the establishment of a strong Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism for the Action Plan to ensure that the WGs will be assisting IORA to achieve its objectives. The Association should move away from activity-based work and workshops and training should address a certain outcome, to move towards output/outcome-based results.

The Chair invited all Member States to participate in the five areas identified. On (a) mentioned above, there is a need for the creation of national academic chapters or similar structures in all Member States. On (b), it is to be noted that Centres of Excellence are important, and some are already operating under the IORA banner. However, existing CoEs should be evaluated to determine whether they meet standard criteria in order to avoid any proliferation. On (c), it was proposed that the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS) further assess the university mobility proposal. On (d), the establishment of an academic Sub-Committee that will have the task of reviewing future Special Fund applications for research have been recommended.

The Sultanate of Oman supported the request for clarification made by India. It was mentioned that this institution is new, and it should not repeat the same mistakes that was made in the United Nations (UN) where there is a duplication of work. Oman stressed that IORA should not follow the same path and recommended that research be done on this issue.

India referred to the priority area on Academic, Science and Technology in the Action Plan and sought clarification on the IORA Action Plan with respect to the flagship initiatives including strengthening the IORAG and RCSTT.

The Secretariat informed the Group that no new WG is being envisaged for Academic, Science and Technology as it is not mentioned in the Action Plan, but reference is made to the reform the IORAG.

India further stressed the fact that the IORAG should be clear on the cluster approach especially with reference to the interaction between the various country chapters of the IORAG.

South Africa referred to the five proposed areas which have been identified to implement the reform process of the IORAG. With reference to the reform process of the IORAG, South Africa mentioned that they are ready to share their model, which works well, with interested Member States. The focus of the IORAG should be on discussions among academics, not between officials and the model presented by South Africa, as a pilot, is to address this objective. The IORAG chapter of South Africa is comprised of different universities and academic institutes with the relevant academic expertise. Other Member States may also have strong institutions in a particular field and their interests would therefore be focused in this field. However, South Africa mentioned that this remains a proposal and each Member State will follow their own models. The objective remains for academics from Member States to cooperate and better work together as the IORAG needs to develop projects with tangible results. This can be achieved through a process that would instill credibility amongst Member States. It was stressed that although the National Focal points will always remain the main point of entry for IORA, the Association also requires the inputs from experts from different areas and this could constitute the specific sub-committees.

The following timeline was provided for this process:

- a) Submission of the first drafts of the concept papers by 20 September 2018.
- b) Circulation for inputs to member states by 25 September 2018.
- c) Consolidation of inputs by 31 January 2019.
- d) 2nd meeting of the subcommittee to reform the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) by end February 2019, possibly with a meeting in the UAE.
- e) Submission of the final document to the CSO by October/November 2019.

Malaysia proposed that the Sub-committee for CoEs be managed by India as the coordinating country for Academic, Science and Technology.

Sri Lanka informed the meeting that they are in the process of establishing a CoE on Ocean Sciences and environment and indicated their interest to be part of the Sub-Committee on CoEs.

South Africa thanked the delegates for indicating an interest to work in the five areas.

The Islamic Republic of Iran supported the proposal which could be a model for other countries. Iran suggested to change the title of the reform process in order to make it more acceptable to all countries.

Indonesia required clarity regarding the process and to avoid confusion it was recommended that consideration be given to call it; "an Ad-hoc Committee based on the timeframe, validity and lines of

communication, since it will be a committee established for a specific purpose and its lifespan would therefore be limited to its objective.

Australia reminded the Meeting of the importance to engage in the IORAG reform process and stressed the importance of the ToR for the Sub-Committee to be finalised within the time frame for endorsement by the COM.

India indicated that in order to strengthen the IORAG, further clarification regarding the mentioned chapters in the different Member States would be required and also made mention to the structure they are following. It is important that the Member States fully comprehend the mechanism to be implemented.

The Chair clarified that Member States are free to follow their own structures with which they feel comfortable.

Tanzania mentioned that they participated in the South African outreach programme and through this process they were able to convene a number of universities and have developed a similar process in Tanzania where they could popularise the IORAG research areas and coordinate it in line with comparative advantages of different universities.

Seychelles informed the Group that they have also engaged with IORA at decision making level, and the visit on the outreach programme was helpful to bridge the gap between decision makers and academics, and to determine what opportunities are available. Being a small country, Seychelles has benefited from IORA e.g. through the Special Fund, they were able to build capacities that were very valuable. The introduction of a quality control mechanism was supported for the promotion of engagement of small countries which do not have a lot of research activities and have limited resources, as a valuable initiative.

The Chair thanked all the delegates for the feedback received. India was requested to present any additional information at the next meeting.

Outcome: The IORAG finalised the proposal for the institutional reform of IORAG and the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Standing Sub-Committee with a view to implement the reform. Areas of reform include: encouragement of creation of national academic chapters (proposed South African model); review the Centres of Excellence (India, Indonesia, Iran, Oman, Malaysia and Sri Lanka); university mobility (Indonesia, Iran, Tanzania, UAE and CIOS); peer-review mechanism for the Special Fund (Australia, India and Indonesia); the role of CIOS in IORAG; enhancing the role of Dialogue Partners within IORA; and the importance of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for research undertaken through IORA (Australia and Indonesia). South Africa, as Chair, will participate in all reform groups. Other members of the IORAG may volunteer to participate in the areas they are interested in supporting.

2.2.1 Consideration of previous IORAG reform decisions/documents/lessons learnt

Outcome: The IORAG considered the status of the previous IORAG reform recommendations, documents and the lessons learnt and provided recommendations for improvements and for moving the process forward. The IORAG encourages national academic focal points to be identified as a matter of urgency and the names to be provided to the Secretariat.

2.3 IORA Action Plan (2017-2021): inputs/proposals on short-medium-long-term actions

South Africa mentioned that the IORAG is only responsible for items relevant to the Academic Group in the Action Plan.

The Secretariat informed the Group that academic issues are cross-cutting and not only limited to IORAG items.

The Chair informed the meeting that the ToR for the new Working Groups (WGs) are being developed. The relevance of the WGs must be stressed with respect to the IORAG. It was recommended that the IORAG assists and underpins everything within IORA.

South Africa informed the meeting that the IORAG should be involved in any research of an academic nature being conducted by any of the other WGs. It means that the AG could be consulted on any project proposals with an academic nature whether it is on the Blue Economy, Women or whatever the proposal may be.

The IORA Secretariat updated the Group on point 31 in the progress report of the Action Plan where it was mentioned that the MoU with UNITAR has already been approved. The IORA Secretariat has updated the draft with the details of the current IORA Secretary-General and UNITAR has made some minor changes. It is planned that the IORA Secretary-General would sign the MOU as soon as possible.

India referred to point 26: "Institutionalise the Indian Ocean Dialogue as an annual mechanism for multi-sector and 1.5 track engagement". India is of the view that the outcomes of IOD, being a track 1.5, should be fed into the CSO rather than the IORAG.

South Africa on the other hand stated that the IOD should be inclusive, and that essentially it is a dialogue forum for the Association. It is important that the IORAG undertakes the research for policy support and to provide evidence-based results to the private sector to make business decisions. The objective to schedule the IOD back-to-back with the IORAG should be supported as there are a large overlapping presence of the same people who have been actively involved in discussions in both the IOD and the IORAG. The vision of the IORAG would be to feed critical information into all other sectors of the Indian Ocean Rim.

India argued that the IOD outcomes should be presented to the CSO and COM and not be channeled through the AG.

South Africa sought clarity on the issue of the tracks and reminded the meeting that IORAG is a Track 2.

Indonesia informed the Academic Group that IOD is a 1.5 track consisting of experts and that it therefore would be placed correctly under IORAG.

The Chair informed the Academic Group that with the institutionalisation of the IOD, it has become part of IORA, and should fall under the IORAG.

India reminded the Group that the IOD was initially their initiative proposed in 2012 where it was decided that they host the Dialogue on alternate years with the Chair of IORA. At that time, no mention was made of the IOD reporting to the IORAG.

Somalia recommended that consideration be given to the idea of having the IORAG for two days similar to IOD and CSO. It was also recommended that the IORAG develop on its own and be separated from IOD.

The Chair explained that this might be an expensive exercise.

The IORA Secretariat stressed the importance of IOD and proposed that it retains its status as an independent forum. However, the IOD needs to find a home, and IORAG is the correct place. The idea would be for the report of the IOD to be attached as a separate report to the IORAG to be submitted to the CSO by the IOD Chair.

India argued that a Track 1.5 cannot be part of Track 2; Track 2 is exclusively for researchers and discussions are at a minute level, to be fed into Track 1.5 with Government officials.

The Islamic Republic of Iran informed the meeting that the outcomes of the IOD are mostly concerned with academics and that any objections could have been done there.

Kenya was of the view that there is a need to move away from the debate and IORAG to propose any activities with evidence-based research including a Monitoring and Evaluation process.

Indonesia recommended that the IOD be accommodated in the IORAG for the time being.

Mauritius stated that there is no decision that India cannot continue with its initiative. Should the Group be agreeable to the solution, the meeting can move on. There is a disconnect between IORAG, IOD, and COM. Where does the IORAG get its money? The officials attending the officials' meeting can give direction on the kind of applied research. But we also need finance for applied research, to use it. The IORAG must address the issue of mismatch and disconnect.

Australia supported the statement of Mauritius. There is no problem if the IOD continue to exist independently as its history is separate, as an institution and it has functioned well.

South Africa informed the meeting that the history of IORAG meetings is that Government officials proposed a particular project and other countries agreed so that the Special Fund can be utilised. But often, nothing is taking place afterwards. The reform was to streamline this, not just on finance. If one looks at resources, and projects not undertaken, there are projects where finance would not have been a problem. But we have not leveraged the infrastructure available. We have not engaged with Dialogue Partners. Then it becomes important to honour our obligations to the organisation. Some proposals require own contributions and are not dependent on whether resources are available. We should look at the bigger picture. There is an interlinkage. We must reform the IORAG. There is an interlink: how does it feed into other mechanisms. It just makes business sense to have it back-to-back, not necessarily establishing a hierarchy. If there are challenges, we can have further discussions.

The Chair reminded the meeting that IORA is a consensus based organisation and if something is introduced, it does not belong to any particular Member State. We have an IORAG and an IOD, and this has already been decided.

The Islamic Republic of Iran observed that most participants in the IOD session were also attending the IORAG meeting and it should therefore not be problem of finalizing the issue. Would it therefore be possible to have a change in the participants, or that the number can be reduced?

Outcome: The IORAG noted the status on proposed Academic Projects. No consensus could be reached on the inclusion of the IOD within the IORAG as part of the institutionalization process and the matter was referred back to the CSO for guidance.

2.4 Status on proposed Academic Projects in line with the IORA priorities

Outcome: The IORAG noted that study reports have been submitted to the SA-IORAG Secretariat and are available to interested members. Some of these reports have also been published in the JIOR. Members are encouraged to use this information to identify interested academics within their countries who are working on similar topics, could further develop these studies, or propose other areas of interest of regional significance.

2.5 Criteria for the establishment of IORA Centres of Excellence

The Chair referred to the proposal of the establishment of a Sub-Committee to discuss the ToR on CoEs. It was suggested that Australia could lead on this topic in collaboration with Malaysia for the drafting of the ToR.

India referred to the IORA Centre of Excellence (ICE) and informed the Group that they are in the process of finalising the criteria on the IORA CoE, including the benefits for the region. The proposed CoEs have numerous data and it should be assessed how this could be accessed by Member States. India indicated that an update will be provided shortly to Member States at the next COM.

The IORA Secretariat reminded the Group of the decision of the last IORAG meeting held in Durban in October 2017, on the need to have criteria for CoEs. Several Member States expressed their intention to have CoEs under IORA and it was suggested that the best way forward would be to establish a Sub-Committee to assess the applications received. By creating a set of criteria, it would be easy to determine whether an institution would qualify for IORA CoE status. Noting that the CSO consists of government officials who may not have knowledge of particular fields, it was recommended that the IORAG could examine the proposals first. In addition, this process would enable Member States to have guidelines for CoEs. In this regard, India's proposal was good and more details were welcomed.

India informed the meeting that CoE is a data pool for a particular subject and there is the need to know how to develop it for access on a digital platform. India has offered to assist with drafting the ToR.

Malaysia referred to its proposal to have the Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA) registered as an IORA CoE in training and exchange of expertise on maritime related issues for IORA Member States. They have formulated the ToR which have been circulated to all Member States. Malaysia has offered its assistance in drafting the criteria for CoE in collaboration with India.

South Africa requested that the presentation made by India on ICE at the CSO meeting held in Durban on 30-31 July 2018 be shared with the IORAG. South Africa is of the view that IORAG should be given the opportunity to comment on ICE.

The Chair requested India and Malaysia to share their documents.

India briefed the Group on the presentation on ICE which has been proposed to be established in a coastal city in India, and to work with a collation of available resources with Member States. ICE would

provide access to data which includes physical and digital infrastructure. The first phase would be to establish a knowledge system through digital access with security measures be incorporated into the system. The second phase would be to extend the connectivity of national knowledge through a network with fast upload and download capabilities and extending connectivity to Member States with their approval. The respective Concept Note will be circulated to Member States in due course.

The Islamic Republic of Iran sought clarification on the criteria for CoEs. How do we ensure maximum participation? How can you start with something and already call it a CoE? It should be an existing centre that can then be recognized as an CoE.

The Chair informed the meeting that the Sub-Committee would consider all issues in relation to CoEs.

Outcome: Refer also to agenda item 2.2. India volunteered to prepare a concept note for the IORAG's consideration.

2.6 Outreach Programme to Member States to Strengthen the IOR Academic Group

The Chair informed the Group that the Outreach Programme had been discussed only with the African Member States at this stage. A positive response has been received from Tanzania, Seychelles, and Mauritius, for creating awareness in these countries, and they are considering adopting the South African model. This is a successful pilot project that could be extended to other Member States that would bring together academics to discuss Indian Ocean issues.

India expressed its appreciation for the Outreach Programme and requested a brief on the outcomes. India has offered to design a similar programme.

The Chair informed the Group that South Africa would send a report on the Outreach Programme to all Member States.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the report by South Africa on the pilot outreach program that was held in Mauritius, Seychelles and Tanzania, including how this can be replicated for the benefit of the Association. The Report, including presentation materials, will be shared with the IORAG.

2.7 Report on IORA Indian Ocean Conference on Blue Carbon (19-23 March 2018)

The Chair informed the Group that the Blue Carbon Conference was held within the context of Blue Economy, with a number of academics present. It is a new subject and it is also about communities who need to be consulted. Seychelles explained how they engaged the local communities prior to the development of mangrove forests. Blue carbon funds could support conservation. This was a particularly a valuable exercise.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the circulated report by the Chair on the IORA Indian Ocean Conference on Blue Carbon that took place on 19-23 March 2018 in Perth, Australia. (Refer also to agenda item 6.1.2).

2.7.1 Academics view on highlights of the 'Perth Recommendations'

Outcome: Refer to agenda item 6.1.2.

2.7.2 Discussion on interaction of IORAG with Blue Carbon Activity and the new Working Group on Blue Economy (WGBE)

Outcome: Refer to agenda item 6.1.2.

3. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND PROPOSAL BY IORA SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND CHAIR IN INDIAN OCEAN STUDIES

3.1 Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)

The RCSTT presented its report to the Group on implemented and upcoming programmes. RCSTT referred to the proposal on the Coordination Centre for Health and Medical Technology at Aachen University in Germany and informed the meeting that the CSO at their recent meeting held in Durban on 30-31 July 2018 recommended that the Chair (South Africa) and Secretariat, on behalf of the CSO, will engage with the Government of Germany on this initiative. On the Coordination Centre on Medicinal Plants hosted by CSIR-CIMAP, India, the Group learned that the MOU was signed on 25 February 2018 and that a work plan has been proposed. India will be hosting a training programme on "Diversity, documentation, Gene Banking and Database for Medicinal Plants" from 25 November to 1 December 2018 and the Secretariat was requested to circulate the event to Member States. In addition, in the sideline of the MOU signing ceremony, RCSTT has been approached by India to consider cooperation with the following Indian institutes: (a) Indian Institute of Petroleum under CSIR and (b) Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM).

On the Coordination Centre on Water Science and Technology in South Africa, RCSTT informed the Group that the Water Research Commission (WRC) of South Africa has agreed to host the Centre and that an MoU would be signed in due course. On the two workshops namely the Workshop on Salts and Chemicals Extraction from Saline Waters and the Workshop on the Effects of Climate Change on the Indian Ocean Marine Environment, RCSTT has mentioned that they have applied for IORA Special Fund support to host the two events. The full report can be accessed at [Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.6](#).

South Africa referred to the Coordination Centre on Water Science and Technology and confirmed the intention of WRC to host the Centre and that they will prepare an MoU for consideration.

The Islamic Republic of Iran informed the meeting that they are endorsing the RCSTT activities for 2018/19 noting that these should be forwarded to Member States for their consideration and to be endorsed by the CSO and adopted COM. Iran recommended that the MoU be finalised and signed with WRC following the endorsement by the CSO/COM. In addition, Iran mentioned that RCSTT which is an IORA Specialised Agency and supported by Iran, has insufficient funds. It has been proposed that IORA should upgrade their support to RCSTT to support its activities. On the Coordination Centre on Women Empowerment to be hosted by Alzahra University, Iran recommended that the MOU be endorsed. On the two workshops to be hosted by RCSTT, Iran requested Special Fund support.

Malaysia reminded the Academic Group that MIMA was already offered as an IORA CoE. However, the Ministry does not agree to host the Coordination Centre on Maritime Transportation and Environment Technology.

Tanzania endorsed the report of RCSTT and inquired about the time frame mentioned on the proposal to establish a policy research unit, including a specialized library and a publication section. Tanzania also

referred to the extended proposal idea by Kenya, with respect to a larger Monitoring and Evaluation of IORAG activities. Tanzania would like to request that the same be applied to RCSTT activities.

The IORA Secretariat informed the Academic Group as follows:

- a) CSO has already discussed the RCSTT report. In summary, IORAG must endorse the report first, before a discussion and decision is taken by the CSO.
- b) Workshop on climate change to be discussed further down in the agenda.
- c) Welcomed the MoU and the first training programme to be held in Lucknow, India, on November 2018
- d) On the Coordination Centre for women, the IORA Secretariat recalled the decision of the 8th Bi-annual CSO meeting held in Durban on 30-31 July 2018 where Member States requested a dialogue between Australia, as Coordinator for Women's Economic Empowerment in the Action Plan, and RCSTT regarding the proposed collaboration with Alzakra University on women's economic empowerment before further steps are taken. RCSTT can also approach Mauritius.
- e) Engagement with Germany on Aachen University where the Chair (South Africa) and Secretariat, on behalf of the CSO, will engage with the Government of Germany on this initiative.
- f) Water proposal to be considered.

The Chair informed the Group that Member States should provide their comments on the activities presented by RCSTT.

The IORA Secretariat stated that intersessional comments shall be made available after the circulation of reports on the activities of RCSTT.

Outcome: The IORAG noted with appreciation the report by the Director of the RCSTT and the proposals which were circulated at the CSO meeting held on 30-31 July 2018. All project proposals will be re-circulated to the IORAG for further consideration and recommendation to the CSO for inter-sessional approval.

Malaysia requested that item 6 regarding the Co-ordination Centre on Maritime Transportation and Environment Technology be removed from the RCSTT report. Australia welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with Iran on women's economic empowerment.

3.2 Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS)

CIOS presented his report to the Group which included the status of the feasibility report on UMIOR where he mentioned that since the project was initiated in 2001 six conferences were held. A landmark was in 2012, when the constitution was approved. It covers student, researcher, and faculty exchange. He mentioned that the challenges were the funding on a sustainable basis. UMIOR is a voluntary proposal, with a total cost of US\$314,000. In ASEAN, it was initiated by three countries. Now, there are thousands of students. Suggestion for consideration is a minimum of countries to participate first. A general conference will elect functionaries. The issue of recognition of degrees could be agreed upon later. If there are no objections, then the programme could continue.

On the Indian Ocean Rim University, a concept note has been formulated for consideration by Member States. On the potential collaboration between IORA and the International Centre for Ocean Governance (ICOG) on ocean awareness in Australia, it is requested that Member States could consider the proposal and there should not be any financial burden on IORA. He finally mentioned that all 10 items in the

workplan have been achieved. A copy of the full report is attached as Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.7.

India informed the meeting that an MoU was signed on various issues, with policy groups and papers. A study was launched on capacity building. These are areas India would like to cooperate with Member States.

The Islamic Republic of Iran commended the work as presented by the CIOS. Iran is interested in further cooperation with CIOS.

Indonesia stressed the importance of broadening the horizons of young scientists. Indonesia is interested to further enhance this idea. Indonesia also expressed its support for the UMIOR initiative.

Outcome: The IORAG noted and endorsed the report of the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS) and provided guidance on the way forward for the consideration of the CSO.

3.2.1 Status of Feasibility Report of the University Mobility in the Indian Ocean Rim (UMIOR)

Outcome: Refer to 3.2.

3.2.2 Status of the Indian Ocean Rim University (IORU)

Outcome: Refer to 3.2.

3.2.3 Status of the Work Plan of the CIOS

Outcome: Refer to 3.2.

4. JOURNAL FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION – JIOR

Outcome: To be discussed at agenda item 6.1.1.

5. IORA SPECIAL FUND

5.1 Discussion on RCSTT application/budget

Outcome: The RCSTT proposals will be re-circulated to the IORAG. Refer to agenda item 3.1

5.2 Other applications

Outcome: No other applications were circulated.

5.3 Current IORAG role in Special Fund applications, and any suggested changes from revised TORs/reform

South Africa referred to the proposed Special Fund Sub-Committee that would consider all future application of an academic nature.

The **IORA Secretariat** provided a brief on the rules of the Special Fund regarding the amounts that can be approved by the Secretary-General, through the closed email group, by CSO and by COM including the accountability report on disbursements of awards received.

CIOS stated that depending on the theme and nature of the proposal the relevant forum and not only the IORAG should also be consulted.

Seychelles stressed the importance of transparency and to have a simplified structure.

Outcome: The IORAG considered the proposal that it can play a valuable role in peer reviewing academic Special Fund proposals for recommendation to the CSO. This proposal will be further developed as part of the IORAG reform process. As noted in agenda item 2.2, Australia, India and Indonesia have indicated interest in developing the proposal in an inclusive manner. The IORAG suggested that Special Fund processes be streamlined and simplified in order to ensure confidentiality and quality of project proposals.

6. COUNTRY REPORTS ON PAST/CURRENT/FUTURE PROJECTS

6.1 Member States to inform the Group on progress on specific proposals, particularly where there is updated information to convey to the Meeting.

Australia

6.1.1 Update on Journal of Indian Ocean Region (JIOR) projects

Australia provided an update on the JIOR of which a copy is attached as **Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.7**. South Africa and Indonesia were thanked for their commitment in funding the journal. It has been suggested that the Vice-Chair considers paying for the annual subscriptions. On the journal, Australia mentioned that the current edition (July 2018) contains special issues on Diplomacy, Blue Economy and cultural intersections. Australia further mentioned that the issues that are currently in preparation will focus on Blue Carbon and Water Security among others.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the support of the Chair in the current edition on Diplomacy and Norm-Building in the Indian Ocean Region and encouraged future journal subscriptions for Member States to be sponsored by the IORA Chairs and Member States. The upcoming journal series will focus on Water Security and Sustainability; Blue Carbon; and Small Island States and Sustainability. Members were encouraged to suggest country-specific editions. JIOR seeks to continue to promote independent peer-reviewed research in and for the region. Members of the IORAG who form national chapters and academic focal points will receive free access along with designated academics through the National Focal Point and the Academic Focal Point.

6.1.2 Update on Blue Carbon Activity (Indian Ocean)

Australia informed the Group that the National Chapter of IORAG will receive free copies of the Journal upon the approval of the National Focal Point. Australia pointed out that the Journal can also be made available to the Dialogue Partners. Australia expressed its gratitude to the IORA Secretariat, for its assistance with the Journal.

The Chair congratulated Australia on the initiative and for forming part of the Peer review mechanism for the project proposal linked to the Special Fund.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the report from the CSIRO Blue Carbon event in Perth, Australia and noted the JIOR intends to issue a special edition on Blue Carbon. A request was made for IORAG focal points to identify networks of scholars working on this issue in their home countries.

Bangladesh

6.1.3 Establishment of the Indian Ocean Technical and Vocational University

Bangladesh was requested to provide the IORA Secretariat with details of the proposal including its financial implications.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the proposal from Bangladesh to establish an Indian Ocean Technical and Vocational University and awaits further details on this proposal.

Comoros

6.1.4 Student and research exchange programme and the development of inter-University research in common interest fields

Outcome: No update was provided.

India

6.1.5 Study on the “Economic Aspects of Fisheries: A Framework for Regional Cooperation in IORA”

India provided an update on the Study on the; “Economic Aspects of Fisheries: A Framework for Regional Cooperation in IORA” which was forwarded to the Secretariat on 31 July 2018. A copy is attached as **Document No. IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.8**. The copy was circulated by the Secretariat to the Member States on 1 August 2018. India further informed the meeting of a new project entitled: ‘Towards Deep Regional Integration in IORA with Global Value Chains, Trade in Parts and Components’. India will circulate the concept note in due course through the IORA Secretariat.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the update on the completed study which found great potential for fisheries management and regional trade in the Indian Ocean.

India also proposed a second project entitled ‘Towards Deep Regional Integration in IORA with Global Value Chains, Trade in Parts and Components’ and will circulate a concept note in due course.

Indonesia

6.1.6 Business Innovation Centre in the Indian Ocean

Indonesia informed the meeting that they have commenced with the project by collecting research data, as well as statistics on business that have been done in the Member States. There are two networks: (a) Academic-to-Academic Network and (b) Business-to-Business Innovation Network. The Academic-to-Academic Network would facilitate the development of exchange and sharing of technological innovation amongst the academics in the region; stimulate technological innovation cooperation and promote cooperation amongst the innovation experts in the region. The Business-to-Business Innovation Network will facilitate the linkages amongst the firms developing technological innovation yet open to collaboration to expand its application and market with other business partners in the Region. This includes the participation of innovative SMEs to take advantage from the network. Through IORA - BIC researchers and innovators Member States could better understand industry needs for research results to be directly implemented. Indonesia has started this activity by collecting research data and statistics on the business that have been done in the Member States. A concept note will be submitted to the IORA Secretariat.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the update to promote innovation and business-to-business linkages. A concept note has been completed and will be submitted to the IORAG.

6.1.7 Joint research activities on Coastal Health and Wealth in the Indian Ocean Region

Indonesia informed the Group that in enhancing research collaboration, they focused on "joint research" programme proposal as one of the possible platforms. This programme is aimed at exploring ideas and solutions offered by academics and researchers in responding strategies issues in the Indian Ocean region. Indonesia proposed a large topic of "Coastal health and wealth in the Indian Ocean" as a framework for this joint research activity. They have planned activities for the next three years that include: 1) Quantifying existing conditions of the coastal areas throughout the rim: ecosystem, resources and services; 2) Coastal pollution and marine plastic debris – sources, trend and distribution; and, 3) Coastal livelihood system which include small scale coastal fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, sea trading and other socio-economic dynamics and the role of fair trade in the poverty reduction and inequality. The above research activities will be supported also by capacity building in the form of scientific exchanges, regional training and workshop. The Research and Training Center for Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health (RTRC MARBEST) Asia Pacific Center for Ecohydrology (APCE), Indian Ocean Tsunami Information Center (IOTIC) may provide materials and in-kind support for this proposal. At this stage, Indonesia would like to update on the progress as follows: 1) Development of Pilot Site of coastal observation network to monitor dynamic in Bintan Island and Kep. Seribu as a show case is on-going. They have secured funding to develop this coastal observation system in two sites, namely: Bintan Island (supported by Demand Driven Research Grant - Indonesian Institute of Science) and Seribu Islands (supported by Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education) for two years. Results will be presented in IORA Scientific Meetings to increase the visibility and attract participation. In addition to the proposal, Indonesia conducts marine oceanographic surveys (including physical, chemical, biology and geology, Widya Nusantara Expedition) in its territorial and EEZ waters and is willing to share this opportunity as platforms for further collaboration with IORA member countries in research and capacity building. The support for the proposed activities is expected to come from the IORA Special Fund, each member countries participating in the programme and Dialogue Partners. A comprehensive concept note is under preparation and will be circulated in due course.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the update in which Indonesia has identified a pilot site and secured funding for a coastal observation centre. Indonesia will seek support from the Special Fund and is preparing its application for consideration by the CSO.

Malaysia

6.1.8 Terms of Reference for the IORA Centre of Excellence for Maritime Affairs

Malaysia informed the Group that it has submitted the TOR to the IORA Secretariat on the IORA Centre of Excellence for Maritime Affairs. The Group was informed that the Centre intends to provide training and to organise an expert group workshop. Mention was also made on the approval by the Eighth bi-annual CSO meeting on the Special Fund application for port and shipping training and future activities that will be held on security and environment.

Outcome: It was confirmed that the CSO approved the Special Fund application for port and shipping training. Future activities include security and environmental matters.

Seychelles

6.1.9 Managed Network of Environmental Research in the Western Indian Ocean, Special Fund

Seychelles informed the Group that the project has been completed and that it can be accessed at the website of the University of Seychelles: <https://www.unisey.ac.sc/research-consultancy/blue-economy-research-institute/a-network-of-environmental-research-in-the-western-indian-ocean>. They will provide the compliance report as per the Special Fund rules as soon as it is ready.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the report of the completed project. Seychelles committed to providing the accountability report to the Secretariat.

Sri Lanka

6.1.10 Conference on 'The Political – Economy of Maritime Asia in the Indian Ocean Rim'

Sri Lanka informed the meeting that due to budgeting constraints they were unable to hold the Conference on; 'The Political – Economy of Maritime Asia in the Indian Ocean Rim'. Sri Lanka intends to hold the said Conference in 2019 and would inform the IORA Secretariat of the proposed dates. Noting that the subject; Political Economy of Maritime Asia, remains of critical importance to the Indian Ocean Rim, Sri Lanka believes that it would be important to have this platform for IORA Member States to share experiences, learn from each other and also discuss ways in which cooperation could be strengthened for mutual benefit.

Outcome: The IORAG noted that due to budget constraints the Conference was not held in 2018 and that Sri Lanka hopes to host this event in 2019. The dates will be circulated to Member States in due course through the Secretariat.

6.1.11 Action Plan - Centre of Excellence on Ocean Sciences and Environment for engagement by Member States

Sri Lanka referred the Group to the workshop that was held in Colombo in June 2014 on the 'Establishment of the Centre of Excellence on Ocean Sciences and Environment' where agreement was reached on the areas of focus for the Centre of Excellence (CoE). However, Sri Lanka believes that the focus areas and the proposed action plan needs to be revisited and will soon be sending a draft revised concept note and action plan for circulation to Member States for their views. The Group was informed that Sri Lanka has held several stakeholder meetings in Colombo to consult on the physical setting up of the CoE on Ocean Sciences and Environment. The required plot of land and the necessary infrastructure are now available for the centre to commence functioning. The plot of land is situated at the Ocean University premises in Colombo.

Outcome: The IORAG noted that some time has passed between the original concept note and developments with regards to the Action Plan and other developments. A revised concept note and Action Plan will be circulated to the IORAG for inputs.

Thailand

6.1.12 Report: International Training Workshop on Inland Aquaculture and Small-scale Inland Aquaculture Promotion during 4 - 17 March 2018

Outcome: No update was provided.

6.2 Projects to be withdrawn because of no progress (two years or more on the agenda with no action)

6.2.1 Indian Ocean Study Centre (IOSC)

Outcome: The IORAG noted the withdrawal of project as no progress has been reported.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

Outcome: The IORAG noted Kenya will host a Global Sustainable Blue Economy Conference on 26-28 November 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya along with Canada as co-host, with support from UN agencies. IORAG members were welcome to participate and also provide sponsorship support.

Indonesia plans to host in late November 2018 a 'high-level panel on enhancing maritime cooperation for inclusive growth in the Indian Ocean' and will communicate more information in due course.

Indonesia proposed a foresight study of IORA including a reflection on the priority and cross-cutting focus issues to ensure continued relevance. South Africa and the CIOS also supported this initiative.

8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair thanked all delegates for their cooperation and again stressed that South Africa has made a commitment to the strengthening of the IORAG and will continue working closely with Member States to achieve this goal. Special reference was made to Blue Economy and Women's Economic Empowerment. The Chair also commended Indonesia, the outgoing Chair, recalling special achievements made during its

chairmanship which included the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of IORA and the IORA Action Plan. The Chair expressed its intention to work with UAE the future Chair and looked forward to the study proposed by Indonesia and which South Africa has expressed its interest in to participate. The Chair again extended appreciation for the support received from the Government of South Africa through the Department of Science and Technology who appointed her to represent the IORAG Chair as well as to the Secretariat and in particular to Mr Anderson for the assistance given her. She also extended her appreciation to her team for their cooperation in the organisation of this event. Prof Attri was also commended for his work and his contribution to the Blue Economy Handbook which was launched on 2 August 2018.

Indonesia, the outgoing Chair, made reference to the excellent recommendations made by delegates and requested Member States to reflect on the strengthening of the Academic Group for its future performance.

Outcome: The IORAG noted the closing remarks by the Chair and adopted the report of the meeting.

ANNEXES

IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.1

24th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG), Durban, South Africa, 3 August 2018

List of Delegates

Head Table

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IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.2

Remarks by Chair, Dr Narnia Bohler-Muller, Chair, Executive Director, Democracy, Governance and Service Delivery, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

**At the 24th Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) Meeting
Friday, August 3rd 2018, Durban, South Africa**

The Secretary General of IORA
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Durban. I am pleased to extend a very warm welcome to all distinguished participants to the 24th IORAG meeting.

I would like to report to you the accomplishments that have taken place since South Africa took over as Chair of IORA last year in October 2017. South Africa is showing its commitment in implementing the flagship initiatives in the five-year IORA Action Plan 2017-2021. The Secretariat has prepared a progress report of the Action Plan and I would encourage delegates to assist IORA in implementing the initiatives mentioned in the Action Plan.

The primary flagship initiatives, as you are aware, is the strengthening of the IORAG. As we have decided at our meeting in October 2017, we have prepared two documents on the IORAG reform and the Terms of Reference for the establishment of the Sub-Committee tasked with the reform of the IORAG. These two documents were circulated by the Secretariat to the National Focal Points of the Member States and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Member States for their comments and inputs that were very valuable. Based on the comments and inputs received, a layout was developed to further implement the reform process. The layout, which consisted of five initiatives, was presented at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 31 July 2018 in Durban. You will note that a number of countries have been identified to drive the initiatives mentioned in the reform paper and I trust that it will be finalised.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another major issue that we need to decide is the flagship initiatives in the Action Plan that requires institutionalisation of the Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) as an annual mechanism for multi-sector and 1.5 track engagement for the further strengthening of the IORAG. For the past two days prior to the IORAG, the fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue was held here in Durban that was attended by some of you. The IOD was attended by representatives of 17 Member States and 2 Dialogue Partners. The Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT), as a specialised agency of IORA, as well as the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS) also attended the meeting. At these Sessions various speakers delivered presentations and fruitful discussions of which recommendations were developed. These recommendations were compiled in an Outcomes Report that has been placed on your table. The delegates that participated in this event have put a lot time and effort into the development of this Outcomes Report and I therefore hope that we can finalise this document today. The final Outcomes Report will be circulated to the IORA Senior Officials (CSO) for their consideration in their meeting in October 2018 and subsequently to be submitted to the Council of Ministers for its endorsement.

In addition, as part of strengthening and improving the coordination and performance of the IORAG, the South African chapter of the IORAG recently conducted a series of regional outreach programmes to academics and researchers in some African Member States (Mauritius, Tanzania and Seychelles) as a pilot project to promote the South African model of the management of their participation, through the South African Chapter of the IORAG, in its preparations for the IORAG meetings. The visits to these countries were very successful and it is being considered to rollout this initiative to other Member States in the region in due course.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In view of the importance that South Africa, as IORA Chair, attaches to the voices of the Region's academics, through the publication of research papers and other academic contributions, specific attention has been given to supporting the Journal of the Indian Ocean Region (JIOR). In this regard South Africa has allocated an amount of US\$11,600 from its voluntary contribution to IORA for the annual membership of the Journal for 2018 and 2019 for the period that South Africa will Chair IORA.

Other developments since our Durban Meeting in October 2017, included the IORA Indian Ocean Conference on Blue Carbon, that was organised by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), on 19-23 March 2018 in Perth, Australia. This Conference which I attended recommended the inclusion of Blue Carbon Activity on the Agenda of the IORAG. It would be appreciated your views and I would encourage that we further give attention to this recommendation under the relevant agenda item.

It may be recalled that at our meeting in Durban in 2017 the issue of IORA Centers of Excellence received attention. Although we are highly appreciative of these offers, it was agreed that there is a need to evaluate the contributions made and the envisaged contributions to be made by these Centers of Excellence. This issue was further discussed at the TROIKA Meeting that was held in Mauritius in March 2018 where it was recommended that the IORAG establish an evaluation process for the acceptance of IORA Centers of Excellence.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new RCSTT Director, Mrs Tahereh Miremadi (who is present here) and we look forward to continuing to work together to advance science and technology in IORA. I am also pleased to inform the IORAG that the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies, Prof. Attri, who is present here today, will be presenting his report which includes his achievements and new proposals for consideration by the Academic Group.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, as you are aware the Blue Economy Handbook was launched yesterday after a dedicated and passionate teamwork by Prof. V.N. Attri, Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS) of IORA and myself. I wish to thank the Government of South Africa, the HSRC, the ISS and IORA for this important initiative and wish to personally congratulate all authors for their hard work for their contributions of the Blue Economy Handbook. Copies of the book is available.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the IORAG was launched it was based on the high value the founding fathers placed on the role of the academia of the region in the future of the Association. It is therefore expected from us to make

important contributions to IORA that will contribute to the wellbeing of the peoples of the Indian Ocean Region. The importance of IORA in the Indian Ocean has clearly been recognized. This fact is enhanced by the new applications for membership and Dialogue Partner status being received and the acknowledgement of the Association on the world stage. We have an opportunity to demonstrate to the CSO and COM our commitment to sustainable development and the future of this Organization.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, I deliver my high appreciation to your participation in the 24th IORAG meeting. I am looking forward to having fruitful discussion and meaningful deliberations in the spirit of collegiality.

Thank you.

IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.3

**Opening remarks by Dr Nomvuyo N. Nokwe, Secretary-General, IORA
24th IORAG meeting, Durban, South Africa, 3 August 2018**

Dr Narnia Bohler-Muller, Chair, IORAG, South Africa
Honourable Representatives of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA),
Dialogue Partners and Observer,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to convey our gratitude to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the South African Chapter of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (SA-IORAG) for the excellent arrangements made for the 24th IORAG meeting in Durban.
2. It is also my pleasure to see such a big gathering from the various Member States attending this meeting which reflects the importance and urgency we attach to reforming the IORAG to serve the Association as a vehicle for its sustainable development.
3. As you are aware, South Africa circulated the Proposal for Institutional Reform of the Indian Ocean Rim Association Academic Group and Member States had an opportunity to provide their comments and I hope that we will be able to finalise the document today.
4. It provides a strong mandate to the Secretary-General to ensure a transformed IORAG which delivers results on the ground, tailored to specific country needs to achieve the 2017-2021 Action Plan.
5. At the heart of these reforms is the recognition that a coherent, integrated strategic purpose and shared vision by IORAG is imperative for us to remain relevant and effective.
6. In addition to these reforms, you will note that South Africa hosted the Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) back to back with the IORAG with a view to strengthen academic, science and technology cooperation in IORA and that the IOD outcomes support and enhance the work of the IORAG. The IORA Action Plan 2017-2021, adopted during the Jakarta Summit, includes the institutionalisation of the forum as an annual mechanism for multi-sector and 1.5 track engagements. Special focus was on sustainable development of the Indian Ocean Rim Region. The IOD also had to decide on its institutionalization to become an official IORA mechanism. The outcomes from the IOD will be hereby submitted to the IORAG Meeting for consideration.
7. The demands and expectations of our Member States in IORA are high, and rightfully so. We therefore need to formulate an appropriate, workable and distinct strategy to take the IORAG forward for meeting the shared aspirations of peoples in the region and its challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. There is no doubt that some salient developments took place during my predecessor's tenure and I

would like to briefly mention some of them:

- a. The revitalisation of the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS) in 2014; the CIOS, who is present here, plays an important role in IORA. He has prepared a number of proposals and we will appraise these proposals in his report to be delivered during this meeting and I look forward to your comments on these proposals;
- b. In addition, we have the Journal for the Indian Ocean Region (JIOR) which was also proposed to be instituted as a periodical publication of IORAG. South Africa has joined with Australia and Indonesia in supporting the publication of JIOR. Our commitment was made last year at the 2017 COM meeting where the former Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, pledged a voluntary financial contribution to IORA of an amount of USD 266 000 (two hundred and sixty-six thousand US Dollars) and out of this amount, USD16 000 (sixteen thousand US Dollars) has been earmarked for the annual subscription fees for all Member States to receive the JIOR for the period of South Africa's Chair in 2018 and 2019; and
- c. The signing of the MOU between RCSTT and the Chinese institution, the Institute of Seawater Desalination and Multipurpose Utilization of the State Oceanic Administration on Desalination technologies. At the same time, I would like to thank RCSTT for its commitment in IORA. By the way, I would like to congratulate the new RCSTT Director, Dr Mrs Tahereh Miremadi (who is present here) and we look forward to continuing to work together to advance science and technology in IORA. I also wish to mention that I was in Iran where I was invited to the signing ceremony that took place on 24 February 2018 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran. RCSTT signed the MOU with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CSIR-CIMAP). I would like to congratulate all those whose dedication and efforts have contributed to the finalization of this MOU, which commits us to work together more closely towards one of our priorities, the promotion of science and technology in the Indian Ocean region. I would also like to thank the Government of India for hosting the Coordination Centre for Medicinal Plants at CSIR-CIMAP, Lucknow, India, and its generous funding support for the establishment of the Centre.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. The Academic Group indeed remains an important body within the framework of IORA. Your advice and insights will be critical to pave the way for IORAG to fulfill its potential in the coming decade.
10. I would also like to mention our Dialogue Partners who are present here. It will be most valuable for the AG to get their ideas, as well how to revitalise the Group. We will count on your engagement and support.
11. I have no doubt that under the chairmanship of South Africa the Group will be able to fulfill its mandate in moving towards becoming an Academic-only policy planning body.
12. I am confident that your deliberations will greatly benefit IORA's work in steering the region towards sustainable development.

Thank you.

IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.4

Agenda

1. WELCOME TO IORAG 2018

- 1.1 Welcome Address and Presentation of the IORAG Chairperson's Report (Chair)
- 1.2 Remarks by the Secretary-General, IORA
- 1.3 Outline of Arrangements and Adoption of the Agenda (Chair)

2. SPECIAL PROGRAMME

- 2.1 Consideration of the outcomes of the Fifth Indian Ocean Dialogue, Durban (Chair)
- 2.2 Institutional reform of the IORAG and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Standing Sub-Committee (Chair/South Africa)
 - 2.2.1 Consideration of previous IORAG reform decisions/documents/lessons learnt
- 2.3 IORA Action Plan (2017-2021): inputs/proposals on short-medium-long-term actions (Chair)
- 2.4 Status on proposed Academic Projects in line with the IORA priorities (South Africa)
- 2.5 Criteria for the establishment of IORA Centres of Excellence (Chair)
- 2.6 Outreach Programme to Member States to Strengthen the IOR Academic Group (Chair)
- 2.7 Report on IORA Indian Ocean Conference on Blue Carbon (19-23 March 2018) – IORAG Chair (Chair/Australia)
 - 2.7.1 Academics view on highlights of the 'Perth Recommendations'
 - 2.7.2 Discussion on interaction of IORAG with Blue Carbon Activity (Australia), and the new Working Group on Blue Economy (WGBE)

3. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND PROPOSAL BY IORA SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND CHAIR IN INDIAN OCEAN STUDIES

- 3.1 Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)
- 3.2 Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS)
 - 3.2.1 Status of Feasibility Report of the University Mobility in the Indian Ocean Rim (UMIOR)
 - 3.2.2 Status of the Indian Ocean Rim University (IORU)
 - 3.2.3 Status of the Work Plan of the CIOS

4. JOURNAL FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION – JIOR (Chair/ Australia)

5. IORA SPECIAL FUND (Secretariat)

- 5.1 Discussion on RCSTT application/budget
- 5.2 Other applications
- 5.3 Current IORAG role in Special Fund applications, and any suggested changes from revised TORs/reform

6. COUNTRY REPORTS ON PAST/CURRENT/FUTURE PROJECTS

- 6.1 Member States to inform the Group on progress on specific proposals, particularly where there is updated information to convey to the Meeting.

Australia

- 6.1.1 Update on Journal of Indian Ocean Region (JIOR) projects
- 6.1.2 Update on Blue Carbon Activity (Indian Ocean)

Bangladesh

6.1.3 Establishment of the Indian Ocean Technical and Vocational University

Comoros

6.1.4 Student and research exchange programme and the development of inter-University research in common interest fields

India

6.1.5 Study on the “Economic Aspects of Fisheries: A Framework for Regional Cooperation in IORA”

Indonesia

6.1.6 Business Innovation Centre in the Indian Ocean

6.1.7 Joint research activities on Coastal Health and Wealth in the Indian Ocean Region

Malaysia

6.1.8 Terms of Reference for the IORA Centre of Excellence for Maritime Affairs

Seychelles

6.1.9 Managed Network of Environmental Research in the Western Indian Ocean, Special Fund

Sri Lanka

6.1.10 Conference on ‘The Political – Economy of Maritime Asia in the Indian Ocean Rim’

6.1.11 Action Plan - Centre of Excellence on Ocean Sciences and Environment for engagement by Member States

Thailand

6.1.12 Report: International Training Workshop on Inland Aquaculture and Small-scale Inland Aquaculture Promotion during 4 - 17 March 2018

6.2 Projects to be withdrawn because of no progress (two years or more on the agenda with no action)

6.2.1 Indian Ocean Study Centre (IOSC)

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

8. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING REMARKS (Chair)

IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.5

5th Indian Ocean Dialogue Durban, South Africa 1-2 August 2018

DAY 1: 1 AUGUST 2018

PLENARY SESSION

Session 1: The role of academia in supporting IORA's goals

Outcomes:

1. Engage Academia to promote regional cooperation through integrated and systematic analysis of complex issues as well as science diplomacy.
2. Acknowledge the 1.5 track nature of the IOD as the interface to bridge the gap between governments, academia, private sector and civil society to identify common areas of interest.
3. Strengthen inclusive academic collaboration within and outside the region to facilitate evidence-based policy interface.
4. Develop emerging forms of innovative technologies in IORA priority and focus areas through research, capacity building and technology transfer.
5. Harness existing and emerging partnerships and projects as platforms for collaboration.
6. Encourage Member States to appoint IORAG focal points who would facilitate information, networking, contacts and knowledge sharing.
7. Drive science, technology and innovation through inclusivity, traditional knowledge and community participation.
8. Utilise research effectively to link the Blue Economy to the SDGs.
9. Develop a mechanism for sharing data, information and knowledge and formulate a matrix on research capacity in IORA Member States.

Session 2: Peace and Development in the Indian Ocean Rim

Outcomes:

1. Encourage each Member State to establish/strengthen an Academic focus group of maritime safety and security experts to identify and produce research which underpins the implementation of the IORA Action Plan leading to enhanced peace and development.
2. Engage with relevant international organisations and regional groupings dealing with maritime safety and security issues.
3. IOD will be a valuable mechanism for the proposed Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security in information sharing and research on maritime safety and security issues.
4. IORA Member States to emulate best practices of existing institutions in the region and beyond and to leverage existing information sharing platforms.

DAY 2: 2 AUGUST 2018

Session 3: Sustainable Development in the Indian Ocean Rim

Outcomes:

1. Strengthen trans-disciplinary approaches to the Blue Economy (BE) to fight poverty, achieve food security, environmental sustainability, gender equity, community resilience, quality job creation and inclusive growth.
2. Acknowledge science, technology and innovative thinking as an engine for ecologically sustainable development.
3. Enhance regional cooperation for development and transfer of smart technologies.
4. Consider setting up of regional technology watch groups in key sectors addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. Encouraging data and knowledge generation, accessibility, transparency, sharing, monitoring and adaptive management to respond to regional complex problems and challenges.
6. Encourage Member States to participate in international Blue Economy events to strengthen cooperation and awareness.

Session 4: Economic Development in the Indian Ocean Rim

Outcomes:

1. Explore an IORA trade mechanism for liberalising tariffs, non-tariff barriers, undertaking trade promotion measures for intra-regional trade and seamless regional connectivity.
2. Enhance and promote intra-regional trade for food security.
3. IORA to emulate best practices on identified areas from regional groupings such as ASEAN, APEC, AU etc.
4. Creating an enabling environment to promote women's economic empowerment.
5. Promote ease of doing business and investment through incentives such as an IORA Business Travel Card.

IOR/24AG/REP/18/1.6

**Summary Report of Activities and Work Plan for 2018 and 2019
IORA Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT)**

Presented To:

**The 24th Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORA)
Durban, South Africa, August 1-3, 2018**

FIRST: THE IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMMES (during the period under review)

- 1- Holding the Third Meeting of Medicinal Plants Focal Points of IORA- RCSTT hosted by National Agency of Drug and Food Control, Jakarta, Indonesia, on May 10 – 12, 2017
- 2- Visiting Germany to prepare for establishing IORA-RCSTT Coordination Centre on Health and Medical Technology to be hosted by Aachen University, Aachen, Germany, September 25, October 1, 2017.
- 3- Signing an MOU on 25 February 2018 of IORA-RCSTT's Coordination Centre on Medicinal Plants to be hosted by CSIR-CIMAP in India, Tehran-I.R. Iran.
- 4- Inaugurating of IORA-RCSTT Coordination Centre on Medicinal Plants on 7 May 2018 at the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) campus of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Lucknow, India.

SECOND: CURRENT PROGRAMMES:

- A. IORA-RCSTT Coordination Centre on Medicinal Plants at CSIR-CIMAP in Lucknow, India, proposed a Work Plan for 2018 consisting of** Organizing a training programme on "Diversity, documentation, Gene banking and Database for Medicinal Plants" for IORA Member Countries, November 25 to December 01, 2018 at "IORA-RCSTT Coordination Centre on Medicinal Plants", CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow- India.

The proposed next steps of the Work Plan of Coordination Centre for 2018-19 are as follows:

1. Organizing the 4th Meeting of Medicinal Plants Focal Points of IORA RCSTT preferably in cooperation with a volunteer country to host the meeting. (Eg. Sri Lanka- Oman- India)
2. Preparing database of Medicinal Plants according to the primary objective of the Centre
3. Coordinating exchange of visits among relevant scientists
4. Facilitating technical visits as per the mandate of the Centre
5. Ensuring local hospitality for annual meetings,

6. Running bilateral projects with other IORA countries in case IORA may help funding the relevant activities by agencies and scientists from Member States

In the sideline of the MOU signing ceremony for the IORA-RCSTT Coordination Centre on Medicinal Plants, Dr. Panda, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, India welcomed the idea of establishing more IORA RCSTT coordination centres in India and accordingly the IORA RCSTT suggested studying the possible terms and conditions for this kind of cooperation with the following Indian institutes:

- i. Indian Institute of Petroleum under CSIR
- ii. Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM)

Action to be taken: The CSO may endorse the new cooperation with India.

B. IORA-RCSTT's Coordination Centre on Health and Medical Technology to be hosted by Aachen University, Germany

Referring to the visit to the University of Aachen to explore the possibility of establishing IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre for Health and Medical Technology at Aachen University, the Aachen University has welcomed this proposal and decided to create a working group to develop certain procedure and guidelines to host this Coordination Centre.

Action to be taken:

In case this proposal is positively considered by the CSO Meeting, the IORA Secretariat is kindly requested to help pave the way for establishing the above Coordination Centre. This could be done in the light of promising statement of the Republic of Germany in the last meeting of COM in 2017, Durban, South Africa which indicated that Germany had agreed with IORA to support the IORA-Secretariat by setting up a two-year program of one Million Euros in capacity building activities in priority areas.

C. Establishing IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Water Science and Technology in South Africa

The Water Research Commission of South Africa has recently introduced Dr. Mamohloding Tihagale, Head of International Cooperation and Partnerships at the Water Research Commission, to liaise with IORA RCSTT and discuss the modalities of establishing the Centre. In the last correspondence received from WRC, it was indicated that WRC EXCO has approved hosting the Centre.

Action to be taken: It is expected that the IORA CSO may approve this programme and pave the way for signing MOU between the above parties.

D. IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Women Empowerment to be hosted by Alzahra University, I. R. Iran

This proposal was discussed in a meeting between H.E. Dr. Nokwe, the IORA Secretary-General and H.E. Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, the Vice President of Iran for Women and Family Affairs in Tehran, IR. Iran, on February 26, 2018 and the draft MOU for this purpose has been prepared and submitted to the IORA Secretariat for their consideration. The IORA Secretariat's

comments received and the final draft of MOU will be submitted to the upcoming meeting of IORA CSO.

Action to be taken: The CSO Meeting may principally agree with the subject so the final draft of MOU to be prepared and finalized for final approval.

THIRD: UPCOMMING PROGRAMMES

1- The 10th International Exhibition of Inventions, and the 3rd World Invention and Innovation Forum (IEI & WIIF 2018), Foshan, China, on 13-15 September, 2018

These meetings are to be organized by China Association for Inventions (CAI) in cooperation with IOR RCSTT.

The participants from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners have been invited to bring in successful cases and experiences, the state-of-the-art in artificial intelligence, civil-military integration, new technologies and new products, environment and new energy, for example, with their implications for economic growth and creative ways and organizational expertise to promote inventions and innovations. Delegation from each country will be offered one free booth in the events.

2- The Workshop on Effects of Climate Change on the Marine Environment of the Indian Ocean (November 2018)

This workshop is to be organized in cooperation with the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST) and Iranian National Institute for Oceanography and Atmospheric Science (INIOA)

The Special Fund Application Forms for receiving partial contribution from Special Fund has been submitted to the IORA Secretariat and subsequently was circulated among the Member States for their kind consideration.

3-The Workshop on Salts and Chemicals Extraction from Saline Waters for IORA Countries, in 2018

This workshop was proposed by the IORA-RCSTT Coordination Centre on Desalination Technology, ISDMU, Tianjin, China

The Special Fund Application Forms for receiving partial contribution from Special Fund has been submitted to the IORA Secretariat and subsequently was circulated among the Member States for their kind consideration.

FOURTH: PROGRAMMES UNDER CONSIDERATION:

1. **Considering to establish a policy research unit, including a specialized library and publication section.** This Unit will carrying out an ex-post evaluation of the RCSTT's activities (2008-2018) based on its objectives and mandated tasks referred to in the MOU and other official documents of IORA. The focuses of the evaluation will be on the RCSTT's operational and strategic direction and the way it engages with its stakeholders. The evaluation will clarify the strong as well as the weak points in its strategy and work plan with a view to further aligning this Agency with its changing environment. It should help broaden our understanding about what a specialized agency has to do to strengthen the knowledge network in the region and how to share this knowledge with the IORA community.

2. **Establishing IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Climate Changes, Climate Events and Environment**

- To be hosted by Technology Development Council of Water Drought Erosion & Environment in cooperation with I.R. Iran Vice–Presidency for Science and Technology (the draft MOU is being prepared and will be submitted to the next meeting of IORA CSO for approval.)

3. **IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Renewable Energies,**

- To be hosted by the Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für Materialien und Energie (HZB), Germany

The Embassy of Republic of Germany in Iran has introduced the above institute for this purpose and close consultations are in process to finalize an MoU on establishment of the Coordination Centre.

4. **Establishing IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Ocean Management and Marine Technology Indonesia (yet to be Finalized)**

This activity is under consideration, including through coordination with Mr. Burhanuddin, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Maritime Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

5. **Establishing IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Genetic Resources, Agriculture and Food Security by Oman (Not Finalized)**

To be hosted by the Oman Animal & Plant Genetic Resources Center (OAPGRC)

6. **Establishing IORA RCSTT Coordination Centre on Maritime Transportation and environment Technology in Malaysia (Not Finalized)**

The Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA) had expressed its support to the proposed cooperation of for establishment of Maritime Institute of Connectivity with RCSTT. In

this regard, Malaysia was requested to provide further details on the same in due course.

FIFTH - IORA RCSTT SUGGESTIONS:

1. Establishing a Sub - Committee on Finance by IORA RCSTT Advisory Council to encourage the Member States providing financial contribution in the IORA RCSTT activities and programmes.
2. Providing the Directors of IORA Specialized Agencies with the same local hospitality by the host countries as provided to IORA Secretariat Directors attending the IORA events.
3. Following up on the funding of the three programmes of IORA RCSTT by IORA Special Fund as it was indicated in the the 22nd Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG), Jakarta, Indonesia, Wednesday, 12 October, 2016.

The above proposed actions may be endorsed by the IORA CSO and AG Meetings and the IORA Secretariat may take the necessary actions.