

**INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, PADANG, INDONESIA
23rd OCTOBER, 2015**

**OPENING STATEMENT FOR AMBASSADOR, BARRY FAURE, SECRETARY OF
STATE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPUBLIC OF
SEYCHELLES**

**Hon. Retno Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and chair of IORA,
Her Excellency, Nomaindiya Mfeketo , Deputy Minister of the Department of
International Relations and Cooperation, of the Republic of South Africa and co-chair of
IORA**

**Secretary General, Ambassador Bhagirath
Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

A very good morning to you all!

First and foremost, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Seychelles, I would like to thank our gracious host, the Government of Indonesia, for organizing this meeting here in beautiful Padang. We equally congratulate you on the assumption of chairmanship for IORA. Indonesia has much to offer the association and we are confident that you will take IORA to even greater heights.

A heartfelt thank you to Hon. Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia and former Chair of IORA. I am sure that many of my colleagues here will agree with me, that the performance of Australia as Chair, has been excellent. The support provided to this association has been pivotal in accelerating progress on so many fronts.

Last but not least, a warm welcome to the Federal Republic of Germany as a dialogue partner to IORA. With the vast expertise in many areas, a strategic partner such as Germany can unequivocally assist the region and pledge its support to the different collaborative initiatives. We look forward to having fruitful dialogues and exchanges with you.

Madam Chair,

The series of meetings leading to today, has seen the discussions of pertinent issues that are at the heart of our region. Issues that we all need to collectively tackle and address. To this end, I stand here today, affirming that Seychelles, as small as we may be, remains committed to IORA and is determined to be part of the team, ready to tackle and surmount these issues.

It was indeed our pleasure to host the IORA Tourism Ministerial meeting in November 2014 and the Women Economic Empowerment Workshop in August this year. We look forward to more exchanges through such events and encourage other member countries to engage actively in these initiatives, in the spirit of enhancing regionalism and bridging the distance between us.

Considering the gained momentum of IORA over the past two years, it is only fitting to focus our attention on regionalism enhancement and increasing interactions with dialogue partners. The progress made by this organization has indeed geared up member states to be more active

and involved with one another and it is evident that these efforts can only be increased if regionalism is promoted and given due consideration. It is after all, the essence of a regional grouping. Nonetheless, we are also recognizant of the fact that dialogue partners can also be major actors in our journey and that their contribution to our endeavors cannot go amiss.

Madam Chair,

Achieving our goals however, is easier said than done. The challenges are many and they transcend boundaries. They are complex in nature and often overlap with national interests. It is therefore, important, now more than ever, for us to look towards our common grounds as member states and attempt to mediate on our differences, with the aim of moving forward as a region.

As a small nation with limited resources and being party to multiple regional groupings, complementarity is of utmost importance. Therefore, as we embrace the enhancement of regionalism, let us be mindful about the many challenges that lie ahead and let us explore the pragmatic and realistic approaches that can best be applied to the Indian Ocean Rim.

I am confident, that through our discussions today, we will indeed move at least one step closer to our goal, as we seek to bring not only our minds together, but also our hearts, as member countries sharing a great ocean that physically divides but that could essentially be the exact medium that unites us.

May I take this opportunity to wish all distinguished ministers and delegates, a fruitful deliberation and may we move together towards prosperity as the Indian Ocean united countries.

I thank you Madam Chair