

**COUNTRY STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR**  
**of H.E Béatrice ATALLAH, Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**  
**Padang, Indonesia, 23 October 2015**

Madam Chair,  
Mrs. Deputy Chairperson,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Mr. Secretary-General  
Distinguished participants  
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely pleased to be among you in Padang on this 15<sup>th</sup> IORA Council of Ministers, just a few months after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Africa Summit that brought us together on Indonesia soil.

First of all, on behalf of the Malagasy government and myself, let me express my warm thanks to the Republic of Indonesia for the hospitality that we benefited from our arrival. I would like to commend the host country as well as IORA staff for the successful organization of this Council.

I also join the precedent speakers to congratulate the new Indonesian Chairmanship. I am fully convinced that Indonesian leadership, as Australians, will help defending our common interests.

Moreover, I seize this opportunity to express my congratulations to Somalia for its adhesion to the IORA family and to welcome the country.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the celebration of IORA 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Council allows us to look back on the past 20 years and put into perspective our challenges for the coming 20 years. For my part, I would say that the results are more than encouraging. During 20 years, IORA has served as a platform for strengthening and increasing multifaceted cooperation between Member States. The latter were able to identify the issues that are inherent in the Indian Ocean and to address them properly.

However, even though our achievements seem significant, one must remind that the road is still long as far as the themes we hold dear are concerned. This is why I join the Indonesian government's initiative aiming at adopting an "IORA Concord" that is in line with our ambitions. Echoing Indonesia, I am confident that Indian Ocean is called to play a leading role on this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, considering its immense natural resources as well as its geographical strategic location. We should keep in mind that Indian Ocean is one of the world's most disserved maritime routes, with fourth of global maritime traffic passing through.

That is why we need to join forces work together and carry loud the voice of the Indian Ocean so as to exempt our common maritime space from any kinds of threat and that it remains a preserved haven thanks to our combined determination.

With its five thousand kilometers coastline and more than one million square kilometers of Exclusive Economic Area which needs to be protected, Madagascar is aware of the role it has

to play in the field of maritime safety and security, maritime resources management and maritime environment protection.

The Malagasy Government is particularly glad to have signed, today, the Memorandum of Understanding on Research and Rescue Cooperation, proposed by Australian Government. I should also like to announce that by hosting the Regional Information Fusion Center, the Eastern and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean through Madagascar is now equipped with a tool for monitoring maritime information. The establishment of the center is part of the Eastern and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Maritime Security Program, which has been implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission. Like the other center based in Singapore, it is meant to make its contribution to securing maritime area at regional level.

I would like to take this opportunity, as a Chairperson of IOC Council, to express the wish for greater cooperation between the two organizations. Furthermore, you may be assured that Madagascar is ready to consider any form of cooperation that might derive from the center's operating, whether bilaterally or at regional level.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apart from the security dimension, Madagascar is firmly convinced of the role played by tourism as the cornerstone of its economic development. Therefore, the government has advocated an ambitious tourism policy which requires the implementation of standards to tourism infrastructure in the Great Island.

In this respects, Madagascar would wish to benefit from the exchanging and sharing of experience programmes through IORA.

Moreover I would like to emphasize the need to strengthen maritime and space connectivity between Member States. It is a prerequisite or at least an asset to the development of exchanges in general, and to tourism in particular, in the region.

In this context, I welcome Sultanate of Oman's initiative on the way to conduct the phase II of the study on tourism development for IORA. In my opinion, the recommendations issued by the Secretariat constitute, a realistic and relevant starting point, notably with regards to the promotion of intra-regional tourism and the "Business Travel Card" concept with a view to mutual knowledge of our people.

The operationalization of such Travel Card will, in addition, intensify the exchanges between our countries, which still remain modest. It is a serious track to be tapped in order to strengthen regional cooperation, which has an important leverage effect.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude my remarks, I should express my gratefulness to IORA member states regarding the initiatives taken in order to reduce disparity between Member States. I am referring, in particular, to IORA Sustainable Development Programme (ISDP), endorsed during the 14<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers in Perth, Australia, which enabled some countries such as Madagascar, to benefit from preferential treatment regarding access to the Special Funds.

Madagascar appreciates the efforts being made by our Association, and would therefore wish to reiterate its commitment to the realization of the major principles and objectives of IORA, and to be more involved in our Organization activities.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Let me now address Mr. Secretary-General.

Mr. Secretary-General, dear Colleague, I would like to personally congratulate you for your involvement and tenacity in your quest for better IORA visibility. I would also like to express my warm thanks to the Secretariat team for their impeccable work and their unfailing support.  
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the occasion of this Council, Australia has handed over the Presidency of IORA to Indonesia. I very much wish to pay tribute to Australia for its dynamism and innovation during the past two years. It indeed brought a new breath to our Organization. Moreover, I am confident that Indonesia will follow this vitality impulse and hold high the banner of IORA.

To conclude, I would like to express the hope that this Council gives us the necessary fresh impetus to much greater future achievements.

Long live our cooperation!  
Long live IORA!

Thank you.