

**Indian Ocean Rim Association**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers**  
**Padang, October 23, 2015**

Ambassador Corinne Breuzé  
Head of the French delegation

Excellencies,

I would like to thank the Government of Indonesia for their invitation, their warm welcome and for the excellent organisation of this 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of IORA Council of Ministers, which France is very pleased to attend / I am very pleased to attend in the name of Minister Laurent Fabius.

With more than one million French citizens living in the South-West of the Indian Ocean, France is definitely an Indian Ocean Rim State. As such, France became a full member of the Indian Ocean Commission in 1986. France will also take the chair of the IOC at the beginning of next year.

I am glad to be here in Padang, together with Mr Benjamin Thomas, Deputy Director for Regional Cooperation. The French region of La Réunion, the most populated of French overseas territories, is indeed very active in the Indian Ocean area. La Réunion has not only developed mutually fruitful relations with neighboring countries in Africa, but also with other member States of IORA in Asia and Australia. Its population and its cultural heritage are representative of the diversity of the people of the Indian Ocean.

France has contributed actively to the international efforts to strengthen peace and security in the Indian Ocean, and is fighting today piracy, trafficking and terrorism. Regrettably, no region of the world can consider itself as safe. We have to be united to face that risk.

Today, France endeavours to work with the IORA and all its members, in order to face common challenges together, such as economic growth, maritime security, the preservation of biodiversity and, of course, the fight against climate change which is a particular threat for all the IORA coastal countries. In this perspective, your participation at the COP21 summit in Paris, in just over a month, will be essential for its success.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, for all these reasons, I would be grateful to IORA member states to consider the possibility for France to become a full member of the Association.

Please let me stress and acknowledge the great work done by Australia during its presidency of the IORA the last two years. We are looking forward to working closely with the IORA and its new Indonesian Chair in the future.

Thank you for your attention.