

**REMARKS BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS DR  
MOHAMAD MALIKI OSMAN AT THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA) 15TH  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING (COMM) ON 23 OCTOBER 2015 AT MERCURE HOTEL  
PADANG IN PADANG, INDONESIA**

Excellencies;

Distinguished colleagues;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. I am delighted to be here with you today for the 15<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers Meeting. I would like to thank Ibu Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Indonesian Government for the kind hospitality and warm welcome.
2. I wish to congratulate Indonesia and South Africa on assuming their respective posts as Chair and Vice-Chair of IORA for 2015 to 2017. Singapore is confident that Indonesia will ably lead IORA forward and into its 20<sup>th</sup> year, and is committed to supporting Indonesia's Chairmanship.
3. I also wish to acknowledge the excellent work done by Australia. Under Australia's able leadership and vision, in particular from Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, focused policy and strategic discussions have been held in six priority areas. Australia's tenure as Chair has helped bring into sharper focus a timely and important topic – the "Blue Economy" and the sustainable development of ocean economies, which has helped to give the group a clearer sense of direction.
4. Singapore would also like to join other delegations in extending a warm welcome to the Federal Republic of Somalia as IORA's 21<sup>st</sup> member, and the Federal Republic of Germany as IORA's seventh Dialogue Partner. We look forward to working closely with you, and for your valuable contributions to the development of IORA.
5. It is significant that this year's Council of Ministers Meeting is being held in Padang, Indonesia. Located on the western coast of Sumatra, Padang sits on the edge of the vastness of the Indian Ocean. Convening this meeting on the eastern side of the Indian Ocean gives us a clearer appreciation of its importance and limitless potential. It is also interesting that the newly appointed Vice Chairman, South Africa, sits on the opposite western edge of the vast Indian Ocean from where we are at present.

Distinguished colleagues,

6. I would like to mention two brief points. First, the Indian Ocean presents both opportunities and challenges. From the eastern side to the western edge and back, as the third largest ocean covering 13.4 percent of global oceanic resources, the Indian Ocean is an important source of economic livelihood for the roughly two billion people living in the Rim. The Indian Ocean also carries 80 percent of the world's sea borne trade, making it crucial for shipping-related industries. Therefore when considering this potential, we ought not to neglect the numerous challenges, and should work together to overcome them and find sustainable solutions based on established rules and norms.
7. Just last month, in September 2015, the United Nations recognised the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources as one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This comes as a timely and appropriate affirmation of IORA's focus on the "Blue Economy".
8. Second, greater cooperation between member states and dialogue partners in IORA can help to positively enhance the potential of countries in the Indian Ocean Rim region, and to help each other promote sustainable practices. To this end, we should look into how both member states and dialogue partners can pool together their respective strengths to further these goals.

9. As a small island nation, Singapore will continue to do its part to help share our experiences with IORA members in areas such as maritime and port development through the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). We are also open to collaborating with other member states and dialogue partners to enhance capability building within IORA.
10. On that note, I would like to wish Indonesia every success in chairing IORA, and look forward to a meaningful exchange of opinions and views on how we can take IORA further ahead. Thank you.

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