

Country Statement
By
Hon. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, State Minister of Foreign Affairs

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express the United Arab Emirates' appreciation to Indonesia for the warm hospitality provided to our delegation here in Padang.

I believe Indonesia's chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association will be a successful one, and I am confident that great strides will be made in the next two years.

I would also like to thank Australia for its successful chairing of the Association.

Under Australia's leadership, the Association's efforts to strengthen Indian Ocean integration has been enhanced significantly.

And I would like to congratulate the Federal Republic of Somalia for joining IORA as the 21st member state, and to extend a warm welcome to the Federal Republic of Germany for joining as the 7th dialogue partner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Association must continue to play a central role in further integrating a region of roughly two billion people and to find common solutions to common problems.

We must keep our focus on maritime safety and security, disaster risk-management and fisheries management.

We must also strengthen cooperation on trade and investment, science and technology, tourism and cultural exchanges.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for Indonesia's initiative toward an IORA Concord to be adopted at an IORA Summit in March 2017 in Indonesia to deepen intra-regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean.

The UAE welcomes the continued participation of dialogue partners and the acceptance of new members, while also enhancing the institutional infrastructure necessary...to bring our governments, economies and cultures closer together.

To this end, the UAE has played a major role as a trade and economic hub to the region and beyond.

A key factor in this success has been our Government's liberal economic agendas and our willingness to cooperate with the wider region.

As such, we look forward to hosting the Second Economic and Business Conference in Dubai in April 2016, to promote increased economic integration throughout the region.

To ensure our prosperity, the UAE is committed to maintaining open sea lines of communication and enhancing safety and security in the Indian Ocean.

That is why the UAE has taken an active role in bilateral and multilateral initiatives to improve maritime security in the Indian Ocean, including the IORA, the UAE Counter-Piracy Conference, the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and building capacity of developing countries of the Indian Ocean Rim, such as Somalia.

Thanks in large part to the contributions of the International community, the dedicated effort to reduce piracy in the western Indian Ocean has resulted in a significant improvement in maritime security.

However, despite notable successes against piracy in the western Indian Ocean, the region as a whole continues to face a range of security threats, including terrorism, armed robbery at sea, and trafficking in weapons, drugs and people.

To successfully confront these threats requires cooperation...not only between the region's governments...but also with private industry and international institutions.

Beyond the field of security, the UAE has sought to find viable solutions to the environmental challenges facing our region.

The impact of climate change is becoming increasingly visible throughout our region.

From extreme weather events to ocean acidification, the UAE supports all efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The forthcoming new legal framework on climate change to be agreed at COP 21 will be an important success factor for realizing the "Blue Economy".

In the UAE's view, renewable energy plays a critical role in both mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as providing socio-economic benefits of many island and coastal countries.

The UAE is very pleased with the successful First IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conference held in Mauritius in September 2015, and looks forward to welcoming you to the Second Blue Economy Summit on 19 January 2016 during Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week.

The UAE will also be hosting the annual AquaME, the Middle East's largest trade summit dedicated to aquaculture in March 2016, to which all IORA members are cordially invited.

Ladies and gentlemen...The UAE believes that the Indian Ocean Regional Association has a bright future, and we hope that the meetings held over recent days will inspire us all to further our cooperation and to ensure that we meet our ambitious goals and aspirations.

Thank you.