

Statement by  
Hon. Marie Joseph Noel-Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade  
Republic of Mauritius  
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Madam Chair,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished guests, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me, at the outset, extend my sincere thanks to the Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to me in Padang. I seized this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations and expression of support to Indonesia as the Incoming Chair.

Our organization has, over the past few years, enlarged its scope of activities to cover renewable energy, strategic stability, maritime security and ocean development. Such initiatives have from the point of view of Mauritius significantly revitalized IORA.

I fully trust that Indonesia, as the Incoming Chair, will further enhance cooperation in the IORA Region.

Excellencies,

Our region is endowed with vast resources, technological know-how, human capital and more importantly, the determination of our Member States to move ahead and take IORA to greater heights.

It is a matter of unleashing the dynamic complementarities among ourselves in areas where we can combine our efforts, trade, academic cooperation and ocean development.

The Indian Ocean region, as you are aware, constitutes a significant market and is a key player in global trade. It is expected that the forthcoming IORA Training Workshop on Enhancing the contribution of Preferential Trade Agreements to Inclusive and Equitable Trade, scheduled in Mauritius from 4 to 6 November 2015 will be a stepping stone for reviving reflections on strong trade agenda for the IORA.

On the academic front, the proposed IORA Virtual Open University aims at providing capacity-building opportunities in the six priority areas of cooperation, already agreed in Bengaluru in November 2013. It can play a key role in human resources development. As with any education project, the returns are discernible in the longer term. The IORA Virtual University has the potential to bring long term spillover benefits to the IORA region in terms of creating jobs and enhancing mobility.

Ocean development is the third area I wish to highlight. The Indian Ocean is one common element that binds all IOR Member States. The First IORA Blue/Ocean Economy Conference held in Mauritius from 2-3 September 2015 initiated high-level discussions on four priority areas namely fisheries and aquaculture, renewable ocean energy; offshore hydrocarbons and seabed minerals; seaport and shipping. Ocean Development is now well entrenched as a prominent area of cooperation for the next decade and even after that.

Thus Mrs Chairperson, concludes the country statement of Mauritius

I thank you all for your kind attention.