Remarks by H.E. Retno L.P. Marsudi
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
Chair of the 15th Council of Ministers Meeting
Friday, 23 October 2015, Padang, Indonesia

Excellencies Ministers from IORA Member Countries,
Honorable Julia Bishop, Outgoing Chair of IORA and Foreign Minister of Australia,
Honorable Nomaindia Mfeketo, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa,

Your Excellency K.V. Bhagirath, Secretary General of IORA
Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to welcome all of you today in Padang.
Let me first convey the highest appreciation to Australia for the able stewardship of our Association over the past two years.

We are here today to build on the achievements made under previous Chairmanships… to seize existing opportunities and to address our common concerns and interests in the Indian Ocean.
As an archipelagic country, Indonesia understands the importance of the ocean and maritime cooperation.

There is no doubt that the Indian Ocean serves as one of the main crossroads of global trade, investment and energy flows.

A wealth of unexplored biodiversity and mineral resources lies underneath it.

And most importantly, the Indian Ocean will define the future of global cooperation.

Our cooperation in IORA has enabled us to tap the existing potentials, open opportunities for economic interaction, forge mutually beneficial cooperation, and better serve the needs of our peoples.

Given the vital importance of the Indian Ocean to us all, it is imperative that we sustain and manage peace, security and stability in this region.

We must ensure sustainable growth and balanced development there.

We must effectively address non-traditional security challenges such as piracy, IUU fishing, trafficking in persons, illicit drugs trade, natural disasters and climate change.

For that reason, Indonesia has chosen the theme of “Strengthening Maritime Cooperation in a Peaceful and Stable Indian Ocean” for its Chairmanship.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Through the six priority areas of cooperation, we have been able to promote sustained growth and balanced development for IORA member states.

As Chair of IORA, Indonesia is committed to working with all members to create and implement a program of activities for this purpose.

We will collaborate closely with South Africa as the Vice-Chair in pursuing projects and initiatives to enhance our collective capacities, bolster our institutions and strengthen regionalism in the Indian Ocean.

In addition to convening the IORA Workshop on Cultural Tourism, Indonesia has proposed:

- Establishing an IORA Business Innovation Centre; and
- Holding an international symposium on learning from IORA's past and charting a course for the future.

Indonesia is also pleased to host the third Indian Ocean Dialogue in 2016 and building up from the existed recommendation in order to enhance maritime cooperation.

The IOD will be held together with the 2nd Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo 2016, International Fleet Review 2016 and 15th Western Pacific Naval Symposium in April 2016 in Padang.

We will also work together to strengthen blue economy cooperation and realize the commitments of the first IORA Blue Economy Conference last September. Indonesia looks forward to hosting the 2nd Blue Economy Conference in 2017.

Above all, we must all together strengthen our regional architecture to ensure stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean.

We must reinforce regional mechanisms to translate potentials into reality and answer numerous challenges.

A framework that can reflect the dynamics and vitality of the region as well as create new opportunities for our members.

Our agreement on the proposed IORA Concord will signal our joint commitment to strengthening regional cooperation.

In addition, we need to discuss how to elevate our engagement with dialogue partners further towards concrete outcomes.

During this afternoon's retreat, we will share with one another our ideas and views on how we will move forward on those two important topics.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am glad that cooperation among academics through the IOR-AG and the business communities in the IOR-BF continues to grow bringing our peoples closer together.

In this regard, I am pleased to share with you that Indonesia's local governments along the Indian Ocean rim have made a big stride and established the Indonesia-Indian Ocean Rim Local Governments Forum (IOLGF).

Today it is a local initiative, but we hope it can grow into one that will include members from other IORA countries.

To conclude, I hope we can have a fruitful day of deliberation and come up with robust commitments to move our cooperation forward as well as build a strong architecture for the region.

I thank you.