

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

Indian Ocean Conference on Blue Carbon

Perth Recommendations on Blue Carbon Management

We, the representatives from both scientific and government institutions of the Member States of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), namely Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, and United Arab Emirates;

Welcoming the participation of the Dialogue Partners present at this meeting, namely China, Egypt, United Kingdom, and United States of America;

Grateful for the participation of the Commonwealth Climate Access Hub, the Center for International Forestry Research, and Blue Ventures;

Recalling the

- Perth Principles, IORA's first Ministerial Declaration regarding the sustainable use of the Indian Ocean and its resources, from the Council of Ministers' meeting (Perth, 2013);
- discussions and Declarations of the First and Second IORA Ministerial Blue Economy Conferences (Mauritius 2015 and Jakarta 2017 respectively);
- IORA Action Plan 2017-2021, adopted at the IORA Leaders' Summit (Jakarta 2017);
- The Jakarta Concord, adopted by Leaders at the IORA Leaders' Summit (Jakarta 2017); and
- The Durban Communique, of the 17th IORA Council of Ministers meeting (2017);

Recognising the important role of coastal blue carbon ecosystems – mangrove, tidal marsh and seagrass – in climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and other ecosystem services;

Acknowledging with concern that some coastal blue carbon ecosystems in the region have been lost or degraded, through natural or human activities;

Recognising the essential role that oceans, coastal and marine resources play in human well-being and the importance of coastal blue carbon ecosystems to achieving sustainable development through the blue economy;

Acknowledging the urgent need to take action on climate change and the important link between enhanced coastal blue carbon resource management and greenhouse gas emission reductions, as well as building resilience to the effects of climate change for all countries including within the Indian Ocean region;

Reaffirming the need for recognition and acceptance by all stakeholders of international conventions and instruments related to sea and ocean activities, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and

Reaffirming support for the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other relevant international environmental agreements including Sustainable Development Goal 14, support for the International Partnership for Blue Carbon, and other initiatives that promote the sustainable use of ocean and coastal resources for climate change and other ecosystem services.

Hereby state:

We, the participants have reached a common understanding to recommend to our respective governments and scientific communities to:

1. Work together toward a common understanding of coastal blue carbon, identify a set of priorities for its protection, restoration and management and advocate for wider recognition of the importance of these issues;
2. Coordinate and support efforts to share information, science, expertise, best practice, lessons learnt and policy with the IORA Academic Group, along with other institutions which play a pivotal role in encouraging and coordinating such research in the region;
3. Further develop collaboration among IORA Member States, Dialogue Partners and other relevant regional and international organisations, including by partnering with private industry and the not-for-profit sector;
4. Implement evidence-based policy to effectively protect, restore and manage coastal blue carbon for climate action, biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation, gender equity, social and economic development;
5. Consider joining and encourage others to join the International Partnership for Blue Carbon (IPBC) and to access this platform for lessons sharing amongst a large network of international policy makers, technical experts, researchers and practitioners;
6. Consider making and facilitating pledges of voluntary commitments and regional engagement in blue carbon, including through IORA's Blue Economy Working Group, and strengthening partnerships with international finance bodies to support coastal blue carbon ecosystem management and international climate policy;
7. Welcome Australia's planned regional coastal blue carbon assessment activity, to be undertaken by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in cooperation with IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners until June 2019, and CSIRO's undertaking to share the resulting data, knowledge and expertise; and
8. Share relevant information annually with the IORA Council of Ministers Meeting (COM), through IORA's Academic Group and IORA's Blue Economy Working Group as agreed, as well as through existing national mechanisms and scientific communities as appropriate.

Perth, Australia
23 March 2018