



19th IORA Council of Ministers Meeting

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Why in News

Recently, the **19th Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting** was held in **Abu Dhabi (UAE)** under the theme of **“Promoting a Shared Destiny and Path to Prosperity in the Indian Ocean”**.

- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has assumed the position of **Chair** while **Bangladesh** will be Vice-Chair of the IORA for the period of **2019-2021**.
South Africa was the chair for the period of **2017-2019**.
- The meeting was attended by **IORA’s 22 Member States and nine Dialogue Partners**.

Key Points

- It is the **only ministerial-level organization** that focuses purely on the Indian Ocean region, bound together by growing economic and trade linkages and a shared interest in promoting prosperity, peace and stability.
- In **2014, India** hosted the **first Indian Ocean Dialogue in Kochi, Kerala** bringing together officials, academics and other strategic thinkers to discuss **six broad themes** – the geo-political contour of the Indian Ocean Region, maritime security challenges, strengthening regional institutions, information sharing, cooperation in disaster relief and management, and economic cooperation. The Kochi Consensus was adopted as its outcome document.
 - The **Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) is a flagship initiative** of IORA, with its origins in the 13th Council of Ministers meeting, held in November 2013 in Perth, Australia.
 - The **sixth edition of IOD will be held on 13 December 2019 in New Delhi, India**.

India’s Role

- India continues to promote its official policy of “**coordination, cooperation and partnership**” in the regional maritime domain.
- As coordinator to the priority area on disaster risk management, India has **published guidelines for IORA**. It has also urged partners to join the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** launched at the **UN in September 2019**.
- India has been **trying to emerge as the net provider of information** in the IOR and in that direction it created the **Information Fusion Centre** located in **Gurugram** to assist member countries of IOR with real-time crisis information. **Bangladesh, Mauritius, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Seychelles** have been part of the information support structure of India.
- Indian policy takes into consideration that IOR is not an India-run maritime domain and that is reflected in the government's **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) programme**, which **aims to turn the region more inclusive**.

Indian Ocean Rim Association

- It was **established in 1997** and is a regional forum that seeks to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation through a consensus-based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach.
- **IORA has 22 member states**, including Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE, and Yemen.
- Its **Secretariat is based in Cyber City, Ebène, Mauritius**.
- It manages, coordinates, services and monitors the implementation of policy decisions, work programmes and projects adopted by the member states.
- The association gains importance by the fact that the Indian Ocean carries half of the world's container ships, one-third of the world's bulk cargo traffic and two-thirds of the world's oil shipments.
- It is a lifeline of international trade and transport and the Indian ocean region is woven together by trade routes and commands control of major sea-lanes.

Source: TH