



REPORT

Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference

17-18 June 2019

Capital Pearls Hotel, Durban, South Africa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emerging opportunities, innovative partnerships, new technologies and empowering women – these were hot topics at the Indian Ocean Rim Association's (IORA's) *Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference* on 17-18 June 2019 at the Capital Pearls Hotel in Durban, South Africa. Hosted by South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the conference welcomed 220 participants from 19 IORA Member States and six Dialogue Partners. Participants attended from chambers of commerce and industry, trade ministries, investment agencies, civil society, and intergovernmental organisations.

On 17 June 2019 a full day plenary conference debated emerging opportunities and challenges to modernise trade and investment in the Indian Ocean Rim region. 18 June 2019 saw official meetings of three IORA bodies - the Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI), the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), and the Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWEE). These meetings have been reported separately. On 18 June the International Chamber of Commerce also held a side event marking the ICC's centenary year.

The Conference was **opened** with a welcome address from Mr Siphosiso Zikode, Deputy Director General of DTI, who highlighted South Africa's progress as IORA Chair in revitalising Trade and Investment Facilitation as a priority area within IORA. Dr Nomvuyo Nokwe, IORA Secretary-General, gave opening remarks that situated the conference as IORA's latest initiative in promoting regional economic and social cooperation, a vision imparted by one of IORA's founding fathers, former President Nelson Mandela.

The **first session** focussed on emerging trade and investment opportunities in the region. Discussions revolved around the importance of innovative partnerships, such as between the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Lockheed Martin; communication between business and government around shared challenges such as Non-Tariff Barriers; and better understanding trading patterns and needs, particularly trading complementarities and maritime infrastructure. The **second session** focussed on trade facilitation, which highlighted the importance of integration among IORA Member States to creating value chains, and government collaboration with the private sector in designing regulation. The WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement was presented as an asset for IORA in energising efforts to cut red tape.

The **third session** identified more specific tools to promote regional trade. These included new ways of sharing trading information securely, reliably and quickly, based on blockchain technology being trialled in Australia and elsewhere. The Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) profiled a project supported by IORA to strengthen dispute resolution networks in the Indian Ocean Rim region. The **fourth session** focussed on tools to promote women's economic empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim region. UN Women presented on the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), which are a focus of IORA's efforts to promote economic empowerment. The International Trade Centre discussed the SheTrades Initiative, which provides trade-related technical assistance to women entrepreneurs, business support organisations and policy makers, and SheTrades Outlook, an online policy tool to improve the policy ecosystem for women in trade.

Key takeaways – ideas, challenges and trends – were captured during the conference and shared with participants, and are attached. Conference outcomes have since informed new and ongoing work plans for the WGTI, IORBF and WGWEE, which will take forward Conference outcomes within IORA as the association injects new energy into facilitating trade and investment facilitation in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

This report was compiled by the IORA Secretariat, based in Mauritius. Questions and follow-up may be directed to hq@iora.int. A list of participants is included to encourage networks and partnerships established during the conference to continue to grow. A list of presentations available online is also attached.

Session 1: Opportunities and Challenges for Trade and Investment in the Indian Ocean Rim

Session 1 was chaired by **Ms Judi Nwokedi**, Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), Chief Operating Officer Tourvest Pty Ltd, Former AREVA Senior Vice President and focused on trade and investment opportunities in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

1. **Mr Chris Woods** of DTI, South Africa, presented on South Africa's perspective on trade and investment in the region. He highlighted structural incompatibility as a challenge mentioning that similar commodities are produced in the region thus reducing the incentives for neighbour-to-neighbour trade within IORA. He stressed the need to promote inclusive trade in the region and to examine the impact of logistics and freight. With reference to Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), he mentioned the need to thoroughly examine what NTBs exist in the region; which ones cause the main problems; and which ones can be easily addressed. Some of the initiatives suggested were: the implementation of a monitoring mechanism that identifies NTBs by means of allowing business to list complaints on a common platform and requires government departments to respond; improving the quality of trade data and statistics; building a network of trade facilitators among IORA Member States at a person to person, national contact point level; improving transparency by, for example, releasing import-rejection data; incentivising the behaviour of Special Economic Zones by encouraging dialogue amongst them; building awareness of a trade agenda through academic training and exchanges of young officials; and work to open up trade from landlocked countries which lie behind IORA Member States for the benefit of the entire region.
2. **Mr Jose Raul Perales** of the Centre for International Private Enterprise focused his presentation on three main challenges. First, the challenge of identifying and leveraging the complementarities between IORA economies, and identifying where regulatory integration could have a significant impact. Second, commercial infrastructure needed to be reinforced to meet changing demographics and trading patterns, as Sri Lanka and India have revolutionised their cabotage laws. Third, the power of non-traditional traders was yet to be unleashed. Women remained a small proportion of traders although data was scarce. He stressed the need to address gender specific barriers to make trade transformative, and to amplify public policy consultations.
3. **Mr Manish Singhal** of FICCI, India, gave an overview of FICCI's engagement with multiple stakeholders catalysing economic partnership across the globe. He highlighted the need to make the Indian Ocean region a shared development space based on open regionalism and a rule-based system. He discussed the different challenges such as heterogeneity, geographical spread, limited use of technology and lack of access to finances for SMEs in some IORA Member States. He then highlighted the opportunities that are available such as the abundant natural resources, large marine resources, large SME base which constituted an engine of growth and employment in the Indo-Pacific region. He stressed the importance of nurturing economic growth through creation of a start-up and innovation ecosystem, people to people connections through tourism and business facilitation through an online B2B portal for IORA Member States.

Interventions from the floor, including HE Professor Anil Sooklal, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa and IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) Chair, and the Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS) Prof. V.N. Attri, highlighted the need for IORA to learn from other success stories of regional trade and investment integration and facilitation around the world; for IORA Member States to support the WTO Reform process; to promote digital trade; take policy initiatives to contribute to the achievement of SDGs; and to collaborate with other partners such as UNCTAD.

Key Takeaways for Session 1:

1. Establish a business-to-government dialogue on Non-Tariff Barriers, including via the implementation of online feedback systems and greater information sharing by governments on how such barriers are being addressed.
2. Build networks of information exchange among IORA trade officials (particularly young officials via an 'IORA Trade Academy') on best practices and developments across the region.
3. Study how existing maritime infrastructure (e.g. ports, shipping capacity and containers and routes) in the region can be harnessed better to not just serve regional SMEs but also entice landlocked countries to bring goods to ports in IORA Member States.
4. Foster a system of innovation and growth in IORA, such as FICCI's partnership with Lockheed Martin.
5. Develop an integrated IORA Maritime Industry Strategy to unleash the potential of the ocean economy.
6. Need to be cognisant of complementarities between Member States, and the more limited flow of freight between Member States.
7. IORA Member States to facilitate regional economic cooperation and boost attractiveness to investors.

Session 2: Promoting Trade Facilitation

Session 2 was chaired by **Ms. Nola Watson**, Chairperson, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and focused on promoting trade facilitation in the Indian Ocean Rim region.

4. **Mr. Sunil Boodhoo**, Director, International Trade Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius presented a vision for trade and investment in IORA by 2025. Mr Boodhoo stressed the importance of one of the objectives of the IORA Charter being "to explore all possibilities and avenues for trade liberalisation, remove impediments to, and lower barriers towards, freer and enhanced flow of goods, services, investment and technology within the region". He discussed the study on Bilateral and Regional Trade and Investment related Agreements and Dialogues between Members States (Prof. V. N. Attri, Chair of Indian Ocean Studies, 2017) where he highlighted that trade integration among the IORA Member States was a key factor improving export diversification, enhanced competitiveness and the creation of value chains among IORA States. He mentioned some constraints and challenges such as perception and transparency, concentration risk, scalability, inadequate level of skills transfer, socio-political constraints and a lack of confidence in legal and financial institutions.

Mr Boodhoo stressed the need for the establishment of a legal framework to better promote trade, investment and economic cooperation within IORA. He suggested the adoption of a variable geometry approach and an inclusive and flexible process that would facilitate Member States' implementation as and when ready. In terms of future trends, he mentioned digitalisation, investment addressing food security and climate change, more focus on the healthcare and improving education leading to quality investment, moving more towards green investments and a more systematic rather than restrictive means of regulating financial flows leading to increased openness to trade in the region.

5. **Professor Peter Draper**, Executive Director, Institute for International Trade, The University of Adelaide (Australia) gave an overview of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) status and implementation issues for IORA Members. He mentioned that the multilateral trade regime is under intense

strain and that the TFA is the biggest recent success at the WTO. He highlighted that “red tape” and lack of transparency when moving goods across borders has long been a source of frustration in international trade and that one way of addressing it is by implementing the TFA. He provided snapshots of IORA Member States’ TFA commitments and discussed trade facilitation performance in economies of the region. He stressed the need to reflect on clearer correlation between TFA commitments and ease of doing business; accelerating TFA implementation; leveraging Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility plus bilateral Aid for Trade cooperation; and the need for IORA members and Dialogue Partners to coordinate capacity building and technical assistance efforts to meet these needs.

6. **Ms Valerie Picard**, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and Deputy Director, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF) gave an overview of the GATF’s work around the world. There were active GATF projects in two IORA Member States namely Kenya and Sri Lanka. She explained their unique approach to Trade Facilitation which is “co-creation” where governments and businesses are equal partners from start to finish. They also believe in leveraging private sector expertise and resources to make delivering reforms more efficient and cost-effective. She further discussed their work in Kenya and Sri Lanka in more detail. She said that Kenya is an important trade gateway to East African landlocked countries, yet traders and customs officials face lengthy and unpredictable formalities at borders. Therefore, the introduction of a fully automated, paperless risk-based pre-arrival process will speed up the clearance and release of goods, increasing predictability and reducing costs for customs and business. Sri Lanka is positioned in the centre of the Indian Ocean and at the crossroads of international shipping lanes, making it an ideal regional logistics hub. The GATF project will help develop the regulatory and operational framework for a multi-country consolidation hub, facilitating transit trade.
7. **Mr Stavros Nicolaou**, Senior Executive, Aspen Pharmacare presented on “Private Sector Perspectives on Trade Facilitation”. He first gave an overview of Aspen, leading multinational pharmaceutical company with a 20-year history. He discussed Aspen’s globally integrated value chain which includes the product pipeline development to the manufacturing and supply chain operation to commercialisation. He highlighted the importance of three components of effective trade facilitation; the first one is the need for regulatory certainty to ensure predictability in supply so that it may meet demand; the second is the need for collaboration between government and business in improving processes to take advantage of opportunities to springboard to meet current and emerging needs, and new opportunities, such as those presented by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA); and lastly, the implementation of measures to reduce non-tariff barriers such as unclear laws and inconsistent standards, to facilitate trade. IORA needed to move beyond dialogue and follow models such as BRICS in energising trade facilitation efforts and making those efforts relevant to businesspeople.

Key Takeaways for Session 2:

1. Consider mechanisms to address impediments to trade in goods, trade in services, and investment.
2. Accelerate implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, leveraging the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility and bilateral Aid for Trade with the support of developed IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners.
3. Partner with business in policymaking and implementation through new or existing public-private mechanisms (e.g. National Trade Facilitation Committees)
4. Establish an Annual Trade Dialogue to review trade developments and potential new initiatives within IORA, which can be fed into the IORBF.
5. IORA Member States to examine the potential of cooperation with the Global Alliance on Trade Facilitation, across the full spectrum of its potential assistance and existing projects (such as adopting risk management

strategies, reducing customs clearance times, examining pre-customs clearance systems, and establishing paperless trading).

Session 3: Tools for promoting regional trade

Session 3 was chaired by **Mr Manish Singhal**, Deputy Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, India and focused on specific tools for promoting regional trade.

8. **Mr Bryan Clark**, Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) presented on the “Trade Community System” (TCS). As Australia’s continued economic growth now depended largely on productivity improvements across economic sectors, the TCS was an effort to securely share trading information to make trading quicker, easier and more secure. The solution provided by ACCI is to link key supply chain information through blockchain technology. The presentation focused on three questions. The first on was whether the problem is worth solving? Mr Clark stated that mistakes made in non-digitised systems would cost up to \$450 per container and sum up to billions of dollars to customers per annum, therefore creating a secure digitised system between data and players would eventually solve the problem. Creating a blockchain where customers input their information once would be an advantage to them. Secondly, is it technically possible to solve? Lastly, can industry make the solution happen? The TCS pilot is demonstrating that the answers to these questions are yes.
9. **Mrs Anjana Khemraz-Chikhuri**, Deputy Registrar, MCCI Arbitration & Mediation Center, Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) presented on the ‘Creation of an IORA Centre of Excellence for Dispute Resolution’, a project of the MCCI supported by IORA’s Special Fund. Mrs Khemraz-Chikhuri started her presentation by explaining that the Indian Ocean is one of the world’s busiest trading zones. As such, disagreements and disputes related to a wide variety of business dealings and contracts often take place in the Region. Having a knowledge of arbitration and mediation as alternative means to resolve such disputes would lead to stronger trade and investment in the Region, since business operators need fast, efficient avenues for resolving their disputes. However, Mrs Khemraz-Chikhuri stated that there is a lack of skills and expertise, awareness and knowledge as well as collaboration between IORA Member States in the field. The project proposes to correct these weaknesses through training programmes in arbitration and mediation, a comparative study examining the use of ADR in IORA members states, with a specific focus on maritime trade disputes, and the setting up of a collaborative network among Member States to promote better knowledge and use of these Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods. From the inception of the program in September 2017 to its predicted end in December 2021, the project has gathered experts from Mauritius, Australia, India, South Africa and Singapore, and would soon be undertaking a detailed study of alternative dispute resolution practice in the Indian Ocean Rim region that would inform a new dispute resolution framework for the region.

Key Takeaways:

1. Consider adopting a trade community system on an open, secure and trusted platform.
2. This could include blockchain and the app market to filter information and create prototypes that will enable customers to better track and their information through designated databases.
3. Helping share knowledge on trade among IORA Member States.
4. Expand Member States’ commitment to Alternative Dispute Resolution systems (such as the project currently being run by the MCCI), in particular by considering the signature of relevant international conventions such as the UNCITRAL Model Law and the New York and Singapore conventions.

Session 4: Tools for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment

Session 4 was chaired by **Mr John Khainga Ndonji**, Principal Gender Officer, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender, Kenya and focused on Tools for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment.

10. **Ms Leigh Tomppert**, Coordinator, "Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim" project (supported by Australia, 2019-2021) presented on the UN Women/UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) as an effective tool for promoting women's economic empowerment. The WEPs are a set of seven principles through which businesses can analyse their own policies and practices and then tailor them to better advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Of the 2000 companies worldwide that have committed to the WEPs, 284 of these are based in Indian Ocean Rim countries. Ms Tomppert highlighted WEP 5, which focuses on enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women. She pointed out that investing in women-owned businesses and integrating them into corporate supply chains is smart economics. A number of actions that can be taken by the public and private sector to promote and implement this principle were highlighted, as well as a number of available tools to support the implementation of the WEPs and gender-responsive procurement. UN Women will launch a guidance note on analyzing trade agreements, policies and practices to ensure that they are gender responsive, do not negatively impact women workers and entrepreneurs, but rather support their equal engagement in global supply chains and benefits from trade.

11. **Dr Judith Fessehaie**, Programme Officer, International Trade Centre (ITC) presented on the #SheTrades Initiative, to connect 3 million women to the market by 2021 through 7 global actions along with web and mobile apps. The Initiative has already begun influencing the global agenda on trade and gender. Dr Fessehaie also shared the approach of trade-related technical assistance provided to women, business support organisations and policy makers.. A SheTrades project, had already been completed in IORA (involving Indonesia, Kenya, and Sri Lanka). #SheTrades is already present in 25 countries, and its objectives include:

- a. Increased business linkages between Women-owned Businesses (WoB) and buyers and investors from the region.
- b. Increased capacity of Business Support Organisations (BSO) to successfully address the needs of women-owned and women-run companies so they successfully explore international markets
- c. Increased awareness of buyers and investors of the potential benefits available in increasing their sourcing from women entrepreneurs.

Dr Fessehaie also presented SheTrades Outlook, a digital policy tool to support policy makers in improving their policy ecosystem for women in trade. It currently encompasses 25 countries, including several IORA members, and will be launched in 2020. SheTrades Outlook includes indicators related to trade policy, business environment, access to skills and finance, legal and regulatory framework, and cultural issues.

Key Takeaways:

1. The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) is one important tool that can support the private and public sector to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment through a set of seven key principles.
2. Investing in women-owned businesses and integrating them into corporate supply chains is both smart economics and a way to advance women's economic empowerment. UN Women will soon launch a guidance

note on measuring the gender impacts of trade agreements and integrating gender into trade policies to ensure gender equal results.

3. #SheTrades Outlook supports policy makers in assessing the policy ecosystem for women in trade, identifying priority for policy reforms, and make comparisons across countries and time.

IOR/WGTIC1REP/19/01

KEY TAKEAWAYS – IDEAS, CHALLENGES & TRENDS

Session 1: Opportunities and Challenges for Trade and Investment in the Indian Ocean Rim region

1. Establish a business-to-government dialogue on Non-Tariff Barriers, including via the implementation of online feedback systems and greater information sharing by governments on how such barriers are being addressed.
2. Build networks of information exchange among IORA trade officials (particularly young officials via an 'IORA Trade Academy' on best practices and developments across the region.
3. Study how existing maritime infrastructure (e.g. ports, shipping capacity and containers and routes) in the region can be harnessed better to not just serve regional SMEs but also entice landlocked countries to bring goods to ports in IORA Member States.
4. Foster a system of innovation and growth in IORA, such as FICCI's partnership with Lockheed Martin.
5. Develop an integrated IORA Maritime Industry Strategy to unleash the potential of the ocean economy.
6. Need to be cognisant of complementarities between Member States, and the more limited flow of freight between Member States.
7. IORA Member States to facilitate regional economic cooperation and boost attractiveness to investors.

Session 2: Promoting Trade Facilitation

1. Consider mechanisms to address impediments to trade in goods, trade in services, and investment.
2. Accelerate implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, leveraging the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility and bilateral Aid for Trade with the support of developed IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners.
3. Partner with business in policymaking and implementation through new or existing public-private mechanisms (e.g. National Trade Facilitation Committees)
4. Establish an Annual Trade Dialogue to review trade developments and potential new initiatives within IORA, which can be fed into the IORBF.
5. IORA Member States to examine the potential of cooperation with the Global Alliance on Trade Facilitation, across the full spectrum of its potential assistance and existing projects (such as adopting risk management strategies, reducing customs clearance times, examining pre-customs clearance systems, and establishing paperless trading).

Session 3: Tools for promoting regional trade

1. Consider adopting a trade community system on an open, secure and trusted platform.
2. This could include blockchain and the app market to filter information and create prototypes that will enable customers to better track and their information through designated databases.
3. Helping share knowledge on trade among IORA Member States.

4. Expand Member States' commitment to Alternative Dispute Resolution systems (such as the project currently being run by the MCCI), in particular by considering the signature of relevant international conventions such as the UNCITRAL Model Law and the New York and Singapore conventions.

Session 4: Tools for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment

1. The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) is one important tool that can support the private and public sector to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment through a set of seven key principles.
2. Investing in women-owned businesses and integrating them into corporate supply chains is both smart economics and a way to advance women's economic empowerment. UN Women will soon launch a guidance note on measuring the gender impacts of trade agreements and integrating gender into trade policies to ensure gender equal results.
3. #SheTrades Outlook supports policy makers in assessing the policy ecosystem for women in trade, identifying priority for policy reforms, and make comparisons across countries and time.

Wrap-up session

1. Note study on trade in IORA being conducted by the Institute of International Trade at the University of Adelaide, building on earlier studies, and look for opportunities to feed ideas into this study.

IORWGTIC1REP/19/02

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Including:

1. *The Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference, for all attendees*
2. *The Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) meeting, for IORA trade officials only*
3. *The Working Group on Women’s Economic Empowerment (WGWEE) meeting, for IORA women’s empowerment officials only*
4. *The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) meeting, for business representatives.*

Side event:

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) 100th Anniversary Regional Event

Associated workshop:

UN Women Research Validation Workshop on Women’s Economic Empowerment

17 June Monday	18 June Tuesday			19 June Wednesday
Modernising Trade Conference 09:30 17:15	IORBF 08:30 12:30	WGTI 08:30 17:00	WG WEE 08:30 17:00	UN Women Research Workshop 09:30 15:30
	ICC Event 13:30 17:00			
Welcome Function 19:00	Chair’s Meeting: IORBF / WGTI / WGWEE 17:30-18:30			

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Day 1: Monday 17 June 2019

Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference

07:30-09:15 Registration of Participants

09:15-09:45 **Opening**

Chaired by Ms Judi Nwokedi, Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), Chief Operating Officer Tourvest Pty Ltd, Former AREVA Senior Vice President

Welcome Address by Mr Siphos Zikode, Deputy Director General, Department of Trade and Industry

Opening remarks by Mr. Sihle Zikalala, Premier, KwaZulu-Natal Province

Opening remarks by Dr Nomvuyo Nokwe, Secretary-General of IORA

09:45-11:15 **Session 1: Opportunities and Challenges for Trade and Investment in the Indian Ocean Rim**

Chaired by Ms Judi Nwokedi, Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), Chief Operating Officer Tourvest Pty Ltd, Former AREVA Senior Vice President

This session will set out the current status of trade and investment in the Indian Ocean Rim and key trends such as the fourth industrial revolution and digitisation.

Presentation by South Africa: reviewing IORA's trade and investment agenda - a view from the Chair

Mr Siphos Zikode, Deputy Director General, Special Economic Zones and Economic Transformation, Department of Trade and Industry

Presentation by the Centre for International Private Enterprise

Mr Jose Raul Perales, Deputy Director (Trade)

Presentation by India: trade and investment challenges and opportunities: the view from India

Mr Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, India

Discussion

11:15-11:30 *Coffee Break*

11:30-13:00 **Session 2: Promoting Trade Facilitation**

Chaired by Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Ms. Nola Watson, Chairman

This capacity building session will provide an update on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement including current status of ratification, examples of customs compliance and overcoming barriers to trade.

Presentation by Mauritius: Looking Ahead: Trade and Investment in IORA in 2025 – the Coordinating Country perspective
Mr. Sunil Boodhoo, Director, International Trade Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement
Professor Peter Draper, Executive Director, Institute for International Trade, The University of Adelaide (Australia)

Presentation from the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation
Ms Valerie Picard, International Chamber of Commerce and Deputy Director, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation

Presentation on private sector perspectives on trade facilitation
Mr Stavros Nicolaou, Senior Executive, Aspen Pharmacare

Discussion

13:00-14:00

Lunch

14:00-15:30

Session 3: Tools for promoting regional trade

Chaired by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
Mr Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General

This session will showcase practical tools from Member States to promote regional trade.

Presentation on the Trade Community System
Mr Bryan Clark, Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Presentation on the IORA Dispute Resolution and Arbitration Mechanism
Ms Anjana Khemraz, Secretary General, MCCI Arbitration and Mediation Centre, Mauritius

Discussion

15:30-16:00

Afternoon Tea

16:00-17:00

Session 4: Tools for Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment

Chaired by Kenya

Mr John Ndonji, Principal Gender Officer, State Department for Gender

Reflecting the importance of women's economic empowerment in achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, this session will include presentations and tools businesses can adopt.

Presentation by UN Women on Women's Empowerment Principles
Ms Leigh Tomppert, Coordinator, Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim Project, UN Women

Presentation by International Trade Centre (ITC), drawing from the SME Competitiveness Outlook 2018 Report and SheTrades platform
Ms Judith Fessehaie, Director, Sustainable and Inclusive Value Chains, International Trade Centre

Discussion

17:00-17:15

Conference Wrap-Up

Summary of the day's proceedings

Chaired by Ms Judi Nwokedi, Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), Chief Operating Officer Tourvest Pty Ltd, Former AREVA Senior Vice President

Mr. Chris Wood, Director (International Operations), Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa

with

Mr. Doug Trappett, Director, Indian Ocean Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia

19:00

Networking cocktail hosted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), South Africa; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia; and Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal (TIKZN).

Capital Pearls Hotel (room TBC)

For all participants

Day 2: Tuesday 18 June 2019

There are multiple meetings on Day 2 as per the outline on page 1. Two meetings are closed to registered delegates only (Working Group on Trade and Investment, WGTI; and Working Group for Women's Economic Empowerment, WGWEE).

Day 2: Business meetings (open to all)

08:00-08:30	Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) Meeting Coffee and Registration of Participants Attendees include nominated IORBF delegates, and anyone as observers
08:30-12:30	IORBF meeting 23 rd Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), to discuss how business can cooperate with governments and promote trade in the Indian Ocean region. <i>Host: Ms Judi Nwokedi, Chair of IORBF, Chief Operating Officer Tourvest Pty Ltd, Former AREVA Senior Vice President</i> 08:30-08:45 Welcome and objectives 08:45-09:15 Report of the previous meeting 09:15-10:15 Strategic conversation – Vision for revitalising the IORBF 10:15-11:15 IORBF initiatives and recommendations 11:15-11:45 Proposal for a permanent business interlocuter for IORA 11:45-12:00 Any other business 12:00-12:15 Communique Preparation 12:15-12:30 Recommendations and Closing Includes group photograph at 09:15.
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30-17:00	Side event: International Chamber of Commerce: 100th Anniversary Event Opening and keynote addresses Panel one: Stop the rise in global inequality Panel two: Make climate change everyone's business Closing
17:00-17:30	Break
17:30-18:30	Chairs' Meeting: IORBF, WGTI and WGWEE Chaired by South Africa <i>Mr. Victor Mashabela, Chief Director, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa</i>

Chairs, Vice Chairs and Coordinating Countries of the IORBF, WGTI and WGWE will reconvene to share the priorities of their respective working groups and identify shared objectives across the three groups. Observers welcome.

Day 2: Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) (closed to registered delegates only)

08:00-08:30	Coffee and Registration of Participants FOR NOMINATED WGTI DELEGATES ONLY
08:30-10:30	<p>Session 1: Revisiting and Revitalising the Working Group on Trade and Investment – role and mandate</p> <p>Chaired by South Africa <i>Mr. Victor Mashabela, Chief Director, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa</i></p> <p>An opportunity for Member States to discuss the WGTI's role and draft Terms of Reference, drawing on discussions from Day 1.</p> <p>Includes group photo at 10:00</p>
10:30-11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00-12:30	<p>Session 2: Revisiting and Revitalising the Working Group on Trade and Investment – work plan</p> <p>Chaired by Mauritius <i>Mr. Sunil Boodhoo, Director, International Trade Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius</i></p> <p>An opportunity for Member States to propose and discuss elements for the WGTI Work Plan.</p> <p>Presentation of key recommendations from the 'Study on Bilateral and Regional Trade and Investment-related Agreements, Arrangements and Dialogues between Member States' <i>Professor V. N. Attri, Chair in Indian Ocean Studies (CIOS)</i></p>
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30-15:00	<p>Session 3: Work plan discussions continued.</p> <p>Chaired by India <i>Mr Anant Swarup, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, India</i></p> <p>Presentation on how IORBF and WGTI can work best together <i>Ms Judi Nwokedi, Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), Chief Operating Officer Tourvest Pty Ltd, Former AREVA Senior Vice President</i></p>
15:00-15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:30-17:00	Session 4: Next steps

Chaired by South Africa

Mr. Victor Mashabela, Chief Director, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa

This session will summarise the day's proceedings, including key elements to report to the IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting on 19-20 June 2019, next meeting date, and any key deliverables to be achieved before the IORA Council of Ministers meeting in late 2019.

17:30-18:30

Chairs' Meeting: IORBF, WGTI and GWEE

Chaired by South Africa

Mr. Victor Mashabela, Chief Director, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa

Chairs, Vice Chairs and Coordinating Countries of the IORBF, WGTI and GWEE will reconvene to share the priorities of their respective working groups and identify shared objectives across the three groups.

Observers welcome.

Day 2: Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (registered delegates only)

08:00-08:30

Coffee and Registration of Participants
FOR NOMINATED WGWEE DELEGATES ONLY

08:30-10:30

Session 1: Updates on WEE activities

Chaired by South Africa

Mrs. Nomvula Makgotlho, Chief Director, Market Access Support, Department of Small Business Development, South Africa

Presentation by UAE on Women's Financial Inclusion

Mr. Mohamed Alzaabi, Director of Trade Promotion Department, Ministry of Economy, United Arab Emirates

Presentation by Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) on blue economy research

Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller, Executive Director, HSRC

Presentation by UN Women on project webinars and research

Ms Leigh Tomppert, Coordinator, Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim Project, UN Women

Discussion

10:30-11:00

Group Photo and Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

Session 2: Promoting entrepreneurship: what next?

Chaired by India

Ms Ashima Chaturvedi, Officer on Special Duty, Indo-Pacific Division, Ministry of External Affairs

Promoting women's entrepreneurship is at the heart of IORA's WEE agenda. This session will update the WGWEE on forthcoming US support for women's economic empowerment in IORA, opportunities to link with UN Women's project, and seek the WGWEE's guidance on ways forward.

Presentation by the US on WEE support and a Women's Business Forum

Ms Melanie J. Bixby, Deputy Director, Security and Transnational Affairs, South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State

UN Women discussion questions on promoting the WEPs in IORA Member States

Ms Leigh Tomppert, Coordinator, Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim Project, UN Women

12:30-13:30

Lunch

13:30-15:00

Session 3: Taking Forward the Work Plan

Chaired by Mauritius

Mrs. Mohni Bali, Head, Gender Unit, Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mauritius

With the WGWE work plan circulated out of session and following the updates on activities given in Session 1, this session invites Member States to nominate to implement currently unallocated projects, suggest new projects and consider next work steps.

15:00-15:30

Coffee Break

15:30-17:00

Session 4: WGWE role, composition and next steps

Co-Chaired by Australia and Mauritius

Mrs. Mohni Bali, Head, Gender Unit, Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mauritius

and

Ms. Catherine Herron, Assistant Director, Indian Ocean Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia

In this session Member States will discuss Coordinating Country role for WEE for 2019-20 (two-year term of current Coordinating Countries expires end 2019); finalise discussions on the WGWE Work Plan, if necessary; summarise key elements for Australia to report to the IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) meeting on 19-20 June 2019; give preferences for the next meeting date; highlight any key deliverables to be achieved before the IORA Council of Ministers meeting in October 2019.

17:30-18:30

Chairs' Meeting: IORBF, WGTI and WGWE

Chaired by South Africa

Mr. Victor Mashabela, Chief Director, Department of Trade and Industry, South Africa

Chairs, Vice Chairs and Coordinating Countries of the IORBF, WGTI and WGWE will reconvene to share the priorities of their respective working groups and identify shared objectives across the three groups.

Observers welcome.

Wednesday 19 June 2019

Associated workshop:

UN Women Research Validation Workshop on Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim Region

09:30-15:30

Note: This is a closed workshop for members of the IORA Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment and the Technical Advisory Group for the UN Women project only. This is not open to other participants. All participants will be expected to have read the research in advance, which will be circulated prior to the meeting.

This Workshop will examine in detail two draft pieces of research on women's economic empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim region being conducted by UN Women through the 'Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim' project, supported by Australia.

Refer to separate Concept Note. Agenda and draft research reports to be circulated to participants separately.

CONCEPT NOTE*Including four elements:*

- 1 *The Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference, for all attendees*
- 2 *The Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) meeting, for WGTI delegates only*
- 3 *The Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWEE) meeting, for WGWEE delegates only*
- 4 *The Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) meeting, for IORBF delegates only.*

*Side event:**International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) 100th Anniversary Regional Event**Associated workshop:**UN Women Research Validation Workshop on Women's Economic Empowerment***Summary**

This conference will explore emerging opportunities for boosting trade and investment in the Indian Ocean Rim region and accompanying synergies with IORA's agenda for the economic empowerment of women. Day 1 will deliver an update on trends and initiatives in the modernisation of global and regional trade and investment and women's economic empowerment, and also present a range of ideas on how these trends can be replicated within IORA. Day 2 of the conference will convene official delegates to IORA's private sector arm, the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), as well as the IORA working groups on Trade and Investment and Women's Economic Empowerment. These three groups will consider how to promote business, trade and women's empowerment within an IORA context and advance their respective work plans.

Additional events will be held by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and UN Women. The ICC will host a 100th Anniversary Regional Event to deepen the ICC's engagement in the Indian Ocean Rim region and highlight the ICC's thought leadership through two panels on global inequality and climate change. UN Women will host a Research Validation Workshop focussed on two draft pieces of research on women's economic empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim region. This workshop is aimed at members of the IORA Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment and the Technical Advisory Committee for the UN Women project (attendance to the workshop is by invitation only and participants will be expected to read the research in advance).

The conference is aligned with the commitment of IORA Member States to implement the Jakarta Concord and IORA Action Plan 2017-2021, as adopted at the 20th Anniversary Commemoration Celebrations in Jakarta (March 2017), the Balaclava Ministerial Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment – A Prerequisite for Sustainable Development of 2018, the Joint Declaration on the IORA Business Community to Build Partnerships for a Sustainable and Equitable Economic Growth of 2017 and the IORA Economic Declaration of 2014.

Background Information

The fourth industrial revolution (or Industry 4.0) refers to increasing automation, platform economies and data exchange in manufacturing technologies that facilitate new business models and value-producing opportunities. Fostering inclusive growth is particularly pertinent for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of many regional economies and represent over 90% of firms and over 70% of employment in most countries, but which may be disconnected from new technologies. The Joint Declaration on the IORA Business Community to Build Partnerships for a Sustainable and Equitable Economic Growth of March 2017 recognised the importance of public-private dialogue in strengthening the collaboration and partnerships necessary to increase trade and investment for the benefit of businesses and communities across the Indian Ocean.

Likewise, despite having less access to technology, women around the world use digital platforms to their advantage by accessing markets, lowering costs of entry and exit, simplifying buying and selling, overcoming procedural obstacles and encouraging innovative and entrepreneurial activities.

The IORA *Balaclava Ministerial Declaration on Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality as a Prerequisite for Sustainable Development* (2018) identified intensifying information and communication technology as a major paradigm shift that requires further attention by IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners. The Declaration states that IORA Member States will: “adopt concrete measures and innovative policies that aim to promote women's and girls' participation and skills development in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, including Information and Communication Technologies in the light of the looming fourth industrial revolution by creating an enabling environment as well as providing incentives to women and girls innovators; including the setting up of appropriate and relevant mentorship programmes and initiatives for the young girls to enable them to harness their full potential.”

Aims and Objectives of the Conference

This two-day conference aims to advance the IORA trade and investment facilitation and women's economic empowerment agendas by:

- identifying opportunities within and challenges of the Indian Ocean Rim's future economy with a focus on the fourth industrial revolution, trade modernisation and digitisation;
- engaging the private sector via regional chambers of commerce and alongside government officials to consider policy, regulatory and initiatives that will foster regional prosperity;
- creating a mutually supportive environment for capacity building within, and across, the IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners with a focus on women's economic empowerment and practical trade facilitation tools; and
- leveraging synergies by co-convening the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) alongside the core IORA bodies for promoting trade and investment (Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) and Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment (WGWEE)) on Day 2.

Format of the Conference

Day 1 of the conference is directed at government and private sector representatives from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners, such as:

- officials from government departments of trade and industry and gender ministries
- local, national and international Chambers of Commerce;
- trade and investment promotion organisations;
- digital industry players (such as logistics firms, banks, infrastructure providers and investors);
- members of National Trade Facilitation Committees; and
- women's entrepreneur groups.

Day 1 aims to showcase the Indian Ocean as a region of growing economic importance as well as identifying emerging trends such as changing business ecosystems, the fourth industrial revolution, and tools to reduce barriers to increased regional trade. These tools include the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, innovative digital apps and online trading platforms, new dispute and arbitration mechanisms, and promoting women's entrepreneurship.

Day 1 will culminate with a networking cocktail for both business and government representatives. The first day will be facilitated by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI - through funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and the government of South Africa as convener of the WGTI and IORBF, and current IORA Chair.

Day 2 will convene the IORA Business Forum, hosted by Ms Judi Nwokedi, Chair of IORBF. A key focus of the IORBF will be the formulation of considered recommendations from the private sector to governments on how to boost regional trade and investment among IORA member states and dialogue partners.

Day 2 also comprises the formal meetings of the WGTI and GWEE attended by official representatives designated by IORA National Focal Points. Officials are encouraged to attend all elements of Day 1 to facilitate engagement between the public and private sectors and to strengthen national and regional business enabling environments as drivers of economic growth. South Africa will host the WGTI which will consider its forward work plan and Terms of Reference for the first time. Australia will host the second meeting of the GWEE and will co-chair the meeting with Mauritius. The working group meeting will include opportunities to hear from IORA co-collaborators in the region (UN Women, Human Sciences Research Council, International Trade Centre) on their recent work and their resulting recommendations for action. The GWEE will consider these recommendations for inclusion in its work plan.

Expected Outcomes

This two-day conference is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- revitalisation of the IORA trade and investment agenda, including via stronger linkages with regional chambers of commerce
- a road map to formation of an IORA Women's Business Forum in consultation with the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum
- clarity on a broad framework for the US-IOA partnership on women's economic empowerment
- agreement on draft Terms of Reference and key elements of a Work plan for the Working Group on Trade and Investment
- progress review of the IORA GWEE work plan including priority activities for implementation.

Benefits to participants

The ideas and networks generated via this trade modernisation conference and the meetings of the IORBF, WGTI and GWEE will:

- expose participants to cutting edge ideas in the areas of trade and investment facilitation;
- inject energy and momentum into regional trade and investment efforts, across both private and public sectors
- shape the WGTI and GWEE agenda and work plans, in particular ensuring that their work is complementary; and
- build active working groups with aligned programs that build IORA's cohesion and influence.

Administrative and logistical arrangements

A draft Agenda for the conference has been circulated separately.

A detailed Administrative Arrangements document, including registration details, will be circulated shortly, as will further details about the ICC side event and associated UN Women workshop. To express interest in being invited to the UN Women workshop please contact hq@iora.int.

For all other conference-related queries, including on the WGTI, IORBF and GWEE, please contact the IORA Secretariat at hq@iora.int.

PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW

Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference, 17 June

Approx. 220 participants, 19 Member States, 6 Dialogue Partners.

The Modernising Trade in the Indian Ocean Rim Conference was attended by representatives of 19 Member States, namely, **Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Union of Comoros, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kenya, Malaysia, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Sultanate of Oman, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of Singapore, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania and United Arab Emirates.** In addition to Member States, IORA Dialogue Partners, **People's Republic of China, Republic of France, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom** and the **United States of America.** A large number of private companies, business chambers of commerce and industry from around the region and international organisations participated, including **UN Women, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), International Trade Centre (ITC), Institute for International Trade, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), BRICS Business Council, Aspen Pharmaceuticals,** also participated.

Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum, 18 June

Approx. 100 participants, 11 Member States, 3 Dialogue Partners.

Working Group on Trade and Investment, 18 June

23 participants, 15 Member States, 2 Dialogue Partners.

Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment, 18 June

25 participants, 14 Member States, 2 Dialogue Partners.

UN Women Research Validation Workshop, 19 June

23 participants, 11 Member States, 1 Dialogue Partner.

IOR/WGTIC1REP/19/04**CONFERENCE AND ASSOCIATED MEETINGS – TABLE OF PARTICIPATION**

	IORBF	WGTI	WGWE	UN Women Workshop	Conference Overall
Member States represented					
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bangladesh			Yes	Yes	Yes
Comoros	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
India	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Iran	Yes	Yes			Yes
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madagascar					
Malaysia		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maldives		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mauritius	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mozambique		Yes			Yes
Oman	Yes				Yes
Seychelles		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Singapore	Yes				Yes
Somalia			Yes	Yes	Yes
South Africa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sri Lanka		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tanzania		Yes			Yes
Thailand					
UAE	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Yemen					
	11	15	14	11	19
Dialogue Partners represented					
China	Yes	Yes			Yes
Egypt					
France		Yes			Yes
Germany	Yes				Yes
Japan					
Republic of Korea	Yes				Yes
Turkey					
United Kingdom			Yes		Yes
United States			Yes	Yes	Yes
	3	2	2	1	6

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Session 1: Opportunities and Challenges for Trade and Investment in the Indian Ocean Rim

- Presentation by India: trade and investment challenges and opportunities: the view from India
Mr Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, India

Session 2: Promoting Trade Facilitation

- Presentation by Mauritius: Looking Ahead: Trade and Investment in IORA in 2025 – the Coordinating Country perspective
Mr. Sunil Boodhoo, Director, International Trade Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius
- The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement
Professor Peter Draper, Executive Director, Institute for International Trade, The University of Adelaide (Australia)
- Presentation from the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation
Ms Valerie Picard, International Chamber of Commerce and Deputy Director, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation
- Presentation on private sector perspectives on trade facilitation
Mr Stavros Nicolaou, Senior Executive, Aspen Pharmacare

Session 3: Tools for promoting regional trade

- Presentation on the Trade Community System
Mr Bryan Clark, Director, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Presentation on the IORA Dispute Resolution and Arbitration Mechanism Ms Anjana Khemraz, Secretary General, MCCI Arbitration and Mediation Centre, Mauritius

Session 4: Tools for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment

- Presentation by UN Women on Women's Empowerment Principles
Ms Leigh Tomppert, Coordinator, Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Indian Ocean Rim Project, UN Women
- Presentation by International Trade Centre (ITC), drawing from the SME Competitiveness Outlook 2018 Report and SheTrades platform
Ms Judith Fessehaie, Director, Sustainable and Inclusive Value Chains, International Trade Centre