



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

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Press Release

on

Trilateral Dialogue on Indian Ocean (TDIO)

(19-20 September 2013)

Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) hosted “Trilateral Dialogue on Indian Ocean” (TDIO), a Track-II meeting of experts selected by ICWA, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), and Eminent Persons of Indonesia at Sapru House, New Delhi from 19-20 September 2013. Eminent persons, diplomats, academics and strategic experts from India, Australia, and Indonesia attended the meeting.

In the inaugural session titled “IOR-ARC and Indian Ocean: Understanding Continuity, Ushering Change and Building Consensus”, Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, head of the Indian delegation and DG, ICWA, highlighted the significance of the TDIO as an innovative step, testifying to the growing interest in Asia and the Indian Ocean. He identified two common challenges: sustainable development of the



Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA delivering his opening statement

littoral countries of the region and the need to expand intra-regional trade, investment, services, food security and infrastructural development. He advocated the need for convening an IOR-ARC Summit.

Mr Peter Jennings, head of the Australian Delegation and Executive Director of Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), underscored Australia’s commitment to strengthen IOR-ARC, as the next Chair for the 2013-2015 term, succeeding India. He outlined maritime security and safety, disaster risk reduction and balanced development as major challenges. He held that both Australia and India had a common interest in protecting resources and maritime communications and fostering defence cooperation, official visits and joint maritime exercise as part of their bilateral ties.

Ambassador Mrs. Artauli R.M.P. Tobing, head of the Indonesian delegation and Executive Secretary of Indonesia's Presidential Advisory Council on Foreign Relations, in her address, expressed apprehension over the impending power struggle in the region. She emphasised the need for cooperation on maritime issues, disaster management and science and technology.



(L-R) Mr. Peter Jennings, Executive Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA, Ambassador Mrs. Artauli R.M.P. Tobing, Executive Secretary of Indonesia's Presidential Advisory Council on Foreign Relations, Shri Ashok Kantha, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi and Ambassador K. V. Bhagirath, Secretary General, IOR-ARC

In his Keynote address, the Special Invitee Ambassador Ashok K Kantha, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), outlined the shifting strategic dynamics in the Indian Ocean and stressed the need to address challenges, such as maritime security, piracy, terrorism along with economic development and freedom of navigation through cooperative mechanisms. In his Special Address, Ambassador K.V. Bhagirath, Secretary General IOR-ARC, highlighted India's contribution of USD 1 billion to IOR-ARC and elaborated on the significance of the organisation.

Following the inaugural session, the participants at the four working sessions, discussed the feasibility of addition of new areas to the existing six priority areas, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) challenges, food and water security, and maritime security. It was unanimously felt that public awareness of IOR-ARC should be generated through media interaction, regional maritime confidence building measures, and strengthening of research. The three sides agreed to hold the next meeting of the TDIO in Australia in June 2014.
