



**United Nations**

# **Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean**

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*Note*

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## Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction . . . . .	4
II. Work of the Committee in 2019 . . . . .	6
A. Adoption of the agenda . . . . .	6
B. Report of the Chair . . . . .	6
C. Recommendations . . . . .	8
D. Adoption of the report of the Committee . . . . .	8

## Chapter I

### Introduction

1. By its resolution [72/21](#), the General Assembly, having taken note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean ([A/72/29](#)), requested the Chair of the Committee to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

2. Pursuant to that resolution, the Committee held its formal session (458th meeting) on 31 May 2019 at United Nations Headquarters. The Chair also held a number of consultations and meetings during 2019.

3. At the 458th meeting, the following delegations made statements in the general discussion under agenda item 4: Australia, Russian Federation, Egypt, Mauritius, United Arab Emirates, India, Indonesia and China.

4. The Committee is composed of the following States:

(a) 43 members:

Australia	Mozambique
Bangladesh	Netherlands
Bulgaria	Norway
Canada	Oman
China	Pakistan
Djibouti	Panama
Egypt	Poland
Ethiopia	Romania
Germany	Russian Federation
Greece	Seychelles
India	Singapore
Indonesia	Somalia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Sri Lanka
Iraq	Sudan
Italy	Thailand
Japan	Uganda
Kenya	United Arab Emirates
Liberia	United Republic of Tanzania
Madagascar	Yemen
Malaysia	Zambia
Maldives	Zimbabwe
Mauritius	

(b) Observers:

Nepal  
South Africa  
Sweden

5. Following elections to fill vacancies in the Bureau, the officers of the Committee were as follows:

*Chair:*

Amrith Rohan Perera (Sri Lanka)

*Vice-Chairs:*

Peter Horne (Australia)  
Ahmad Shaleh Bawazir (Indonesia)  
Carlos Manuel Da Costa (Mozambique)

*Rapporteur:*

Lalaina Josie Brigitte Raharimboahangy (Madagascar)

## Chapter II

### Work of the Committee in 2019

#### A. Adoption of the agenda

6. At its 458th meeting, the Committee adopted the agenda as contained in document [A/AC.159/L.149](#), which read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Report of the Chair of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution [72/21](#).
5. Adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.
6. Other matters.

#### B. Report of the Chair

7. At its 458th meeting, the Committee considered agenda item 4, concerning the report of the Chair of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution [72/21](#). The Chair made the following comprehensive statement on his consultations:

“Excellencies, distinguished members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean,

“As we meet today at the 2019 session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, let us recall that the Indian Ocean, with its sea lanes serving as major arteries of East-West trade, continues to be of crucial significance to the world economy.

“The Indian Ocean carries around half the world’s container shipping and about two thirds of its oil shipments. Ensuring security and stability and maintaining freedom of navigation in the sea lanes of communication of the Indian Ocean is vital, not only for the global economy, but also for global peace and security.

“It was in 1971 that, by resolution 2832 (XXVI), the General Assembly declared the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Sri Lanka, as an island nation strategically located in the Indian Ocean, with its existence so inextricably linked to the ocean and its resources, was one of the pioneers of this action. A year later, by resolution 2992 (XXVII), the Assembly established the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to further the objectives of the 1971 Declaration.

“We are well aware that the concept of the Indian Ocean as a “zone of peace” was conceived in a different political environment, taking into account the possibility of an escalation of the arms race among great Powers in the Indian Ocean region, with the potential to pose a serious threat to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region.

“However, today we meet in a world that is no less under threat. Increased mobility at sea and heavy traffic have opened up opportunities for terrorist



activity, piracy, drug trafficking, illegal arms trading, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, among others. This in turn gives rise to a plethora of corrupt practices, including illegal and unreported fishing, bottom trawling, environmental degradation and destruction of coastal infrastructure.

“In addition, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, non-traditional threats and crimes are now emerging, such as trafficking in persons in the fishing industry, the charcoal trade and illicit oil trafficking. Intentional damage to fibre-optic submarine cables poses a severe threat to lines of international communication. Legal issues arising from the use of mercenaries, privately contracted armed security personnel and floating armouries are among a range of issues that require our close attention.

“Littoral States such as Sri Lanka are in fact at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking by maritime routes. The use of the Indian Ocean as a major drug trafficking highway poses a maritime security and a maritime law enforcement challenge.

“Excellencies, colleagues,

“It is for these reasons that the work of this Committee continues to remain relevant as we collectively commit ourselves to ensuring peace, security and economic growth in the Indian Ocean region.

“In this regard, as mandated in General Assembly resolution [72/21](#), I undertook a series of informal consultations to ascertain the views of Member States on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and, in particular, its future direction. In the course of these consultations, what emerged was a broad consensus on the continuing relevance of the mandate of this Committee in the present context. I was able to gather the sense that the core elements of the mandate remain pertinent today, in the light of these non-traditional threats and challenges.

“Furthermore, in addressing the contemporary issues in the Indian Ocean region, it is particularly important to note the emergence of organizations such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association, which has been formed to ensure greater cooperation among States, inter alia in harnessing ocean resources in the Indian Ocean region. This Committee could provide a useful forum to give added emphasis and voice to Indian Ocean Rim Association issues within the United Nations system.

“The creation of a sustainable ocean economy; new blue industries including off-shore renewables, marine technologies and aquacultures; clean-up; and the implementation of regenerative processes to combat climate change will help to initiate a zone of economic progress, as well as peace, that will provide the stability that accelerates rapid environmental improvement and ensures international peace and security.

“I would encourage the continuous engagement of Member States in the process of determining the future direction of our work. It is my expectation that this afternoon you will give particular attention in your interventions to how the work of the Committee could be moved forward with a view to charting our future course of action.”

8. During the meeting, an exchange of views was held on a range of issues relating to the work of the Committee.
9. The Committee reaffirmed the continuing relevance of its mandate in the light of new threats and challenges confronting the region. The importance of such organizations as the Indian Ocean Rim Association was viewed as being of particular

significance in enhancing cooperation in maritime safety and security. The need for Member States to continue their engagement in the process was also emphasized, with a view to determining the future direction of the work of the Committee. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

10. The Committee remained convinced that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in the work of the Committee was important and would assist the progress of a mutually beneficial dialogue aimed at developing conditions of peace, security and stability in the region.

### **C. Recommendations**

11. The Chair proposed that the mandate of the Committee (based on the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace) could be revised, subject to the consensus of the Committee, and updated to reflect current realities and convergent interests in the region. The Committee decided that the Chair should undertake further consultations and make a proposal to the Committee in that regard, which would be taken up by the Committee at its next session.

### **D. Adoption of the report of the Committee**

12. At the 458th meeting, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Committee.

13. At the same meeting, the Chair informed the members of the Committee of his intention to hold informal consultations concerning the text of the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

14. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted its report.

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