**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 3326**

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**Ms R M M Lesoma (ANC) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

What (a) were some of the key discussions that featured during the Indian Ocean Conference that took place from 27 to 28 August 2018 in Hanoi, Vietnam and (b) are the objectives and policy priorities of the South African chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association? NW3786E

**REPLY:**

1. The third (3rd) Indian Ocean Conference took place in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam under the theme “Building Regional Architecture” from 27-28 August 2018. The event focused almost exclusively on the concept of the Indo-Pacific region, a new concept in international relations being espoused and advanced by the United States and India.

South Africa is encouraged by the focus that the Indian Ocean Region is receiving of late, with several international conferences highlighting the importance of the Indian Ocean Region as a leading region with the potential to contribute to global security, economic growth, and sustainable development.  South Africa’s view, as advanced at the conference in Vietnam, is that the future of the Indian Ocean Region must be centered on the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). South Africa views IORA as the pre-eminent regional organization linking Africa, Middle East, Asia and Australasia via the Indian Ocean, as encapsulated in our theme for our Chairship (2017-2019) of **“IORA: Uniting the Peoples of Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Middle East through Enhanced Co-operation for Peace, Stability and Sustainable Development”**.  This theme encompasses South Africa’s view that the Indian Ocean Region should be characterized as a region of peace, stability and development; and we view IORA as the primary regional organisation with which to pursue this ambitious goal.

1. Priorities for South Africa as Chair of IORA include the following:
2. Realising Over-Arching consensus principles, i.e. commitment to sustainably advancing peace, stability and development by strengthening cooperation, partnership, and constructive dialogue to promote the welfare and livelihood for its people.
3. Striving for Continuity of leadership;
4. Strengthen the work programme of IORA;
5. Consolidate IORA’s membership;
6. Strengthen relations with IORA’s Dialogue Partners;
7. Enhance partnership with international organisations;
8. Support for the African Agenda;
9. Strengthen IORA mechanisms;
10. Improve the functional efficiency of the Chair; and
11. Strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat