





### **About The Conference**

The 3rd Indian Ocean Conference was hosted by India Foundation in association with the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies from August 27-28, 2018 in Hanoi. The theme for the third edition of the Conference was "Building Regional Architectures" and discussions focused on the region's security architecture, governance architecture and on maintaining trade and tranquility in Indo-Pacific.

The Conference was attended by over 300 delegates from 44 countries of the region and was addressed by 41 speakers from 25 countries.



# **Inaugural Session**



**H.E Ranil Wickremesinghe,**Prime Minister, Sri Lanka

**H.E Pham Binh Minh,**Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Vietnam



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**H.E Upendra Yadav,**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population,
Nepal









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We cannot tap the bounty of the Indian Ocean without ensuring maritime peace and stability. Economic prosperity and maritime security go hand-in-hand. Security is an all-encompassing concept and includes traditional, non-traditional and newly emerging threats.

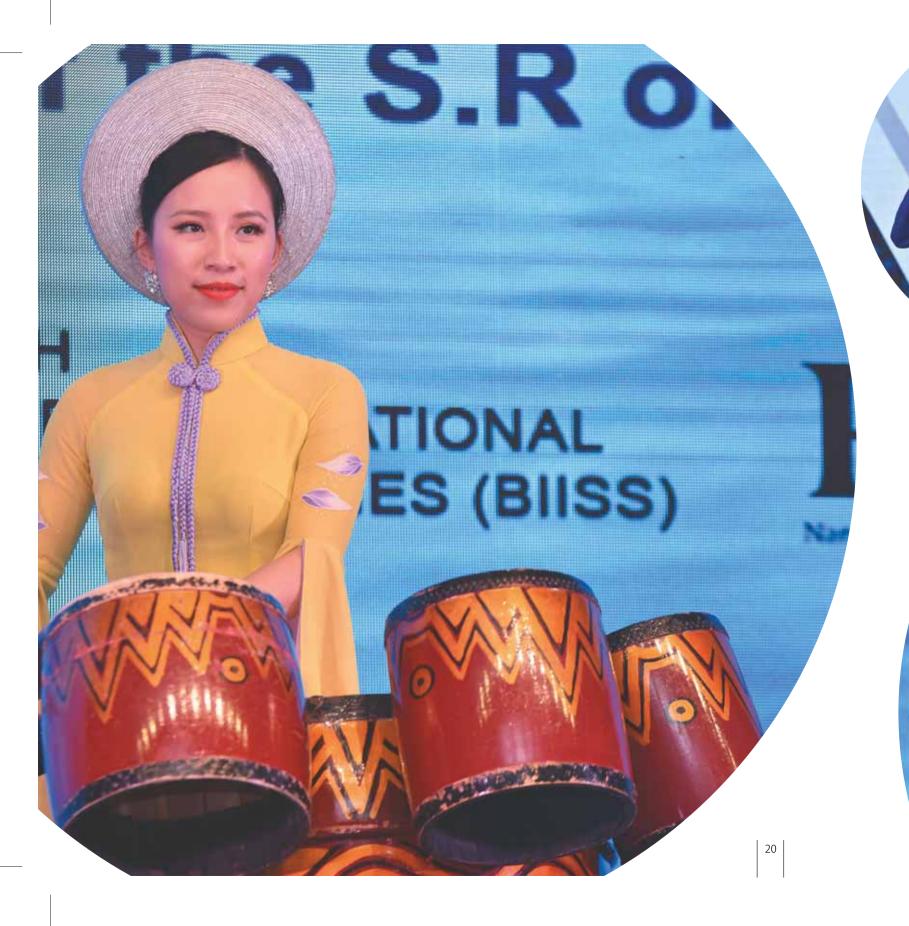
-H.E. Sushma Swaraj External Affairs Minister, India



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### Ministers' Panel I



**H.E Sagala Ratnayaka,**Minister of Youth Affairs,
Project Management and
Southern
Development, Sri Lanka

# **H.E Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo,**Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade , Mauritius



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**H.E A H M Mustafa Kamal,**Minister for Planning,
Bangladesh

#### H.E Dr Thani Bin Ahmed Al

Zeyoudi, Minister of the Climate Change and Environment, UAF



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### Ministers' Panel II



**H.E Alice Wells,**Principal Deputy Assistant
Secretary, Bureau of South and
Central Asian
Affairs, US Department of
State, USA





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**H.E Kazuyuki Nakane ,** State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

**H.E Cho Byung Jae,** Chancellor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy, South Korea



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**H.E William Samb,**Minister Assisting the Prime
Minister, Papua New Guinea



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Together, we must
make clear our determination
to create an Indian Ocean region
that respects international law as
reflected in the law of the sea convention,
that ensures a framework for transparency
and the peaceful resolution of disputes,
and that supports economic, political,
and social linkages with South and
East Asia.

-H.E Alice Wells

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## Officials' Panel I



Kittichaisaree,

Judge, ITLOS

### H.E Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa,

Chairman, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International & Energy Studies, Bahrain, Bahrain



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**H.E U Myint Thu,** Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar

#### H.E Yi Xianliang,

Director General, Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China



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**H.E Mrs Pornpimol Kanchanalak,**Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand













# Officials' Panel II





**H.E Steve Dainton**Deputy Commander,
Combined Maritime Forces,
UK



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**H.E Narendra Kumar Verma,**Managing Director and CEO,
ONGC Videsh, India







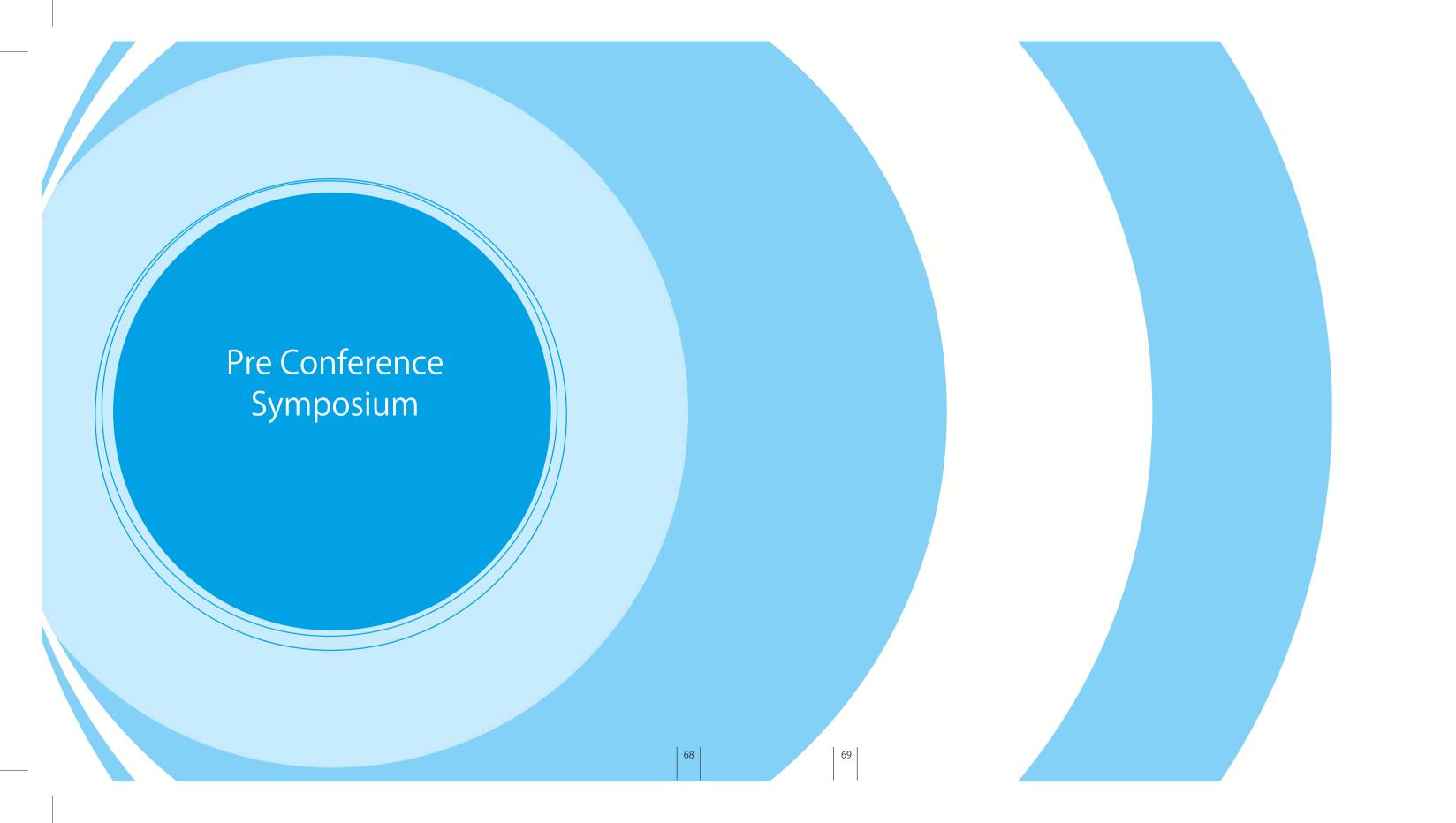
















# Special Session - Maintaining Trade and Tranquility in Indo Pacific SPEAKERS:

Ms Kay Thi Soe,

Director General, Strategic

Studies and Training Dept,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Myanmar

#### Chair: Mr Ashok Kantha,

Director, Institute of Chinese Studies,



### Mr Em Sovannara,

Director, Department of Political & Security Relations, International Relations Institute, Royal Academy of Cambodia



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**Ambassador Ali Hussain Didi,**Former Ambassador to EU,
Maldives

Mr Abdullah Salem
Hammad Al Harthy, Chief
of Economic and Dialogue
Groups
Department, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs, Oman



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Professor Pham Quang Minh, Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Vietnam5. Professor Pham Quang Minh, Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Vietnam The speakers of the session
stressed on the importance of the IndoPacific region to the world economy,
highlighting that this region contributes to upto
68% of the world trade. There was also consensus
on the need to maintain stability and security,
investing in infrastructure, strategy for
sustainable economic development and
bolstering regional cooperation.

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Indian Ocean Conference 2018 REPORT



# Pre-conference Symposium 1

The first pre-conference symposium on Security Architecture was chaired by Mr. Brahma Chellaney, Author, India. The speakers were Prof Wang Dong from Peking University, China; Dr Tan See Seng, Deputy Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore; Amb Munshi Faiz Ahmed, Chairman, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies; Dr Seyed Hossein Rezvani, Former Ambassador and fellow researcher at IPIS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran and Dr. Le Dinh Tinh, Deputy Director General, Bien Dong Maritime Institute, The Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam.

While providing different perspectives on the subject matter, the panellists shared the common view of international law and exclusiveness being the basis of a stable regional security architecture, in which ASEAN plays the central role.





# **Prof Wang Dong**

Professor, Peking University, China

Prof Wang Dong asserted that there is an absence of a region-wide security architecture and ASEAN-based architecture is one of the most mature and successful effort at the sub-regional level. However, it has not been able to mitigate power rivalry in the region. He proposed that a comprehensive and sustainable security architecture must (i) be inclusive; (ii) hold the principle of mutual respect; (iii) be equal for all and not dominated by one hegemony; and (iv) accommodate different cultures.

### Amb Munshi Faiz Ahmed

Chairman, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Bangladesh

As a measure to address the security threats, Amb. Munshi Faiz Ahmed suggested that regionally, countries must focus on coexistence and cooperation, information sharing, harmonisation of laws and regulations, joint patrolling in certain areas, and sharing technology and capacity building.



### Dr Tan Dr Tan See Seng

Deputy Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

Dr Tan, in his address, mentioned that the regional architecture needs change, as there is unambiguity within the same. He also explained that the regional architecture has a divided ideology. On the one hand, there are people who believe that European Union is the "Golden Standard" for regional architecture with specific focus on "Institutional Singularity" while on the other hand there are people who focus on the uniqueness of Asia in specific and its institutionalised experience, keeping in mind the importance of institutional balancing. Dr Tan highlighted the idea of improvement in Security Architecture keeping in mind "Efficiency" and "Effectiveness" as well.

As a measure to address the security threats, Amb. Munshi Faiz Ahmed suggested that regionally, countries must focus on coexistence and cooperation, information sharing, harmonisation of laws and regulations, joint patrolling in certain areas, and sharing technology and capacity building.





### Dr Seyed Hossein Rezvani

Former Ambassador and fellow researcher at IPIS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran

Dr Seyed Hossein Rezvani stressed on the traditional and non-traditional security threats facing the region including terrorism, extremism, transnational crime, climate change, pollution, etc. He said that to build regional collective thinking in dealing with those issues, there must be greater and more constructive engagements based on mutual interest and respect. He highlighted the role of the India Ocean Conference as the first generation momentum of regional discussion.

### Dr Le Dinh Tinh

Deputy Director General, Bien Dong Maritime Institute, The Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam

Dr Le Dinh Tinh opined that the Indo-Asia-Pacific can build a lasting security architecture that benefits all existing ASEAN-led institutions. He underlined that ASEAN is doing good at providing platforms/good offices for CBMs, preventive diplomacy, problem-solving, and conflict management among others. He also underlined the common grounds that ASEAN and other big powers and middle powers share including enhancing regional peace, stability and prosperity, maintaining the rule-based order, and upholding the principle of peaceful dispute settlement.





# PRE-CONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM 2

The second symposia on Governance Architecture was chaired by Mr. Baijayant 'Jay' Panda, Former Member of Parliament, India. The speakers were Ambassador Nguyen Duy Hung, Former Director of ASEAN Department, MOFA, Vietnam; Dr Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa, Chairman and Chief Executive, Institute of Strategic & International Studies, Malaysia; Mr Prasenjit Basu, Author, India; Mr. Gareth Bayley, Director, South Asia and Afghanistan Directorate, Foreign Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom and Ms Nisha Biswal, President, US-India Business Council and Former Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, USA.

Discussions in this session were focussed on the significant amount of challenges being faced by the region and also the numerous opportunities that lie ahead. There was also agreement amongst the speakers on the difficulty in building a common governance architecture for the Indo-Pacific but if done, the scale of opportunities and advantages for sustainable development, stability and prosperity in the region would be enormous.



# Mr Baijayant 'Jay' Panda

Former Member of Parliament, India

Chairing the session, Mr Panda set the tone of the session by calling the Indo-Pacific as one of the most diverse regions of the world. While there are many differences, the regional countries also have converging interests. These interests, along with a new governance architecture can help the countries in enhancing intra-regional engagements on a people-to-people basis and bridge the cultural gap that exists. This in turn will also bring in more prosperity in the region at large.

# Ambassador Nguyen Duy Hung

Former Director of ASEAN Department, MOFA, Vietnam

Ambassador Nguyen Duy Hung asserted that Indo-Pacific, as one of the most important and dynamic regions, is now: (i) heavily affected by the global changes; (ii) facing multiple challenges and complexities coming from many sources: big power competitions, hot spots (SCS), traditional and non-traditional security issues, terrorism, arm race and (iii) is the centre of strategic rivalry. Speaking of ASEAN, he complimented the way in which ASEAN has strengthened the regional order.





# Dr Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa

Chairman and Chief Executive, Institute of Strategic & International Studies, Malaysia

In his remarks, Dr Isa, said that globalisation poses a lot of challenges and opportunities to the world in general and the region in particular. Therefore, the region is now in need of a solid structure to define the rules and commitments, and involve all concerned stakeholders. Dr Isa complimented EU for setting an example of an advanced governance architecture. Besides, ASEAN is also a successful structure which plays an important role in promoting regional stability and has achieved notable milestones. He also delved on the challenges being faced by ASEAN, such as commitment amongst the members and partners; the willingness to contribute to the region from state members, building and maintaining confidence among state members, the willingness to engage from other stake holders and strong commitment to build a unique community.

### Mr Prasenjit Basu

Author, India

Mr Prasenjit Basu was of the view that the most challenging factor in building a regional architecture is the ability of the region to deal with China. He posited that China's policy, like the nine-dash line, BRI, AllB etc, are more of challenges than opportunities to the region and the way China's economy is run and governed pose great threat to the region.





### Mr Gareth Bayley

Director, South Asia and Afghanistan Directorate, Foreign Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom

Against the backdrop of growing global trade, Mr Gareth Bayley reiterated UK's commitment towards maritime security, including maintaining the ships operating at sea. Mr. Bayley also proposed a range of principles for regional architecture, including responsible global actor; global public goods flow; transparency; the Hague legal process; respect for UNCLOS as the fundamental principle for activities at sea and FONOPS as a symbol of open and non-exclusive access.

### Ms Nisha Biswal

President, US-India Business Council and Former Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, USA

Ms Nisha Biswal re-emphasised the importance of the region whose waters carry 9.8 billion tons of goods; 80% sea born trade, and 90,000 vessels. Therefore, it is necessary to create a mechanism to ensure security and investment in maritime capacity building. She reaffirmed that in the absence of an institutionalised mechanism for the regional economy and the US's withdrawal from TPP, a multi-stakeholder architecture is needed for robust regional governance. Ms Biswal also posed the question of what future of governance architecture will look like and how regional countries can support trade and trade arrangements that create win-win solutions in the context of economic ties.





# SPECIAL SESSION

The special session on maintaining trade and tranquillity in Indo-Pacific was chaired by Mr Ashok Kantha, Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, India. The speakers were Ms Kay Thi Soe, Director General, Strategic Studies and Training Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar; Mr Em Sovannara, Director, Department of Political & Security Relations, International Relations Institute, Royal Academy of Cambodia; Mr Ali Hussain Didi, Former High Commissioner, Maldives, Mr Abdullah Salem Hammad Al Harthy, Chief of Economic and Dialogue Groups Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oman and Professor Pham Quang Minh, Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Vietnam.

The speakers of the session stressed on the importance of the Indo-Pacific region to the world economy, highlighting that this region contributes to upto 68% of the world trade. There was also consensus on the need to maintain stability and security, investing in infrastructure, strategy for sustainable economic development and bolstering regional cooperation.



### Ms Kay Thi Soe

Director General, Strategic Studies and Training Dept, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar

Ms Kay Thi Soe spoke on the importance of Indian Ocean in general and the significance of the maritime trade route to Myanmar in particular. In order to utilise the advantages that the Indian Ocean brings to Myanmar and develop a sustainable economy for the country, Myanmar has invested in infrastructure for marine development as well as worked out a strategy for blue economy. She expressed her belief in stability and security leading to development, if countries in the region enhanced their engagements in security dialogues, became more active in trade and security cooperation and developed policies inclusive of the sensitivities of all the stakeholders of the region.

### Mr Em Sovannara

Director, Department of Political & Security Relations, International Relations Institute, Royal Academy of Cambodia

Mr Em Sovannara argued that to maintain trade and tranquillity in Indo-Pacific, it is necessary to maintain global stability, security, environment and capacity building within the global cultural milieu. In order to address various regional/international challenges, all states should engage in negotiations and reach out to share the advantages with equity and strive to work towards common interest by using existing international mechanisms.





### Ambassador Ali Hussain Didi

Former Ambassador to EU, Maldives

Mr Ali Hussain Didi, Former High Commissioner, Maldives warned of the growing trend of populism and protectionism in global and regional politics. Admitting that politics and trade are progressing at a much different level, in which the latter is progressing much faster, he said that governments and legislative systems should be re-calibrated in a suitable way to bring together not only the governments but also the people of the region.

### Mr Abdullah Salem Hammad Al Harthy

Chief of Economic and Dialogue Groups Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oman

Mr Abdullah Salem Hammad Al Harthy, reiterated the guiding principles of Oman's foreign policy, namely preserving peace, coexistence, non-interference, and peaceful settlement of disputes. He stated that for collective interests of the region, those countries with higher level of development should be active in helping other countries in specific programs such as mitigating impacts of natural disasters and creating tax-free zones to enhance economic cooperation.



### Professor Pham Quang Minh

Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Vietnam

Professor Pham Quang Minh, Rector, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Vietnam did an in-depth analysis of Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy of the US and the role of India, stating that the work-in-progress strategy is a huge opportunity on the one side, but also a major challenge on the other side. He embraced the idea that in terms of strategy, maritime freedom is considered as central to regional security. Recognising that India has a vital position in the regional strategy of the Indo-Pacific he opined that India should also increase its engagement with the South East Asian nations.





# **INAUGURAL SESSION**

The Inaugural session of the Conference was addressed by H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka; H.E. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Vietnam; H.E. Upendra Yadav, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population of Nepal; H.E. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India and H.E. Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore. The Welcome Remarks of the 2-day Conference were delivered by Ms Preeti Saran, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, India

# H.E. Smt Sushma Swaraj

External Affairs Minister, India

Addressing the Conference, External Affairs Minister of India H.E. Smt Sushma Swaraj, stated that nurturing peace and stability in this region is of prime importance and highlighted the role of IORA for that purpose. She spoke of the challenges being faced by the region and the need to build regional partnerships to tackle the same. She also spoke of the centrality of ASEAN's role in the region's maritime architectural development and Government of India's commitment to the vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region).





### H.E. Dr Vivian Balakrishnan

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

In his address, H.E. Dr Vivian Balakrishnan highlighted the importance of maritime advantages which can never be surpassed and also the challenges posed by the arena. He spoke of inter-dependence as the key to maintaining peace and prosperity in the region, with no country trying to dominate the other. He also spoke on the significance of free trade and the need to use available opportunity to facilitate trade.

### H.E. Shri Upendra Yadav

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population, Nepal

The Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal, H.E. Shri Upendra Yadav spoke of the complexities of the Indian Ocean Region with its challenges of illegal activities, pollution in the ocean and natural disasters. He reiterated Nepal's commitment to build its capacity to be able to combat these challenges and cooperate with other countries and stake holders to prioritise sustainable development. He spoke of the role of common goals of promoting peace, trade and open architecture in the progress of the region.





### H.E. Pham Binh Minh

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam

In his remarks, H.E. Pham Binh Minh praised the age old civilisational connect of the Indo-Pacific which is being strengthened by greater interactions. He spoke of the invigorated enthusiasm amongst the stake holders of the region who are now emerging and showing interest in the Indo-Pacific region. He termed the envisioning of a viable regional architecture as one of the challenges being faced by the leadership of the region and reaffirmed Vietnam's commitment of taking initiatives for working towards realising the dream of a regional architecture and maintaining peace in the region.

H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe

Prime Minister, Sri Lanka

Delivering the Inaugural Address of the 3rd Indian Ocean Conference, H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka highlighted the fact that for many decades, there has been resistance to any single power dominating the region. The region has historically been a melting point of civilisations, cultures and religions while keeping its multipolar character intact. Talking of the region's significance to the 21st century, he called Indian Ocean, the Ocean of Future.

Enlisting five global trends that will define the new world order, the Prime Minister spoke of fragility that the world is experiencing, secondly the trade tensions amongst economic giants that are posing significant threats to global trade, thirdly the growing military built up across the globe which is now spilling in the ocean space, fourthly the geopolitical rise of Asia (both political and economic) and lastly, the rise of multi-layered regionalism.

Calling the times to be transformational, he called upon all the stake holders to make the most of the unique opportunity to create a fair, equitable, and prosperous world that leave no one behind.



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# Day 2: Ministers' Panel I

The second day of the Conference began with a panel of Ministers' from Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Bangladesh and UAE discussing the idea of Building Regional Architectures for the Indian Ocean Region.





### H.E Sagala Ratnayaka

Minister of Youth Affairs, Project Management and Southern Development, Sri Lanka

Taking the stage, H.E Sagala Ratnayaka, Minister of Youth Affairs, Project Management and Southern Development of Sri Lanka claimed that Indian Ocean has strategically been the most important sea lane since the end of the Cold War. The multifaceted opportunities require multi-layered regional architecture and challenges like tackling maritime crimes and climate change require cooperation from all states of the region. Talking about Sri Lanka's efforts towards enhancing its geopolitical location, he spoke of the efforts being made by the Government of Sri Lanka in cooperating with other countries by way of implementing economic reforms and promoting industries. He posited that a safe, productive and resilient Indian Ocean is central to define the future of the world.

### H.E Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade , Mauritius

H.E Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of Mauritius highlighted the need for open regionalism, win-win situations and the core objective of peace, prosperity and security in the Indian Ocean. He addressed the imperatives of the changing global geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic landscapes and enhanced regional initiatives.





### H.E. AHM Mustafa Kamal

Minister for Planning, Bangladesh

H.E. AHM Mustafa Kamal, Minister for Planning of Bangladesh focussed his address on the development of the region at large. He spoke of greater and deeper cooperation between the countries of the region and other stake holders to ensure upliftment of the masses. Elaborating further on Bangladesh's agenda of development H.E. Kamal spoke of the need to discover ways to develop a regional architecture which will be inclusive of dialogues and partnerships between all the countries. He also spoke of evolving the prospects of global trade keeping in mind the objectives of free trade and navigation.

### H.E Dr Thani Bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi

Minister of the Climate Change and Environment, UAE

H.E Dr Thani Bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of the Climate Change and Environment of UAE, in his address stated that the Indian Ocean is of unparalleled importance and has a critical role to play in the years to come as the provider of not just food and trading goods, but also of knowledge sharing and cultural development. Terming the Indian Ocean to be the provider of Global Economic Growth, he called upon all the countries of the region to work hand in hand for shared prosperity in the region. He specifically mentioned that there has and shall be a considerable increase in Asia's Exports from 17% to 28% in 2030. He also spoke of issues like climate change and the importance of marine resources and the sustainable management of the same for environment and economical purposes.



# Day 2: Ministers' Panel II

The second panel of the day had representatives from USA, South Africa, Japan, South Korea, and Papua New Guinea. The panellists spoke of peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the need to join forces for domain security to counter maritime threats, mitigate the effects of disasters and enhance trade based cooperation based on academic and technical data for regional cooperation.





### H.E. Alice Wells

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, US Department of State, USA

H.E. Alice Wells, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, US Department of State, USA spoke of the necessity to build an architecture backed by strong actions and not just dialogues. She made a mention of expansion of economical engagement as per infrastructure needs and the need to improve inter connectivity for betterment of the region. Also, there should be a broad and deep cooperation for geopolitical, transnational and environmental threats. She laid great emphasis on the importance and necessity for free and open air and sea lanes of communication, within the ambit of a rules base international order, which would give prosperity to the region as a whole.

# H.E. Luwellyn Landers

Deputy Minister of International Relations, South Africa

H.E. Luwellyn Landers, Deputy Minister of International Relations of South Africa stressed that the region needs an effective security architecture in order to tackle new security challenges. He referred to IORA as an active and effective institution for its member states to cooperate for the region's prosperity and development. In its chairmanship, South Africa will pay attention to maritime security—the determining factor of the sustainable development—and promote cooperation with other countries from both inside and outside of the region.





# H.E. Kazuyuki Nakane

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

H.E. Kazuyuki Nakane, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan spoke of the importance of a rule-based and inclusive Indo-Pacific region in bringing prosperity to all countries. He reiterated Japan's commitment of opposition to all such activities that affect the status quo of the region and called upon the countries to resolve their disputes by peaceful means. He asserted that Japan will help other countries to improve their laws and maritime enforcement capacity, contributing to sustaining and strengthening free and open order based on the rule of law in order to fulfil enormous infrastructure needs in the region and strengthen connectivity between countries.

# H.E. Cho Byung Jae

Chancellor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy, South Korea

H.E. Cho Byung Jae, Chancellor, Korea National Diplomatic Academy of South Korea expressed South Korea's openness towards various initiatives and readiness to join forces to enhance strategic and physical connectivity for region's peace and stability. He enlisted certain principles to enhance the existing regional architecture and asked for it to be more open, reasonable and transparent. He spoke of peaceful dispute resolution, for mutually beneficial cooperation and for the need to build new architectures based on already existing institutions.



# H.E. William Samb

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister, Papua New Guinea

H.E. William Samb, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea started his speech by talking of globalisation and the growing interdependence amongst the countries. He then spoke of peace, stability and prosperity in IOR by necessitating the importance of architecture for achieving the common object of security and maintaining peace. The minister also said that there needs to be a discussion in order to find reasonable safeguards for our nation and people. The current need of a mechanism and apparatus in place for improvement of the region as a whole is important.





# OFFICIALS' PANEL I

The third session of the day was addressed by Lordship Kriangsak Kittichaisaree, Judge, ITLOS; H.E. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary for International Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Chairman of DERASAT, Bahrain; H.E. U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar; H.E. Yi Xianliang, Director General, Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China; and H.E. Mrs Pornpimol Kanchanalak, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.



# Lordship Kittichaisaree Judge, ITLOS

Lordship Kittichaisaree reasserted the relevance of UNCLOS and its mechanisms to settle disputes and manage peace in the Indo-Pacific region. He illustrated this point by providing typical cases in maritime border delimitation and even disputes regarding fishery and other marine resources. He also highlighted the role of smaller countries in the establishment and operation process of multilateral mechanisms of international law.

# H.E. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa

Chairman, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International & Energy Studies, Bahrain

H.E. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, stressed that the challenges to the Indo-Pacific region in general and the Arabian Gulf region in particular, include the rise of terrorists and militias, spread of violence, foreign powers interference in internal affairs as well as other economic and social problems. He posited that cooperative relations are the basis for addressing those challenges and we should use international forums as a starting point for widening and deepening our relations.





# H.E. U Myint Thu

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar

H.E. U Myint Thu, emphasised that Indian Ocean is vital for regional peace and stability, and Indian Ocean Rim states should foster constructive dialogues and strengthen mutual trust. He opined that despite many initiatives available in the region like BRI, IPS or SAGAR, ASEAN must maintain its proactive role in shaping geopolitical landscape in the region. He also underlined the role of Myanmar as the strategic bridge linking South Asia and South East Asia.

H.E. Yi Xianliang, spoke of the farreaching and beneficial impacts of China's BRI to countries in the region after five years of implementation. Regarding the basis for the India Ocean region's architecture, he termed political trust and inclusiveness to be the two most important elements.

# H.E. Mrs Pornpimol Kanchanalak

Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

H.E. Mrs Pornpimol Kanchanalak, shared the idea that connectivity is the most important thing in modern days. She proposed the initiative of highways connecting countries in the region: starting from India, going through Myanmar and then Thailand, Cambodia and ending in Vietnam. She also stressed on the role of private sector in infrastructure projects. To conclude, she emphasised "Peace and prosperity go hand in hand. Peace without prosperity is not sustainable. War and conflict is a zero sum game in which there are no winners, just losers."



# Officials' Panel II

The last session of the day was addressed by Commodore Steve Dainton, Deputy Commander, Combined Maritime Forces, UK; Mr Phongsavath Boupha, Former Minister, President's Office, Laos; Shri Narendra Kumar Verma, Managing Director and CEO, ONGC Videsh, India; and H.E. Ashraf Haidari, Director General of Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan.





#### H.E Steve Dainton

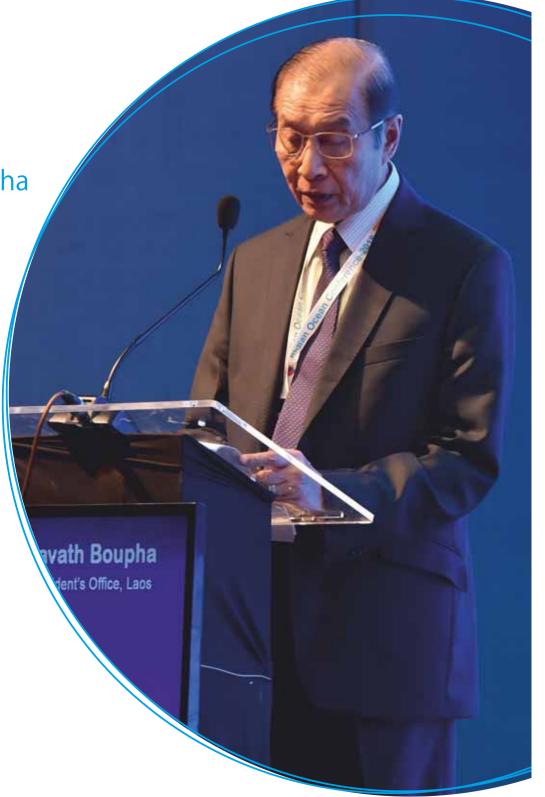
Deputy Commander, Combined Maritime Forces, UK

Commodore Dainton, spoke of the vulnerabilities of the Indian Ocean Region in terms of hindrance to international trade. He stressed on the importance of the construction of a sustainable regional architecture to ensure the free flow of commerce not to be impeded by maritime crimes. There are three choke points through which commercial ships must transit in the Indian Ocean region: Ban-el Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz and the Malacca Straits, which are all susceptible to maritime crimes such as piracy; weapons and drug trafficking which fuel terrorism and humanitarian crises like mass migration and people smuggling. He affirmed that "problems on sea must be resolved by people on land," specifically calling for the cooperation of like-minded states in building a sustainable regional architecture in order to provide security and stability in the maritime environment.

H.E Phongsavath Boupha

Former Minister, President's Office, Laos

Mr Boupha stated Laos' opinions on regional and global security, and economic and cultural challenges. He welcomed the importance of trade, commerce and governance to the Indian Ocean archipelago and stressed on the role being played by the waters of the ocean in the facilitation of trade transportation and growing cooperation between the countries. He called for solutions to address issues such as piracy and terrorism. He also stated that he regarded the Belt and Road Initiative of China and other such initiatives of other countries as an important factor in enhancing cooperation and facing challenges.





### H.E Narendra Kumar Verma

Managing Director and CEO, ONGC Videsh, India

Mr Kumar stated that the two most important components to a robust regional architecture contain two aspects: regional connectivity and energy security. By increasing the regional connectivity, the region takes major "qualitative shift towards a greater economy and cultural integration". The Indian government has taken some important projects regarding their intention to unlock the full potential of the region such as the trilateral highways between India-Myanmar-Thailand, and most recently, India has extended its proposal to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. In addition, he spoke of the importance of enhancing the air connectivity, by determining the special economic zones and energy manufacturing hubs.

#### H.E Ashraf Haidari

Director General of Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan

H.E Ashraf Haidari stressed on the importance of cooperation and partnership between littoral and landlocked countries in addressing their shared problems in the maritime security realm and the role of Afghanistan in combatting terrorism in the region. Maritime security and events in landlocked countries are interconnected. He stated that the landlocked state of Afghanistan has been a victim of state-sponsored terrorism inflicted by the Taliban, turning it into a centre of demand for drugs, accounting for 90% of regional and global demand. In order for coastal and non-coastal states alike to lower their vulnerability towards terrorism, there must be cooperation in the use of Afghan-led processes. He mentioned the Kabul process for peace and security in which Afghanistan engaged in direct talks with the Taliban with the objective to counter extremists and terrorists in Pakistan. He stated: "A stable Afghanistan at the heart of a rising Asia is in the region's best interests to ensure stability and prosperity".



### ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

### C H A I R



Ranil Wickremesinghe
Prime Minister,
Sri Lanka

#### VICE-CHAIR



Pham Binh Minh
Deputy Prime Minister

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Sushma Swaraj
External Affairs Minister,
India



Vivian Balakrishnan
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### M E M B E R S



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Union Minister of Commerce &
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Government of India



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Shakti Sinha
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Sunaina Singh Vice Chancellor, Nalanda University, India



Jayant Sinha
Minister of State for Civil Aviation,
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