APPENDIX C - REPORT AND COMMENT ON ATTENDANCE
IOR-ARC BANGALORE NOVEMBER 2011:

TOWARDS A REFORM AGENDA

Dennis Rumley
16th January 2012

I. AIM AND SCOPE OF MY FOCAL POINT POSITION

As I stated at the official handover to me to become Vice-Chair of IORAG at the Bangalore meeting, I indicated that I was greatly looking forward to working with Chair Mohanty and other colleagues in the Group to hopefully enable IORAG to achieve four basic goals:

1. To become more *active* – the identification of projects and areas of endeavour

2. To become more *directed* – a clearer sense of direction, including the development of an academic plan

3. To become more *connected* – in various ways, but especially to other IOR-ARC Groups (such as the Business Group) and to networks of IO scholars around the Region

4. To become a more *productive* Academic Group – to complete meaningful projects in a reasonable time frame which lead to useful regional policy directions

I would hope that the IORAG Reform Sub-Committee, which met for the first time in Oman in February 2011, will meet again to identify a number of areas in which these four goals – activity, direction, connection and production - can be realised. Perhaps a Standing Reform Sub-Committee can meet regularly a few months before each main IOR-ARC meeting to allow ideas and recommendations to be circulated and to give sufficient time for responses.

As a minimum, "IORAG Reform" should be a standard item (and not the last) on each IORAG Agenda until appropriate changes are finally implemented.

II. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF BANGALORE MEETING

1. I attended the IOR-ARC meeting in Bangalore as Australia's IORAG focal point. I also represented the Indian Ocean Research Group (IORG) as one of the two official Observers to IOR-ARC. The complementary nature of assuming both roles at the meeting facilitated a broader understanding of the IOR-ARC process, enabled greater scope for wider academic diplomacy and opened up ideas for a more concrete set of linkages between IORAG and the other groups within IOR-ARC. While I might have anticipated some conflict of interest in this dual role, in fact (to my knowledge) none emerged.

2. One of the principal outcomes of the meeting was my becoming the Vice-Chair of IORAG for two years.

3. While providing firm support to the Chair, Mohanty, during this period, one of my main goals in the next two years is to facilitate the reform process within the Group. ***I would welcome strong support from DFAT in this endeavour***.

4. While there is a clear need for reform, one of the pleasing aspects of the meeting was the number of research projects which were presented and the number of projects which obtained support. Too little time, however, is spent in a proper evaluation of project performance.

5. On the other hand, as previously reported, the deliberations of the IORAG reform sub-committee in Oman in February 2011 were somewhat frustrating and did not produce a sustainable reform agenda.

6. One of the principal frustrations with the functioning of IORAG, however, is that it spends far too much time on bureaucratic rule-making and unmaking and too little time *discussing* projects that might be of benefit to the organisation. For example, finalising the report from the Group in Oman was quite an unnecessarily lengthy and painful operation.

7. One other frustrating aspect of the functioning of IORAG is that those who spoke the most were primarily representatives of government instrumentalities and too few who were academic researchers with a strong interest in Indian Ocean policy-related research.

III. REFORMING IORAG – SOME STARTING POINTS

1. In general, there exists a sense of goodwill to facilitate the **continuation of an IORAG.** However, the membership and meetings of IORAG need to be more strongly supported by all 19 IOR-ARC member states and by regional academic institutions, especially in terms of the nature of representation (normally an academic) and by enabling regular attendance/participation.

2. **The aim, structure, function and funding of IORAG needs urgent reform** and this needs to be more openly discussed and 'driven' by a Standing Reform Committee which meets annually.

3. I did add one item to the **Bangalore Agenda on reform**, but by the time this came up, the meeting had gone on for far too long and everyone was quite exhausted. I therefore decided to circulate to all present some notes on reform which were put together for the reform meeting in Oman (attached as Appendices).

4. **Reforming IORAG needs to be close to the top of the Agenda for the next IORAG meeting**. Plenty of notice needs to be given such that position papers and issues can be pre-circulated in good time.

5. **Academic Plan.** Many in the Organisation have pointed to the need for an academic plan for IORAG (see Appendixes 1 and 2). Proposals for such a plan need to be formulated and circulated for proper discussion. I do not pretend that developing such a Plan will be easy. However, it may be possible to reach a consensus on some broad research issues – for example, basic research areas (Appendix 2).

6. **Research Project Formulation.** The presentation and evaluation of a proposal for research funding support by IORAG is essential. However, in order for all projects to be given proper consideration, proposals need to be pre-circulated at least two months prior to the meeting.

7. **Project Funding.** This is an ongoing problem. Many projects should seek outside funding. However, if the project is central to the Academic Plan of IORAG then perhaps the organisation can support it and that support might be given within a flexible framework.

8. **Project Evaluation.** All projects need to be appropriately evaluated on an ongoing basis. The present status and structure of IORAG meetings make it extremely difficult for this to take place.

9. **Dissemination of Project Results.** Better regional mechanisms for the dissemination of project results need to be implemented – conferences, publications, concrete policies etc.

10. **Structure of the IORAG Meetings.** The present structure of IORAG meetings makes it almost impossible to implement reform measures of the sort noted above. This is partly due to time. IORAG meetings can be over two days – for example, day 1 could be detailed discussion over new projects and day 2 could be presentation and evaluation of project results.

11. An **IOR-ARC Academic Network** (IORARCAN). All member states and Dialogue Partners need to develop a basic academic network. This then needs to be expanded to include research interests that then feed into a regional Indian Ocean Academic Centre in Mauritius which acts as a hub for the whole region. Effective use of the website for a regional academic directory and for related matters is essential.

12. Finally, *visibility*. The level of ignorance of and apparent lack of interest in IOR-ARC on behalf of some Dialogue Partners is quite astonishing. However, Kevin Rudd's Bangalore statement on the role of the Organisation helped a great deal. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to increase the level of awareness and interest in IOR-ARC. The website will help when it becomes fully functional, but more needs to be done.

APPENDIX 1
SUGGESTED IORAG REFORM POLICY

Dennis Rumley
12TH February 2011

1. GOALS

Recall original goals of IORAG
IORAG as 'second track' but is 'state' representation a problem? Academic representation on IORAG *essential*.

2. PRINCIPLES

Research needs to target issues of common concern.
All project proposals to specify regional benefits.
All research needs to avoid concern with individual states.
Projects to be supported by a core group of regional states
Respect for academic freedom necessary.

3. RESEARCH

Key research areas/areas of interest of IORAG? – resources and development?
Identify new research projects – Council of Ministers (COM)/Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) to recommend?

4. PROCEDURES

National focal points to facilitate greater academic participation.
Better coordination of research and meeting times among groups (IORAG, WGTI and IORBF).
IORAG input to new IOR-ARC website?

5. SUPPORT

Strong financial and logistical support from business, universities and government required for IORAG success
Special Fund to be used for prioritised projects?
Can greater Special Funding be sought?

6. OUTCOMES TO DATE

Of a total of 76 IORAG projects 1997-2010, 9 are ongoing and have a concept paper (ANNEX B). Can the number of IOR-ARC states involved increase? **(SEE POLICY NOTE 1)**
Of these 9 projects, Australia has a lead role in one project (project 20 - UMIOR) and is a core group member in one other project (project 64 – AMASSEAO). *Mauritius keen to join* **(SEE POLICY NOTE 3).**

APPENDIX 2
BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COLLABORATIVE INDIAN OCEAN RESEARCH
Dennis Rumley
12th February 2011

Working Assumptions
1. There is a need to develop a research environment which has a stronger focus on Indian Ocean issues.
2. There is a need to foster a culture of Indian Oceanness.
3. The highest priority for an Indian Ocean research focus should be on matters of common concern to IOR-ARC states.
4. Such research should be directed to enabling better regional policy outcomes.
5. A priority task is to collect and collate basic regional human, economic and environmental data to provide a stronger regional policy foundation and to enhance collective regional awareness.

EDUCATION
1. Exchange – students and staff – scholarships
2. Ideas – courses of various descriptions, including short courses for business
3. Materials – translation projects
4. Indian Ocean Mutual Awareness Project (IOMAP) – information/courses, education and training programmes
5. Possibility of reviving UMIOR?

BASELINE DATA PROJECTS
1. Indian Ocean Research Directory (IORD)
2. Indian Ocean Data Base (IODB) – economic, resources, environment etc
3. Indian Ocean Mutual Awareness Project (IOMAP) – perceptions project
4. Indian Ocean Reader
5. Indian Ocean Atlas (IOA)
6. Publication progamme – publish research findings in JIOR
7. Others?

POTENTIAL POLICY-ORIENTED RESEARCH PROJECTS
a. social sciences and humanities
1. Maritime affairs – security, policies, jurisdiction etc
2. Economic security
3. Energy, food and water security
4. Environmental security – interdisciplinary project
5. Regionalism
6. Humanities and other projects – see *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* inaugural essay – concentrate on 'collective' projects and omit state-based issues such as "geopolitical change" and "state security".

b. science-based projects
1. Ocean resources
2. Marine science
3. Agriculture
4. Fisheries