

**“Promoting a Comprehensive Connectivity in the Indian Ocean-Rim”**

**Statement by H.E Mr. Budi Bowoleksono, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
prepared for**

**The 12<sup>th</sup> IOR-ARC Council of Ministers**

Gurgaon, India, 2 November 2012

Your Excellency Mr Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India, and  
Chairman of the Council of Ministers,

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Mr Secretary General of the IOR-ARC

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, and your team for the excellent arrangement and very generous hospitality extended to my delegation and myself.

I wish to use this opportunity to extend the regret of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, His Excellency Dr. Marty Natalegawa, for being unable to attend this meeting, in spite of his strong wish to participate. I join him in expressing our full confidence in your ability, Mr. Chairman, to bring this meeting of Council of Ministers to a productive and successful conclusion.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome into our midst the Union of Comoros. This enlargement of our Association is both evidence and expectation that IOR-ARC has to become even more relevant to our region.

As we mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Association, the theme of “IOR-ARC at 15: the Next Decade” is very pertinent and forward-looking. It is an appropriate moment for us to review our cooperation – to see if it has reflected the aspiration of all members of this forum that seeks concrete action – and to decide our agenda for the next decade.

Let us have a look at the state of our region and cooperation these days.

The IMF predicted that the economic slowdown in Europe and United States would likely to continue, dragging the global growth to 3.3 per cent. Meanwhile, the inequality in our region has also grown to a worrying degree.

What has our cooperation done to improve the resiliency and inclusiveness of our region?

The energy and food market are still very volatile. The poor quality of our supply-chain, combined with the increasing demand of our fast growing economy and population, are straining our energy and food security. Our naturally disaster-prone regions tend to exacerbate our problems. Continued incidence of piracy in our ocean complicates our efforts to resolve pressing issues.

What has our cooperation done to address these immense challenges?

The IOR-ARC actually has the capacity to give more impact to the world and to our people. We are a forum comprising 20 member countries, stretches from southern part of Africa to eastern part of Australia. We could be a self-reliance and resilient region, a powerhouse of our own economy.

I was, therefore, very pleased to hear that the Council of Senior Officials had discussed issues such as health, food security and climate change. We support the broadening of the Association's scope of work because it is important to have strong sectoral and functional cooperation.

To do that, we need to establish a more solid connection to act collaboratively as a forum. Therefore, connectivity would be a natural element to be strengthened, as an overarching agenda in the next decade.

Our effort to promote connectivity in the Indian Ocean Rim should be more than just building ports, roads, and bridges to deliver our goods faster – crucially important as they are. It should incorporate actions to improve coordination between our institutions. It should integrate efforts to strengthen our people-to-people interaction. It should also include activities to promote business-to-business cooperation.

Last year, we have identified six main areas as the focus of our cooperation. These six areas of our shared concern and interest could be the groundwork of our effort to promote a more comprehensive connectivity in our region. By having a more comprehensive connectivity, we will eventually engrave deeper trust and understanding among our nation, and build better sense of confidence and community among our people.

With a stronger confidence, we could improve our cooperation in the forum.

With a stronger cooperation, we could strengthen our prosperity as a region.

With a stronger prosperity, we could give meaningful contributions to the world.

Let us walk the talk and convert our commitments into real projects and activities.

India has served us well as the able chair and leader of the Association, for which we are grateful. I am confident that with your strong support for the next chair, Australia, and Indonesia as vice-chair, we will be able to further advance our cooperation in the next two years.

Thank you.