

STATEMENT BY HON. AMB. PROF. SAM K. ONGERI, EGH, MP,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 12TH MEETING OF THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM
ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR-ARC),
2ND NOVEMBER, 2012 GURGAON, INDIA

Your Excellencies, Fellow Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by conveying deep appreciation to the Government of India for the kind treatment and generosity that my delegation and I have received since our arrival in this beautiful city of Gurgaon. The warmth and hospitality traditionally associated with the Indian people has been manifest in all our engagements.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank all the distinguished delegations from the IOR-ARC member countries who have displayed their commitment to this association. Their presence here for the last few days has enabled healthy discussions and an exchange of proposals on cooperation initiatives and the way forward for this very important association.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya fully supports the underlying fundamentals of multilateralism which have enabled member states and friends of IOR-ARC to subscribe whole heartedly to the objectives of this association.

As a founding member of this association, Kenya remains fully committed to the objectives of the IOR-ARC charter. We are proud to see visible progress in the commissioning of joint projects and undertaking of various mutually beneficial technical cooperation initiatives between partner states. It is our sincere belief that there is still additional space for more and deeper initiatives of cooperation, as well as opportunities to harness the great potential of this association.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya continues to benefit greatly from collaboration frameworks with various countries in Science, Technology and Innovation. We are keen to share our successes with member states and even more through the Academic and Inter-Universities Group. Kenya's most celebrated research institutions are in the fields of agriculture, human and animal medicine, marine and fisheries, forestry and wildlife.

Kenya deeply appreciates the proposed programme of University mobility in the Indian Ocean Region (UMIOR) which will encourage and further facilitate exchange programmes and visits for students, professors and technical experts among institutions of higher learning.

Mr. Chairman,

The enhancement of trade and investment between member states is crucial for the promotion of development objectives as a region. We appreciate the great efforts taken by member countries during the meetings of the IOR Business Forum and the Working Group on Trade and Investment to work towards the achievement of these goals. My country will continue to support the study on the establishment of the Free Trade Area, and the finalization of the database of business membership organizations.

While appreciating that tourism has over the years become a major driving force of the economies of most member states of the IOR-ARC, it is important to recognize the effects of the global financial crisis on luxury and holiday travel and the attendant impact on economies that draw foreign exchange earnings from tourism. IOR - ARC is blessed

with the world's most unique fauna and flora and a rich heritage that has been preserved over thousands of years. It is in this regard that Kenya presented a concept paper on cooperation in tourism for consideration by members of this association. With the assistance of the Secretariat, we hope to receive positive responses and additional views of member states on the proposal and its recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya would like to associate itself with the proposal made by Yemen and other states for a regional initiative towards combating piracy along the waters of the Gulf of Aden. This phenomenon has negative implications on international trade, fishing and other economic objectives in the region.

In this regard, Kenya supports UN Security Council Resolutions which call for nations to work together and use all means necessary to contain the problem of piracy in the Indian Ocean. As a Government, we will do our part in contributing to international efforts to combat piracy.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya, together with its international partners, has been involved in various initiatives aimed at restoring peace in the war ravaged nation of Somalia. We are encouraged by the recent developments in Somalia and in particular the election of a new President, Prime Minister and adaptation of a new constitution. We believe the recent military advances made by AMISOM in liberating large sections of Somalia from militias will give the Somali government added impetus to fast track the implementation of the Kampala Roadmap.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the people of Kenya, I would like to join hands with other member countries in conveying our commitment to the objectives of IOR-ARC, and in supporting the application by the United States of America to be admitted as a dialogue partner.

I Thank You