

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR J DAVIES AT THE GENERAL
DEBATE DURING THE 9TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE
INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR-ARC),
SANA'A, REPUBLIC OF YEMEN,
25 JUNE 2009**

Honourable Chair
Your Excellencies
Executive Director
Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to extend a warm word of appreciation for the hospitality extended to my delegation during the 9th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. Also, please allow me on behalf of the South African delegation to congratulate our host, for the excellent organisation of this event and the effective manner in which he has conducted the Chairmanship. I would also like to congratulate India on their assumption of the Vice-Chair of the Association. We are building on a solid foundation laid by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

May I also express our gratitude to the Executive Director as well as the Secretariat, for the excellent support rendered to ensure the smooth functioning of the meetings preceding this 9th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the IOR-ARC.

Members of the IOR-ARC

It is imperative that we, as members of the IOR-ARC create a conducive environment in which the goal of the IOR-ARC for regional integration and co-operation becomes a reality. Once again, I want to stress that this dream could only become a reality through conscious planning and effort, to further promote interaction in the region. We need to strive to use the IOR-ARC as a key to unlock the potential of the Indian Ocean Rim, in particular enhancing trade and investment flows, as well as the sustainable exploitation of the vast tourism potential of the Association's members.

The time has come for furthering our multilateral cooperation and ensuring the implementation of decisions taken at this 9th Meeting. The Indian Ocean Rim Association is facing challenges in some areas but its strategic value is beyond doubt and members could benefit greatly from the various sectors. The economic importance of the Indian Ocean should not be underestimated. We have to increase and strengthen our cooperation in areas such as maritime transport, fisheries and science and technology.

It is with pleasure that we note that the Working Group of Heads of Missions has been very active since our last meeting in 2008 and I would like to express my appreciation for their efforts in seeking ways to achieve the objectives of the IOR-ARC Charter. After studying the Sun City Outcome document it becomes clear that the IOR-ARC has a new focus and that newly-identified projects once implemented will be to the benefit of all member countries. I would like to urge all member countries to participate, be actively involved and take ownership of the projects identified and discussed during this series of meetings.

The IOR-ARC should not only serve as a platform for sharing ideas but serve as a vehicle towards producing tangible results that have a qualitative impact on peoples' lives. A key element

of making this a reality is the strengthening of the necessary institutional capacity. I would like to encourage other member countries to show their commitment by actively assisting with the strengthening of the Secretariat and thereby having a positive impact on the operations of this Association. South Africa is committed to this organisation and its activities and objectives. In this regard, we have seconded an official to Mauritius to augment the capacity of the Secretariat to implement our joint initiatives, and India has indicated that they are about to make a similar secondment.

Once again, South Africa would like to stress the importance of forging inter-regional linkages with other inter-regional initiatives.

Distinguished Members of the IOR-ARC

I hope this 9th Meeting will be further evidence of our enduring relationship but more importantly look firmly ahead toward the enormous potential the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation hold for all of us.

In conclusion, Chairperson

South Africa looks forward to fruitful discussions together with our partners from the region. May our deliberations be focused and productive.

Thank you for your attention