

Minister of State of Foreign Affairs the United Arab Emirates
Statement by H.E. Anwar Mohammed Gargash

Mr. President (or your Excellency),

Please allow me to extend my congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the 9th conference of Foreign Ministers of Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-IRC). I am confident that your wisdom and experience, and with the support and coordination of the member states, the 9th conference will successfully accomplish all its work. At the same time, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks for the warm reception and hospitality that have been extended to us since our arrival here in this historic and beautiful city.

The United Arab Emirates has been working, since joining this Association. To bolster economic and investment relations between the member states. It also worked to reinforce the role of this Association with other international organizations.

We feel that regular meetings and action plans of specific projects are essential in the current phase of the assoc.

Recently, and as many of you are aware, the world has witnessed unfavorable conditions at the international economic stage. Yet despite such a global economic slowdown, the United Arab Emirates believes, and in accordance with the mandate of this Association, that it is imperative to focus on liberating trade and dismantling trade and investment barriers in order to achieve balanced economic integration and enhance competence and competitiveness in the region.

The United Arab Emirates also believes that the growing threat of piracy needs a coordinated effort to preserve valuable human lives, protect the business interests of all countries, including those of the IOR-ARC members, maintain the region's competitive edge and guarantee the security of our shipping lines. Maritime security is an important consideration given that the Indian Ocean is home to several chokepoints like the Straits of Hormuz, Straits of Malacca, the Lombok and the Sunda Straits, which could disrupt energy flows and trade.

Moreover, growing naval commerce mean "soft" security issues such as terrorism, smuggling of narcotics, illegal arms trade and environment degradation are also assuming importance. More urgently, the UAE sees a dire need for effective measures to tackle issues of illegal immigration such as human trafficking. A starting point to deal with such security issues is to coordinate efforts of the multi-dimensional IOR-ARC with that of maritime security-specific Indian Ocean Naval Symposium that was initiated last year.

The UAE is glad to offer its expertise and resources in addressing any of the issues that are of concern to the Association and its member states. Similarly, we are also

looking forward to benefit from the expertise of other members. In the coming future, we sincerely hope to see our joint effort support a more robust and effective association.

As many of you are aware, over the past few months the UAE has been running an active diplomatic campaign to host the HQ of IRENA in Abu Dhabi. It is time, we believe, and I know many of you here will agree, that an international agency comes to our part of the world. This will send a strong signal to the international community that this agency is serious about tackling major issues such as climate change, sustainable development and access to Renewable Energy technology for all nations both developed and developing.

The UAE serves as a bridge between the developed and developing world - and is an ideal connecting point for all countries across the globe both logistically and in terms of the multi-cultural nature of our society. With over 202 nationalities residing in the UAE, it truly is a home for an international agency. We believe that locating IRENA in the developing world will ensure that renewable energy will become at the forefront of the agenda of developing countries.

I conclude with our thanks and gratitude to the outgoing chair Dr. Mottaki for his stewardship, and thank Yemen for holding this gathering. We are confident that their role will be constructive and represent a significant addition to the work of the association.