

**SPEECH BY HONOURABLE RAPHAEL TUJU, M.P., MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING THE 6<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING OF THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR-ARC), 21<sup>ST</sup> – 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2006, TEHRAN, IRAN**

Chairperson,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and gentlemen

Let me first on behalf of the Kenya Delegation take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson of the IOR-ARC Council of Ministers for the effective facilitation of this forum. We salute the Government of Iran for the excellent hospitality accorded to me and my delegation since our arrival in this historic city of Tehran. Our presence here is a symbol of the commitment and goodwill that is accorded to the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC).

Your Excellencies,

The IOR has become a platform for economic cooperation, which serves as a bridge between Africa, Asia and Australia in the promotion of trade and other interest despite diversity in cultural backgrounds. A number of countries within the Rim are faced with numerous economic challenges. It is therefore on the basis of this co-operation that much is expected of us by millions of our people, therefore the need to consolidate efforts to tackle these challenges. It is worth nothing that the Indian Ocean presents monumental accumulation or wealth from where countries sharing its coastline could benefit.

Mr. Chairman,

The current trend in the world's economic and political affairs call up upon countries with common values, aspirations and understanding to strategically approach issues collectively in order to derive maximum benefits. It is on the basis that my delegation strongly believes the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation can be used as a platform on which member countries could maximize potentials benefits. It is therefore a challenge to all of us to ensure that through our individual and collective efforts, the ideals of regional cooperation are our driving force in the endeavors to sustainably exploit the potentials within the Indian Ocean and our respective countries.

Your Excellencies,

The business and the academic community should base the success of the organization on commitment. The economic interests are core to the IOR-ARC activities and a driving force behind co-operation, hence the need to fully involve the business community and the academia in the pursuit of our goals.

Further, the countries washed by the Indian Ocean are among the major tourist destinations. In this respects much attention need to be placed on promotion of tourism and human resource development as core activity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our ports present enormous opportunities for investment and play a major role in facilitation of international trade. Kenya has established a Shippers Council that has played a major role in trade facilitation. The proposed establishment of a Shippers Council for the IOR-ARC region is therefore timely as it will play an important role in addressing various problems faced by the shippers in the region.

Piracy along the Kenya-Somalia coastline is emerging as a major challenge to trade facilitation not only between Kenya and the Asiatic countries but in the long run will become a serious impediment to the regional trade espoused within the Indian Ocean Rim Organization.

My country has faced this challenge without adequate support from the International community and calls up the IOR-ARC Member States to take up the challenge for it will in the long run seriously erode the anticipated benefits from exploitation of substantial resources within the Rim, especially the fisheries and tourism sectors.

Recently there was an attempt by pirates on a cruise ship off the shores of Kenya-Somalia coastline. Somalia should be a member of this organization but as it is, they have not applied because they have no government in place. Members of our organization are also members of UN and some are members of the AU where the issue of piracy can as well be addressed.

Somalia has the second longest coastline in Africa and is therefore an important element in the trade passing through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

As an organization, it is important that the IOR-RC recognizes the impact of what is going on in Somalia as having repercussions on us. We cannot be an inert standby organization of the situation obtaining in Somalia. Of course the question that begs an answer – is what can we do? May be I may ask another question: Do we throw our hands in the air and say we can do nothing? As members of the UN and AU we must ensure to address the Somalia question whenever the opportunity avails itself.

Finally Mr. Chairman, the success of IOR-ARC as a regional organization will depend on the degree of enthusiasm with which we the member countries cooperate in achieving the aims and objectives of the organization. We further reiterate the need for enhanced cohesion among member countries for the sake of a strong and formidable association in the current dynamic global arena.

Thank You.