



REPÚBLICA DE MOZAMBIQUE

MINISTÉRIO DE ASSUNTOS EXTERIORES E COOPERAÇÃO

Statement by His Excellency Henrique Banze

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

At

The 12th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC

Gurgaon, India, 02 November 2012

Mr Chairman

Distinguished Heads of Delegations,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me, at the outset, to convey my sincere gratitude for the invitation addressed to my country to participate in this important 12th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim-Intergovernmental Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC).

Our deep appreciation goes to the People and Government of the Republic of India on convening this meeting and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful city of Gurgaon.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to congratulate you upon your election to preside over this meeting. We are confident that, under your leadership, our deliberations will be crowned with success. On our side, we assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our readiness to fully cooperate in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Our particular recognition also goes to our Senior Officials, as well as to the General Secretariat of IOR-ARC for the excellent preparatory work done,

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary General of the IOR-ARC for his commitment to our Organization.

Mr. Chairman

Honourable Ministers

Ladies and Gentleman

The current session of the Council of Ministers, takes place fifteen years since the inauguration of the Association in Mauritius in March 1997. It might therefore, be appropriate for us to take stock of our achievements thus far as well as to adjust the way we work wherever necessary to improve our capacity for the attainment of our objectives.

In assessing the achievements of our organization, we must take into account the fact that we are a diverse group of countries, with different levels of economic development and integrating, at times, different regional groupings. However, it is the Indian Ocean, which sustains the maritime lifeline of over 50% of world trade that binds us together.

Today, after 15 years of existence of the IOR-ARC, it is possible to make a positive assessment of the objectives that guided its founding fathers. In fact, IOR-ARC has established itself as a significant multilateral forum and won recognition both within the member States, and at the international level.

The joining in of Comores as full member and United States of America as a Dialogue Partner gives substance to this recognition. Therefore, I wish to congratulate both the Comores and USA. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our solidarity to USA for the negative impact of Sandy storm and for the loss of lives it has caused.

Mr Chaiman,

This meeting constitutes an excellent opportunity to strengthen the ideals of IOR-ARC and to reinforce cooperation among member States.

This is the time to deepen our multilateral relations at all levels, so that our Association can become a powerful and dynamic force capable of contributing to peace and security, including maritime security including the fight against piracy, and accelerate growth and development, enhancing cooperation in thematic areas such as tourism, fisheries, trade and investment, science and technology and disaster management.

The growing level of cooperation among member States it is a clear indicator that the future of IOR-ARC is bright and, notwithstanding the challenges that it faces, through our joint efforts and common objectives we will succeed in the search for the improvement of the standard of life of our peoples as well as their aspirations for prosperity.

Ladies and Gentleman

The world today is witnessing unprecedented crisis with a tremendous negative impact on the economic growth, especially in (Least) Developed Countries. The impact of recent economic and financial crisis, climate change and piracy, poses challenges that require us to rethink the strategic role of our Association and find appropriate mechanisms to address these global challenges.

Notwithstanding these challenges some member States of our Association have witnessed rapid economic growth and IOR-ARC should consider mechanisms to translate this increase in growth into more intra-regional cooperation aimed at benefiting all member States. We therefore, welcome the Study on *Trade and Investment Prospects of the IOR-ARC in the new Millennium-New Economic Frontier of the Region*. We believe that it will prompt the adoption of trade facilitation measures aimed at facilitating and boosting intra IOR-ARC business and investment.

In this context, we need more solidarity, particularly south-south, notwithstanding north-south and triangular cooperation among our countries with a view to promote sustainable development. Our Organization should encourage these platforms of cooperation, in order to enable a more favourable environment for public and private partnership in the development of infrastructures, capacity building, transfer of technology, and strengthening of small and medium enterprises that will lead to prosperity and sustainable development.

Your Excellencies,

Mozambique has registered an average annual growth of about 7 percent over the past 10 years and the developments arising from investments in the extraction and prospection of coal, gas and other natural resources, points to an annual growth above 10 percent in the coming years.

With more than 2.800 km of Indian Ocean coastline, Mozambique has a tremendous tourism potential as well as an extensive road network, rail and ports that serves potentially domestic and regional trade.

Improving the business environment remains high challenge on our agenda. As an illustration of this positive trend, the Government of Mozambique approved the last five years investment projects estimated at over 20 billion U.S. dollars. These investments have contributed significantly in job creation.

The discovery of natural resources, in particular coal and gas, further enhances the prospect of economic development in Mozambique, given its potential to stimulate economic development in other sectors such as agriculture and processing agro-industry, energy, transport and communications, tourism, construction and others.

We invite IOR-ARC member States to take stock of these opportunities for furthering intra IOR-ARC cooperation.

Ladies and Gentleman

Scaling up food security and nutrition is a challenge that Mozambique is committed to face for the attainment of Mozambican well-being, as well to contribute for other partner countries to achieve. That's why in its chairmanship of Portuguese Speaking Community, for 2 years, Mozambique will lead food security efforts. Thus, we see an important role being played by Indian Ocean and obviously by IOR-ARC.

Therefore, I would like to thank the support and willingness expressed by the member States to join the implementation of the proposed projects by Mozambique on Sustainable Development of Aquaculture Security and Poverty Reduction and the Artisanal Fisheries.

These two projects aimed at reducing poverty and contributing to food security are of utmost importance for the Government of Mozambique. We hope therefore, that the Council will consider positively the funding of these proposals through the mechanisms existing in the IOR-ARC.

Let me conclude my remarks by reiterating the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to continue working closely with all member States of IOR-ARC and all international Dialogue Partners for the successful materialization of the objectives of our Organization.

Thank you for your kind attention!

November 02, 2012