

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE
DATUK RICHARD RIOT ANAK JAEM
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MALAYSIA
DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
10TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF
THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR-ARC)
SANA'A, REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
THURSDAY, 5 AUGUST 2010**

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

As this is the first time that I am taking the floor, allow me to express my heartiest thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of the Republic of Yemen for the excellent hospitality and organization of this meeting. I am happy indeed to have the opportunity to be here in this beautiful and historic city of Sana'a to attend the 10th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.

2. I wish to congratulate the Republic of Yemen for its leadership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) over the last two years. At the same time, I would like to express our full confidence and support to the Republic of India as the incoming Chairman of IOR-ARC for 2011 and 2012. Malaysia will endeavour to work close with India to further strengthen the Association. Let me also congratulate Australia on its appointment as the new Vice-Chair. Malaysia believes that both India and Australia will continue the good work of the Republic of Yemen and strive to inspire IOR-ARC to an even brighter future.

3. Allow me also to take the opportunity to thank our senior officials for the tremendous efforts that they have undertaken over the last year and the recommendations that they have put forward for our consideration today. The Ministerial Meeting is indeed an important avenue for us to take stock of what has transpired since our meeting in Sana'a in June 2009.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Like others, Malaysia would like to see IOR-ARC become a successful grouping as that achieved by other regional organizations. Nevertheless, Malaysia acknowledges the constraints that IOR-ARC faces in its implementation of its many proposed projects and programmes. As IOR-ARC has been in existence for some 14 years, such challenges provide impetus on the need to draw up a road map on the way forward.

5. At 14 years, IOR-ARC is akin to a teenager approaching early adulthood and much guidance is necessary in order that the teenager does not go astray. As such, a

roadmap detailing the future direction of IOR-ARC encompassing among others, practical work programmes must be put in place as a blueprint to drive the Association forward.

6. On a practical note, Malaysia is cognizant of the vital role that must be played by the Working Group of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions (WGHM) based in Pretoria which had been tasked to undertake periodic review of the work programme and the progress of projects including the three flagship projects, namely the Fisheries Support Unit, Maritime Transport Council and Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer. It is, therefore, important that IOR-ARC member states keep their representatives in Pretoria updated in order that the Working Group could perform its role and functions effectively. Another immediate step that the IOR-ARC could take to drive the Association forward is to engage its Dialogue Partners in a more meaningful manner so as to allow the Association to work hand-in-hand with its dialogue partners to build a win-win situation in various fields. Dialogue partners, with their immense strength financially and in capacity building, could be enticed to assist member states in various training courses, projects as well as funding.

Mr. Chairman,

7. At our last gathering in June 2009, member states of IOR-ARC were unanimous in the desire to undertake a review of the charter. In this regard, I am pleased to note that our senior officials have discussed thoroughly, and considered many viewpoints and recommendations to make not only the Charter, but also the Rules of Procedures, Staffing Regulations and Financial Regulations in order that they be more in keeping with today's demands.

8. It is hoped that with the improved working situation, the Secretariat will be able to play a more effective role in the running of IOR-ARC's operations. Malaysia is supportive of the need for the Secretariat to be given the necessary tools and means and, more importantly, the relevant mandate to execute its responsibilities.

9. With regard to trade, I am pleased to note that Malaysia's trade with IOR-ARC member countries last year amounted to USD92.94 billion, a slight decrease over that in 2008 owing mainly to the global financial and economic crises. At the same time, we are confident that a regional mechanism would boost trade potential and foreign investment cross flows among IOR-ARC member states. This would be one of the effective ways to elevate the Association's stature to be at par with other prominent regional cooperation as a framework to deepen and enhanced economic cooperation for the mutual benefits of member states.

10. As regards the desire to elevate the international profile of IOR-ARC, Malaysia is of the view that the proposal for IOR-ARC to seek Observer status of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council is but one way forward for the Association to consider. We welcome, therefore, the Secretariat's initiative to conduct a preliminary study on the cost benefits of such an undertaking as

well as the procedures to be followed for the granting of Observer Status to IOR-ARC, for member states' further consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

11. Allow me also to underline Malaysia's continued commitment to the various projects and programmes under the three Working Groups. In particular, I wish to highlight that our national university, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, will be hosting in March 2011 the IOR-ARC Higher Education Collaboration for Academic Excellence Convention which is aimed at exploring the potential of establishing an IOR-ARC Centre for Multilateral Education in Malaysia. Member states' active participation at the Convention would be vital as we deliberate the types and mechanisms of multilateral education that would be plausible, practical and beneficial in the IOR-ARC context and we look forward to meeting you in Kuala Lumpur.

12. With regard to the Republic of Yemen's timely initiative to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Oman Sea, Malaysia would be happy to share its experience and best practices in managing security and curbing armed robbery and piracy in the Straits of Malacca.

13. Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by emphasizing Malaysia's confidence in the vast potential of this Association. Despite the many obstacles and global challenges confronting us. I believe that given time, this grouping of Indian Ocean Rim states will gain strength, and that IOR-ARC will be a success as had been envisaged by its Founders.

I thank you for your attention.