

Statement by Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
Mr. Chavanond Intarakomalyasut
At the Tenth Council of Ministers Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim
Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC)
5th August 2010
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I first begin by joining my colleagues in expressing my thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Yemen for the organization of this meeting and the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to express our appreciation for H.E. Dr. Abu Baker Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, for chairing this meeting. I am confident that with Your Excellency's able guidance, our sessions today will be successful in achieving meaningful results that would propel the progress of the IOR-ARC.

Before I proceed, please allow me to convey the message from H.E. Mr. Kasit Piromya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, who unfortunately is not able to attend this meeting due to a previous engagement. The Foreign Minister has entrusted me to lead the Thai Delegation on his behalf and wished this meeting every success.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

IOR-ARC is a unique regional forum, comprising 18 Member States from many parts of the world, namely Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Australia. As such, IOR-ARC represents a region of great diversity, but this diversity should not be regarded as an obstacle. Rather, the diversity reflected in the IOR-ARC must be viewed as a key advantage that would help fulfil our association's huge but largely untapped potentials.

In this regard, Thailand sees the review of the IOR-ARC Charter as a positive step in the right direction towards revitalizing the IOR-ARC. But while we embark on this and other initiatives, we must realize that the future success of this Association calls for all Member States to remain fully committed to the fundamental principles of consensus, open regionalism and voluntary participation. As such, our new Charter must uphold these important principles and reflect our shared political will to enhance our cooperation in the IOR-ARC without creating legal obligations.

Indeed, there are vast opportunities for closer and more focused economic and technical cooperation within the IOR-ARC framework. Thailand is of the view that we

were to reap the full benefits of IOR-ARC, we must be more realistic and practical in our approach, focusing our efforts only in the key areas that truly reflect our common interests. Such a more focused and action-oriented approach is required if we were to make our cooperation more concrete and its benefits more tangible.

Such an area of common interest is maritime transport and security, which is essential for international trade and economic prosperity of all countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. Thailand supports the establishment of the Maritime Transport Council and its objectives of promoting maritime transport activities and addressing the challenges related to maritime pollution control and environmental protection. Thailand believes that the functions of the Maritime Transport Council should be in line with the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

With regards to maritime security, Thailand shares its concerns with the international community on the increase of piracy threats in international waters, particularly in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean in recent years. As this problem is cross border in nature, efforts to curb piracy requires coordinated international cooperation. Governments of the IOR-ARC Member Countries have a crucial role to play, especially as port and coastal states surrounding the Indian Ocean. We should enhance cooperation, share information, and increase communication, particularly to alert others in the nearby areas when attempted attacks were reported. Moreover, the best practices and experiences from the success of ReCAAP could be shared with and extended to our efforts to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Indian Ocean as well. ASEAN developments to strengthen maritime security could also serve as further examples of regional cooperation. To this end, we welcome the adoption of the Djibouti Code of Conduct last year as well as Yemen's initiative in combating piracy.

Another area of common interests that we could concentrate our effort in, is fisheries. To this end, the Fisheries Support Unit can be an effective mechanism supporting the exchange of know-how as well as promoting trade, research and management in the field of fisheries and aquaculture. Moreover, the FSU could also play a role in the conservation and better utilization of fisheries resources and the protection of the environment in the Indian Ocean.

In this regard, Thailand would be glad to offer our experiences and expertise, such as in the fields of fisheries and maritime transport and security, to other IOR-ARC Member States.

Furthermore, given the increasingly evident impacts of global warming on marine and coastal species and eco-system, the importance of climate change cannot be understated. Rising sea levels, extreme weather and food security problems caused by climate change are threatening local communities along the coasts and elsewhere in the world. Thus, Thailand believes that climate change should be regarded as a potential crucial area of cooperation in the IOR-ARC. We should explore the possibilities in fostering our cooperation in this area, through the exchange of information, the

organization of capacity building programs as well as the development of renewable and low-carbon energy, in order to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

As an active and responsible member of the international community, Thailand is committed to playing a constructive role in the IOR-ARC. Hence, on behalf of the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to express our willingness to work with all Member States and Dialogue Partners in order to accomplish our common goals for the shared prosperity of our region.

Thank you.