

**Statement by
H.E. T.M. Hamzah Thayeb
Head of Delegation of the Republic of Indonesia
at the General Debate**

**9th Meeting of the Council of Ministers
of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation**

Sana'a, Yemen, 25 June 2009

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

Let me begin by expressing the Indonesian delegation's profound gratitude and sincere appreciation to you, Excellency, and to the people and Government of the Republic of Yemen for the most generous hospitality accorded to us ever since our arrival in this beautiful and historic city of Sana'a.

I would also like to extend our gratitude to H.E. Dr. Abu Baker Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, for chairing this meeting. I am confident that under your stewardship, our sessions today will be successful in achieving fruitful results which would strengthen cooperation among the IOR-ARC member countries.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Ours is an association bound by geographical location that borders the Indian Ocean. In its 12 years of existence, the IOR-ARC agreed on a number of projects and programs in many fields which, to date still require to be fully implemented. It is in this respect that, we believe, the Association should be given a new impetus to strengthen its capabilities in carrying out these activities. One fundamental approach to that end would be to amend the Charter to reflect the new current situation, while maintaining the principle of consensus among the Member States in arriving at any decisions.

At the same time, from the myriad of programs, perhaps we should concentrate and focus on those projects and programs that are viable and that are supported by all members, on those activities that are practicable and that are achievable with significant multiplier effect for the benefit of all our peoples from the three different continents. Needless to say, these projects and programs should be undertaken in the IOR-ARC members.

Similarly important is the coordination and monitoring tasks of the Secretariat in the implementation of the activities. While we believe that it is imperative to continue our efforts in streamlining the Association, strengthening the IOR-ARC Secretariat is crucial. In this respect, we note the IORNET.com has been a useful tool in our cooperation serving as a portal to facilitate communication, undertake dialogues and exchanges of information among the IOR-ARC business communities.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Our world is presently facing rapid changes as a result of globalization. All of us are facing not only many challenges but also opportunities. In order to be able to deal with these new realities, the IOR-ARC must adjust to the new situation by strengthening its capabilities. Cooperation in the economic and political fields alone are not sufficient, but must be complemented by cooperation in the socio-cultural field so as to enhance mutual understanding, and thus, strengthen our sense of togetherness in facing those challenges.

Food security, climate change, the environment, and promoting understanding between nations are but some of the issues we have to address.

Indonesia is of the view that cooperation in fisheries by sharing best practices among member countries should become a priority in our cooperation. As we are all aware, most of our members are endowed with marine potential. Seas and oceans are part of our way of life. Acknowledging this fact, Indonesia therefore welcomes the cooperation in the area of fisheries. In this regard Indonesia took important steps not only in exploiting the potential of our marine resources but also actively promoting the sustainability of these marine resources. In May 2009, Indonesia convened and hosted the World Ocean Conference attended by 74 countries of which 14 are members of IOR-ARC and 5 are dialogue partners. The Conference deliberated on the threats to our oceans, including Illegal, Unregulated and Undocumented (IUU) fishing, the effects of climate change on oceans as well as the role of oceans in climate change. The World Ocean Conference was also intended to complement and accelerate climate change efforts under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In conjunction with the World Ocean Conference, Indonesia also convened the 1st Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) attended by leaders from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. This initiative was designed to safeguard the Coral Triangle region's extraordinary marine and coastal biological resources. Bearing in mind that the Coral Triangle area is located in the easternmost part of the Indian Ocean Rim,

we hope that there will be possibilities to link the IOR-ARC and CTI through joint efforts in the future.

We similarly welcome and support the initiative for the establishment of a maritime transport council aimed at improving the management of marine transportation comprehensively. We hope that through this program it will improve economic activities.

As to cooperation in the socio-cultural field, it is essential to enhance mutual understanding among our peoples, and thereby strengthening the people-to-people interaction. Exchanges of students, journalists, academia, artists, and networking among universities would further solidify the bonds among nations and communities in our region. This could be promoted and nurtured by the provision of scholarships such as the Developing Countries Partnership Scholarship (DCPS) and the Darmasiswa (non-degree) Scholarship programs offered by Indonesia which, last year alone, 105 students from IOR-ARC members have benefited the programs.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

As countries in the Indian Ocean Rim we share common interests in the security and safety of our sea transports. The resurgence of piracy in the recent past is threatening these trade routes. We therefore welcome the initiative by the Republic of Yemen on the issue of combating piracy in the Gulf of Aden, taking into account similar endeavors undertaken at the United Nations Security Council, while respecting the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states.

In conclusion, it is up to us member states of the IOR-ARC to continue our efforts in developing our cooperation to attain our objectives. Let us make haste judiciously guided by a realistic sense of what is possible and within the limits of our resources, to implement our projects and activities. By so doing, I believe that we can address the many challenges effectively and make concrete and tangible contribution for the benefit of our peoples.

I thank you.
