

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DATUK JOSEPH SALANG
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MALAYSIA

AT

THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF IOR-ARC
TEHRAN, IRAN.

WEDNESDAY, 7 MARCH 2007

Mr Chairman,

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen

Before I proceed any further, I would like to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to our Indonesian friends for the loss of lives and untold sufferings caused by the tragic air crash in Jogjakarta and the devastating earthquake in Sumatera.

2.. On behalf of the Malaysian Delegation, I would like to join the other speakers to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to H.E. Manourcher Mottaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the Iranian Government for the excellent arrangements and the warm hospitality that has been accorded to my delegation and myself since our arrival in Tehran. The excellent preparations made by the Iranian Government will undoubtedly contribute towards the successful outcomes of the meeting.

Mr Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

3. Allow me to share Malaysia's views and ideas on how we could move forward together in realizing the vision of this Association in this era of accelerated economic globalization.
4. I am encouraged to see that each and every one of us in this region has moved forward and achieved positive economic results in the span of 10 years of IOR-ARC
5. However, we are still being confronted with a number of serious challenges in this region such as political instability, poverty, impacts of natural disaster and environment degradation, to name a few. In order to overcome these challenges, we need to further strengthen our regional cooperation by reminding ourselves on the objectives and working mechanisms of IOR-ARC in order to ensure that we achieve the targeted goals of this Organisation.
6. Yet a stable ray of optimism in the midst of challenges wrought by the prevailing forces of globalization can be the continuing collaboration between institutes of higher education under the IOR-ARC banner. It is my hope that the University Mobility Indian Ocean Rim Consortium (UMIOR) be an enduring tour de force of multilateral cooperation between higher education institutes among the IOR-ARC member states. I would like to express Malaysia's readiness to take the lead in furthering exchanges in teaching, learning and research-intensive activities for the Association. In this connection, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia) is prepared to be the focal point for Malaysia to work with other members of IOR-ARC. This is also in line with Malaysia's commitment as an international hub of higher education.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

7. We took note of the progress made so far by IOR-ARC. We believe that this Association could achieve more if each member state makes serious effort to achieve the goals of this organization. In this connection, I urge all members to double their effort and show their strong commitment to speed up the progress of the projects approved by the Council of Ministers. We must give clear direction to our Senior Officials to manage resources more efficiently and also ensure that there will not be overlapping of projects. We must not lose sight of the understanding that we have in this for a that participation on any projects or initiatives should be on voluntary basis as this would enable member states to actively participate in areas where they think they can contribute fully. In addition, I believe that any project to be funded from the IORARC Special Fund should be utilized for projects which could be beneficial for the greatest number of member states of IORARC.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

8. Malaysia is keen to see that this Association make tangible progress on its way to discover the hidden potential of this region. We trust that some positive outcome could be achieved in the near future. In this, I believe that we should capitalize on our experience in other regional cooperation and organization and create synergy between IOR-ARC and these regional cooperation and organization. To unlock the potential of this region, Malaysia will continue to play an active role in all the meetings of IOR-ARC and will provide the necessary inputs and assistance in projects which are deemed feasible.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.

9. Allow me to reiterate Malaysia's appreciation to Iran for hosting this occasion. May our deliberation today set the right direction and momentum for IOR-ARC to march through the existing and forthcoming challenges. Malaysia, as a Member State of IOR-ARC would like to reiterate its commitment for this regional cooperation and will work together with the other member states in order to achieve its goals and objectives.
10. May I remind Mr. Chairman and distinguished colleagues that Year 2007 is Visit Malaysia Year. This year also witnesses the 50th Anniversary of our Independence. Many trade and other exhibitions are being held. Please come and join us in our independence joy.

With that, I thank you, Mr. Chairman.