

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
HIS EXCELLENCY SHRI . E. AHAMED

(6TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF IOR-ARC, IRAN, TEHRAN)

FEBRUARY 21, 2006

Mr. Chairman

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates

Let me, at the outset, convey my warm appreciation to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the gracious hospitality extended to me and my delegation and for the excellent arrangements made for our meeting here.

2. We are very sad that the driving force behind the last two IOR-ARC Council of Ministers meetings at Colombo H.E. Mr. Laxman Kadirgamar is no more with us. May I offer our condolences to the departed soul and take a vow to keep his vision of a successful IOR-ARC alive!
3. Our senior officials have had detailed deliberations over the past two days. They have, inter-alia, discussed administrative and budgetary concerns. The recommendations they have made for our consideration are practical and result oriented. We need our Secretariat to be assured of logistical and budgetary support so that we can demand commensurate results from it. On our part, we would be happy to support the recommendations that have been made.
4. I wish to also place on record my delegation's appreciation for the generous financial contribution Mauritius has made in the running of the Coordinating Secretariat at Port Louis. We hope that the Coordinating Secretariat will closely monitor the implementation of the many activities and projects proposed by the Academic Group, the Business Forum and the WGTI. We understand that many of these projects would require additional financial assistance in the form of voluntary contribution from the Member States. I am, therefore, pleased to announce India's voluntary contribution of US\$50,000 to the Special Fund in the year 2006 to carry out IOR-ARC's activities. This reconfirms our trust in IOR-ARC and demonstrates our political will to support the activities of the grouping.
5. Mr. Chairman, in assessing the achievements of our organisation, we must also take into account the fact that we are a diverse group of countries, with different levels of economic development and also belonging at times to different regional groupings. However, it is the Indian Ocean, which sustains the maritime lifeline of over 50% of world trade that binds us together. We should encourage the three working groups - the Academic Group, the Business Forum and the Working Group on Trade and Investment to come up with tangible proposals based on our complementarities and synergies.
6. I would like to suggest that we organise workshops on issues having direct relevance to our trade and industry sectors or for developmental activities in our countries. There are many areas where we can benefit by sharing each others' developmental experiences, technologies, traditional knowledge or best practices.

7. Disaster Mitigation and Management has emerged as a significant area of international cooperation, particularly after the Tsunami of 26 December 2004. India had organized an IOR-ARC Workshop on Disaster Mitigation and Management in 2005. Tsunami has made us to recognize the need for a comprehensive oceanogenic disaster forecasting and mitigation system. I am happy to note that the Committee of Senior Officials have accepted India's offer of establishing an Expert Group to discuss issues related to setting up of a network of early warning centers in the member countries to transact real time data. India is prepared to share the experience gained in Mitigation of Natural Disasters with other IOR-ARC Member States and provide training for building capacity in prediction, modeling, forecasting and early warning of natural disasters. At the same time, we would be happy to learn from the experiences of other member states in this important field.
8. Mr. Chairman, the private sector in India has made a significant progress in recent years. Our knowledge industries have created their own brand image. This is attracting major global corporations to invest and locate in India. At the same time, the Indian private sector is also looking for investment opportunities overseas. My Government is ready to facilitate private sector investments in IOR-ARC member states for mutual benefit. In this context, I am happy to announce that we would organise an IOR Trade Fair in India. On the sidelines of the Trade Fair, sectoral seminars, Buyer Seller Meets could also be arranged. In order to promote the private sector led business activities, we need to look at the issue of visa facilitation for bonafide business travelers. India grants multiple entry long term visa for individuals falling in this category.
9. Mr. Chairman, you would agree with me that people to people interaction would indeed play a pivotal role in bridging the civilization gaps in our region. Let us think of initiating such activities which can utilize this synergy and lead to a better visibility of the region in our own countries in particular and world at large. We can think of events such as IOR-ARC cultural festivals, Film Festivals etc. as way forward in this context.
10. Tourism is an important aspect of our interaction. According to a World Tourism Council report, South Asia and South East Asia have shown the largest percentage increase in tourist arrival which encompasses the entire Indian Ocean Rim. India will be willing to host a roundtable of tourism sector representatives from the member countries leading to better synergy amongst our tourism industry players, including tour operators. They should be encouraged to work out tour packages encompassing more than two countries in our region.
11. Before I conclude, let me express Mr. Chairman, my delegation's full support and commitment for the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. I am confident that our deliberations under your mature leadership would lead us to concrete decisions that would take forward our young grouping. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



STATEMENT BY

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

AT

**THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING
INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION
TEHRAN, IRAN.**

WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2006

(Please Check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

1. First of all I would like to congratulate Your Excellency for the assumption of the Chair of the Council. On behalf of the Malaysian Delegation, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Your Excellency and 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 success of the meeting.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

2. In the last two years, this region had experienced two major catastrophes namely, the Tsunami disaster in December 2004 and the massive earthquake in South Asia in October 2005. Sadly most of the countries which suffered from these natural catastrophes are member states of Indian Ocean Rim Association. In this connection, I would like to extend my condolences to the victims and families of these victims. Malaysia, is deeply appreciative of the immediate response of the

international community in providing humanitarian assistance to the victims and their families. Malaysia is grateful to those who had extended help to Malaysians who were affected by the tsunami. The Malaysian government together with the Malaysian public, NGOs and the business community had also contributed to alleviate the sufferings of the victims not only in Malaysia but also in other affected countries.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

3. Natural disasters are increasing in frequencies, complexity, scope and destructive capacity. Thousands of people have lost their lives and many more have been traumatized by the destruction caused. I am of the view that national authorities and the international community should continue to provide practical support to the affected communities. At the same time, we need to instil in our communities a culture of disaster awareness and give emphasis on preparedness to face such eventualities. We note too that in the last few years, nations in the Indian Ocean Rim have been taking appropriate action to install and upgrade early warning systems as well.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

4. In this connection, I am pleased to inform you that Malaysia had installed the ocean buoys and tide gauge in the Indian Ocean. I would like to express our appreciation to Indonesia for allowing Malaysia to install the monitoring system in its territorial water. In addition, Malaysia is also ready to consider participating in any regional initiative that would enhance our preparation to face such natural catastrophes.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

5. While we are in the midst of recovering from the Tsunami Disaster and the South Asia earthquake, we have also had to face other challenges, including the outbreak of Avian Influenza. In fact, it is believed to have already caused many deaths in the region and appears to be spreading to other parts of the world. It is essential for IOR-ARC member states to monitor the situation and collaborate with each other and relevant international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) to meet this challenge.

6. In Malaysia, we have established a joint panel consists of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro Based Industry to prepare for the possibility of an avian flu outbreak and to take measures to prevent it. In this connection the National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan had drawn a contingency plan to prepare for any outbreak. Among others, the plan includes intensifying inspection of import and export of poultry at the borders, compensating the poultry breeders in the event that their birds are culled, stockpiling of medication and flu vaccines for at least 25 per cent of the population and intensifying awareness campaigns to inform villagers and breeders of the danger of avian flu. At the moment, the Government has spent some money to stockpile the anti-viral drugs which is sufficient for 60,000 people. The Government has also designated 21 hospitals to care for severe and complicated patients as well as centers such as the Institute for Medical Research to carry out tests for the virus

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Colleagues,

7. As for the progress achieved by IOR-ARC since its establishment in 1997, we would have to admit our achievements are limited. During our last meeting in Colombo, 2004, we had outlined a number of projects to be embarked by IOR-ARC and the setting up of a Special Fund to implement these projects and programs. Accordingly, we should focus on resources to actualizing these projects, bearing in mind that our financial resources in the Special Fund is very modest. Malaysia looks forward to working with all our colleagues here in implementing these initiatives. On the suggestion of our distinguished colleague from Sri Lanka, Minister Fowzie, to declare 2007 the Year of Tourism for IOR-ARC. I am pleased to inform the Council that Malaysia has launched the Year 2007 as Visit Malaysia Year, which coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of Malaysia.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues,

8. May I conclude by reiterating Malaysia's continued commitment towards IOR-ARC so that it would truly become a successful manifestation of regional cooperation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Address by His Excellency, Dr. Abdul Razak Noormahomed, Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources of the Republic of Mozambique at VI Meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC –Tehran, 21st 22nd February 2006

Excellency Honourable Manouchehr Mottaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Mister Chairman

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I wish to express the gratitude of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for convening the Sixth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation and for the warm hospitality afforded to me and to my delegation since our arrival in this Historic country

I would like to congratulate Your Excellency Manouchehr Mottaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Your election as Chairperson of our Association.

It is our belief that under Your able leadership we will come out with concrete projects that will enable us to promote intra IOR-ARC trade, investment and achieve a solid integration, which are the main goals of our Association.

Mister Chairman

I take this opportunity to commend the decisions taken by the Member States during the last Session of the Council of Ministers, in Colombo, which contributed positively to enhance the work of the organization.

Nevertheless, we feel that more impetus should be given to the IOR-ARC to make more progresses in medium to long term. In this context, my Government would suggest a revision of our projects so that we stick on those with a great potential and in which we have comparative advantage.

Our Organization offers opportunity to exchanges experiences and share information in various fields in order to develop our societies and improve the life of our people. In this regard, we have to show the concrete achievements done so far.

We are encouraged by the progress achieved during the previous meeting, specially by the recommendations adopted by the Committee of Senior Officials that leads us to make a strategic revision of our programmes. However, we have to do more to achieve our goals.

My Government would reiterate the need for a tripartite approach of our projects, which provide space for interaction between Governments, academics, and business sector to ensure the full participation of the all society

My Government wants to thank the Government of Mauritius for hosting the Co-ordinating Secretariat and having covered its expenses since the existence of IOR-ARC. In this context we invite all member states to rethink the role and structure of the bodies of IOR-ARC in order to make them more effective in implementing our decisions, specially those related to the financial management and projects implementation.

I would like to underline the need for all member states to ensure the proper follow-up of our decisions and recommendations aimed at the strengthening and give effectiveness to our Organization.

To allow our Organization to go ahead we must allocate the necessary financial resources and provide the IOR-ARC with a stable budget for its activities and for the proposed projects. In this regard, we commend the offer of USD 50.000,00 made by the Government of India during this meeting.

We noticed an increasing interest of third part countries towards our Organization. For us that is an

important signal of growing confidence of the world in our Organization that could be an important factor of progress. Therefore, this issue should be carefully addressed.

Finally, Mister Chairman, I would like to express Mozambique's Government willingness in continuing working with all Member States, Dialogue Partners and others stakeholders within the spirit of the Charter towards the achievement of our objectives and the progress and social development of our countries and people

I Thank you, Mister Chairman!

Opening Remarks by Singapore Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H.E Mr. Zainul
Abidin Rasheed at the Sixth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC
Tehran, 21st 22nd February 2006

Main points

- Mr. Abidin Rasheed congratulated the Chair on his election, and thanked the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their excellent arrangements and hospitality accorded during the IOR-ARC meetings.
- He noted that the Senior Officials had a productive meeting in the preceding days and had come up with constructive proposals. Specifically, he noted that there was a consensus that the IOR-ARC identify several tangible projects that Member States could jointly embark on.
- He noted that the preceding speakers had demonstrated through their opening remarks the political resolve of their countries to fulfil their collective interests within the IOR-ARC.
- He noted the importance of the private sectors of each Member State in driving the projects proposed by the IOR-ARC.
- He expressed satisfaction that Member States had recognized the importance of sharing information concerning tsunami early warning systems as well as contingency plans to manage avian flu outbreaks. Mr. Zainol Abidin Rasheed expressed his hope that there would be concrete progress in these areas.
- He expressed confidence that the Sixth IOR-ARC Council of Ministers Meeting would be a success under the able Chairmanship of Iran.

Address by His Excellency Ali Reza Sheikh Attar,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Head of
Iranian delegation to the Committee of Senior Officials
at the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC
Tehran, 21st 22nd February 2006

Dear Colleagues,

At the outset I would like to congratulate Your Excellency for assuming Chairmanship of our meeting. Hereby, I once again announce my country's full support and commitment to IOR-ARC.

We believe the potentials of Member States are considerable and complementary. Therefore our co-operation needs to be serious and the impediments and obstacles of our Association should be recognized in pathological manner. Although one of the main hurdles for our co-operation is lack of financial support, which should be removed by governments of member countries, in the meantime the direct financial support may be incorporated by other forms of support, namely technical and scientific one.

Supporting Secretariat by sending seconded colleagues should be encouraged as Iran and South Africa announced their readiness to send seconded staff to the Secretariat.

Iran also proposed new areas for co-operation in the field of IT, petrochemical and LNG, as well as convening workshops on different subjects such as standardization.

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY SOUTH AFRICAN DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MS SUE VAN DER MERWE AT THE GENERAL DEBATE (AGENDA ITEM 5) DURING THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR – ARC), TEHRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, 21 FEBRUARY 2006

Honorable Chair
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Please allow me on behalf of the South African delegation to congratulate our host, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the excellent way in which this occasion has been organized. Thank you also for the hospitalities extended to all delegates since our arrival in Tehran. South Africa looks forward to fruitful discussions together with our partners from the region regarding the future direction of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)

Ladies and gentlemen

Next year, it will be ten 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 to achieve our objectives.

As we were listening to the outgoing Chairperson's report on the Fifth Meeting of the Council of Ministers that took place in Colombo in 2004, we are once again made aware of the enormous economic potential of the Indian Ocean Rim. This potential has been illustrated by many commentators, acknowledging amongst others that the Indian Ocean carries half of the world's container ships, one third of the bulk cargo traffic and two thirds of the world's oil shipments. The Indian Ocean Rim is also rich in resources, ranging from food fisheries to precious minerals, from agricultural wealth to valuable human technical expertise. Most importantly, the Indian Ocean Rim represents a population of close to two billion people, making it a massive market. The strategic value of the Indian Ocean Rim, therefore, is beyond doubt as it constitutes an enormous asset to international traders, governments and fishing communities alike.

During the colonial period, many Member States have had first hand experience of the importance that colonial powers attached to trading routes along our coastlines and across the Indian Ocean; and in the book *Empires of the Monsoon: A history of the Indian Ocean and its Invaders,* author Richard Hall recalls contacts between Asia Africa from the pre-colonial period and how the monsoons drove a flourishing trade along our common shores.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The tragic consequences of natural disasters that have devastated the Indian Ocean Rim recently, as well as the reached the shores of member states, have taught us the value and importance of regional integration and cooperation. However, the potential of the Indian Ocean Rim remains untapped or underutilized to the peoples of our countries. As member states of the Indian Ocean Rim representing mainly the developing world, it is our shared responsibility to vigorously promote South-South cooperation in the spirits of multilateralism to the mutual benefit of all. South Africa looks forward to further discussing with our Rim partners issues such as the mitigation of natural disasters and the establishment of early warning systems; maritime cooperation; building on the academic and research capacity exchange; and, most importantly, the promotion of trade and

investment.

South Africa is eager to see that this Association makes tangible progress on its path to unlock regional potential and deliver positive outcomes. We are especially keen to strengthen the Rim's institutional capacity to achieve this. I would like to propose that we look at some of the following issues as a matter of urgency:

South Africa's position is that the role of the IOR-ARC Chair is vital for the work of the Association. The Chair's mandate to monitor the progress of identified projects and programmes should be clearly spelled out to ensure effective communication between identified project champions and the Executive Director. We believe that the Chair's role needs to be a leadership role.

The role of the Executive Director should also be strengthened to enable her or him to effectively carry out the work of the secretariat. Our belief is that the Executive Director's mandate should enable her or him to represent the Association at key international meetings to raise the Rim's global image; she or he should present quarterly progress reports on deliverables to all members; and this person should be supported with the necessary resources to ensure delivery.

In this regard South Africa is committed to make its contribution by seconding an official to Mauritius this year to augment the capacity of the secretariat to deliver our joint programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen

You are aware of the current lack of funding for projects and programmes, such as academic research and exchange. South Africa is one of the views that our programmes and projects must be based on reliable and dependable information. Therefore, South Africa welcomes the establishment of the proposed Special Fund, ideally to be would enable the Association to carry out its tasks in a much more informed manner, as well as to provide a platform from where our Dialogue Partners could be engaged to participate or contribute to selected projects and programmes. South Africa is fully aware and sensitive to the reality of Member States limited human and financial resources, and obligations to important other regional organizations.

In this regard, Ladies and gentlemen, Member States will remember the Africa Asia Summit that took place in Jakarta during April last year and the subsequent adoption of the new Africa Asia Strategic Partnership (NAASP). This was the 50th anniversary of the history Bandung Summit in 1955 which established Afro-Asian solidarity. It is this bond between our nations on which we need to capitalize.

Delegates will be aware, that as Africans we are committed to an African Renaissance in an effort to rid our continent of its history economic backlogs. Africa has already embarked upon a continental initiative, home grown and African lead, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Joint African-Asian initiatives offer unlimited potential for equitable participation and sharing in the benefits of the global economy. The challenge to us as Member States of In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen

Allow me reiterate South Africa 's appreciation to Iran for hosting this occasion. May our deliberations as well as our future actions be targeted and productive. And, although, as Hall said in Empires of the Monsoon which I mentioned earlier ' The monsoons no longer dictate when ships can travel the Indian Oceans yet their rhythms still pervade the lives of two billion people throughout the Indian sub-continent, from East Africa to Malaysia. The Indian Ocean is reviewing its status as a Zone of encounters and contacts and a crossroads of cultures ...'

We, as Member States, own this Association. At this stage however, we need to raise its international profile, rebuild confidence in its operations and we need to reinvigorate its enormous potential to our collective gain.

I thank you

SPEECH BY HONOURABLE RAPHAEL TUJU, M.P., MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING THE 6TH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING OF THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR-ARC), 21ST – 2ND FEBRUARY 2006, TEHRAN, IRAN

Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and gentlemen

Let me first on behalf of the Kenya Delegation take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson of the IOR-ARC Council of Ministers for the effective facilitation of this forum. We salute the Government of Iran for the excellent hospitality accorded to me and my delegation since our arrival in this historic city of Tehran. Our presence here is a symbol of the commitment and goodwill that is accorded to the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC).

Your Excellencies,

The IOR has become a platform for economic cooperation, which serves as a bridge between Africa, Asia and Australia in the promotion of trade and other interest despite diversity in cultural backgrounds. A number of countries within the Rim are faced with numerous economic challenges. It is therefore on the basis of this co-operation that much is expected of us by millions of our people, therefore the need to consolidate efforts to tackle these challenges. It is worth nothing that the Indian Ocean presents monumental accumulation or wealth from where countries sharing its coastline could benefit.

Mr. Chairman,

The current trend in the world's economic and political affairs call up upon countries with common values, aspirations and understanding to strategically approach issues collectively in order to derive maximum benefits. It is on the basis that my delegation strongly believes the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation can be used as a platform on which member countries could maximize potentials benefits. It is therefore a challenge to all of us to ensure that through our individual and collective efforts, the ideals of regional cooperation are our driving force in the endeavors to sustainably exploit the potentials within the Indian Ocean and our respective countries.

Your Excellencies,

The business and the academic community should base the success of the organization on commitment. The economic interests are core to the IOR-ARC activities and a driving force behind co-operation, hence the need to fully involve the business community and the academia in the pursuit of our goals.

Further, the countries washed by the Indian Ocean are among the major tourist destinations. In this respects much attention need to be placed on promotion of tourism and human resource development as core activity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our ports present enormous opportunities for investment and play a major role in facilitation of international trade. Kenya has established a Shippers Council that has played a major role in trade facilitation. The proposed establishment of a Shippers Council for the IOR-ARC region is therefore

timely as it will play an important role in addressing various problems faced by the shippers in the region.

Piracy along the Kenya-Somalia coastline is emerging as a major challenge to trade facilitation not only between Kenya and the Asiatic countries but in the long run will become a serious impediment to the regional trade espoused within the Indian Ocean Rim Organization.

My country has faced this challenge without adequate support from the International community and calls up the IOR-ARC Member States to take up the challenge for it will in the long run seriously erode the anticipated benefits from exploitation of substantial resources within the Rim, especially the fisheries and tourism sectors.

Recently there was an attempt by pirates on a cruise ship off the shores of Kenya-Somalia coastline. Somalia should be a member of this organization but as it is, they have not applied because they have no government in place. Members of our organization are also members of UN and some are members of the AU where the issue of piracy can as well be addressed.

Somalia has the second longest coastline in Africa and is therefore an important element in the trade passing through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

As an organization, it is important that the IOR-RC recognizes the impact of what is going on in Somalia as having repercussions on us. We cannot be an inert standby organization of the situation obtaining in Somalia. Of course the question that begs an answer – is what can we do? May be I may ask another question: Do we throw our hands in the air and say we can do nothing? As members of the UN and AU we must ensure to address the Somalia question whenever the opportunity avails itself.

Finally Mr. Chairman, the success of IOR-ARC as a regional organization will depend on the degree of enthusiasm with which we the member countries cooperate in achieving the aims and objectives of the organization. We further reiterate the need for enhanced cohesion among member countries for the sake of a strong and formidable association in the current dynamic global arena.

Thank You.

Country Statement by the Leader of the Sri Lanka Delegation
6th Council of Ministers Meeting
21st and 22nd February 2006
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Hon Ministers, Excellencies,

I would like to warmly congratulate the Hon Manuchehr Mottaki, on his assumption of office as the Chair of the 6th Council of Ministers Meeting of the IOR-ARC. We have richly benefited from the Chairman's statement in which he has outlined his vision for the future direction of our Association. Each Council of Ministers Meeting contributes its special character, as indeed Tehran will. It is the collective potential of the Member States, that IOR-ARC has been instituted to develop.

I request for your kind indulgence to briefly recall the devastation and loss of life brought upon on several of our member countries including my own, by the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004. The disaster was of such magnitude that it claimed over 232,000 human lives. It left in its wake death and destruction. I wish to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the support extended in the form of emergency relief supplies and financial contributions received from all the Member States of the IOR-ARC Governments and the public of member states responded magnificently and in the spirit of neighbourliness and humanity. Although this disaster succeeded in inflicting physical damage and destruction it helped the world at large to rekindle the spirit of humanness by extending support and sustenance at a level that Indian Ocean countries are yet to see. It is our credit that we were able to keep alive human values in times of dire need.

The readiness of Member States to share information on early warnings on a real time basis among the neighboring Member States indeed is commendable. I admire their desire to activate networking arrangements and sharing of information on websites. These for me are a display of the obvious signs of foundations for future achievements and a proof of keenness of the Member States to foster the objectives of the Association.

Excellencies, may I now draw your attention to pay a tribute to my colleague, the late Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, who adorned this Chair during our last meeting. He steered our discussions and provided astute leadership and visionary guidance towards charting a course for the membership towards reaching the objectives of the IOR-ARC. This was until his brutal assassination last August moaned by one and all in the international community. My late colleague played an important and key role in the affairs of this Council and his contribution towards evolving and determining the principle of clustering for the Association, a mechanism to allow a smaller number of Member States among the membership to get another and work our projects, will remain in lasting testimony of him.

It must be acknowledged that IOR-ARC remains one of the youngest regional organizations with a ten-year history. IOR-ARC, nurtured by members with noble and great expectations, is now embarking on an important phase of institutional development, where the membership will pragmatically begin to strengthen the Association. A perceptible sign of this pragmatism is the desire to owning up the Secretariat. A tribute from all of us here is owed to the Republic of Mauritius which during the last nine years bore the burden of the responsibility of meeting the salaries of the general staff of the secretariat and that of the executive head of the secretariat. I am certain that all my colleagues in the council will join me in recognizing the great service of Mauritius, to our Association.

I wish to end with a few thoughts from my late colleague Hon Lakshman Kadirgamar who at the inauguration discerned seven strands of thought on the formation of IOR-ARC as enunciated by the founders at the first Ministerial in Mauritius. I thought it fitting to revisit those reasons, which are still very relevant today.

- It could be said that IOR-ARC is a revival of historical trading ties in response to the challenge of modern economic imperatives
- Regional cooperation is seen as an effective response to the challenges posed by the globalization of world trade
- While disparate in terms of size, population, resources and development of the rim States and the absence of contiguity, a range of complementarities exist which can be tapped. It is argued that one good way to maximize these complementarities was to explore areas of cooperation not undertaken elsewhere
- Although members of IOR-ARC already belonged to other regional blocks such as ASEAN, SAARC, A=and SADEC, overlapping membership of this nature was not seen as an obstruction to or a distraction from the implementation of IOR-ARC activities, but rather a welcome source of enrichment in terms of ideas and experience.
- The imaginative and innovative composition of the IOR-ARC structure-that is to say, government, the business communities and the academic communities working together was seen as a source of special strength in the increasingly interdependent modern world.
- Some suggested that IOR-ARC should proceed slowly at a measured pace
- It was agreed that the IOR-ARC Secretariat should start small and develop incrementally as the organization generates a work programme that warrants as larger secretariat.

If, however, on the whole, the pace of regional cooperation has slackened, it is up to us, the Heads of Delegation to the Council of Ministers Meeting to give fresh impetus, to give direction where there has been deviation and to urge action where there has been inaction.

May I therefore suggest, in order to increase the visibility of this Association that we declare the year 2007 as the IOR-ARC Year of Tourism. You would recall that we celebrate 10 years in existence in 2007.

We look forward to you, Mr. Chairman, to guide the destiny of the IOR-ARC, so that the shared potential of the Indian Ocean Rim, can through serious effort, be collectively developed to benefit all our people.

Thank You.

Address by Mr. Abdellhamed M. Nasser,
of the Republic of Yemen at the Sixth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-
ARC –Tehran, 21st 22nd February 2006

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, on behalf of our delegation, I would like to convey our congratulations to your country, the Islamic Republic of Iran for assuming the Chairmanship of this important Association, and express our confidence that the Association shall witness a significant progress during your wise Chairmanship.

Mister Chairman

Your Excellencies,

We express our thanks and appreciation to the Republic of Sri Lanka for its good and successful Chairmanship of the Association for the past two years.

Excellencies

I would like to announce that Yemen had agreed on the Preferential Trade Agreement and is going to make a study on impact assessment of Tsunami disaster on the productivity of marine resources and will circulate the same to Member States in due course.

I also would like to express my country's readiness to co-operate with other Member States in order to make this Association a successful one.

Mister Chairman

Once again I congratulate you and wish you all success.

Thank you.