

STATEMENT MADE BY HON. MR. JAKAYAM KIKWETE (MP)
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND REGIONAL CO-OPERATION
OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE FIRST
MINISTERIAL MEETING OF IOR-ARC

Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be in your beautiful country, Mauritius. On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the people and the government of Mauritius for the kind hospitality extended to us since our arrival. It is important that this first meeting is being held in Mauritius where the beautiful well cared environment and the charm of its people that creates a friendly atmosphere for successful deliberations of our work.

Mr. Chairman,

My government has developed keen interest in the IOR-ARC since the idea was floated across the Ocean. We took interest because we believe the principles as stipulated in the proposed Charter will be a great benefit to us as well as to our cooperation partners. The Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation would not be treated as just one of those other organisations. We will take it seriously and participate fully.

We have specific concerns which we believe can very ably be taken care of by IOR-ARC. There are numerous objectives we want to achieve on the Eastern part of our country and beyond, but our hand, in the meantime is just too short to reach most of them. We believe, however, that by joining hands with other people through such co-operation arrangement as this one, we can obtain our objectives in the shortest

possible time. Therefore we have trust that the IOR-ARC will very competently accommodate our interests.

Mr. Chairman,

Tanzania is not a rich country as several members of our organisation are. We may be the poorest but we strongly believe that our membership in this organisation will complement our efforts to extricate ourselves from poverty.

We have a lot to offer in terms of business opportunities, natural resources, manpower, extensive areas of virgin land for agriculture, millions of tons of unexploited minerals, etc. This is what we bring to this organisation. We are right now working hard to improve the basic infrastructure such as transport and communication, the power supply system throughout the country in order to serve better the economic sectors. On top of all this, we have worked out and put into operation an attractive incentive package for investment and business. As you may all be aware, Tanzania, like some other developing countries, has liberalised her economy. This has been done to permit all people, nationals and non-nationals alike, to exercise their right to freely pursue their aspirations in the country.

Mr. Chairman,

We have in the last ten years been taking strenuous efforts to put the macro and micro economic frame in order. I am pleased to inform this august meeting that we have started to record encouraging results. The economy is now picking up as the structural economic reforms carried out by the government start taking root. The economy has registered a major turn-round from negative growth in the late 70's to positive economic growth economic rate of up to between 4-5% at present. This is still lower than we would have wished. Inflation declined in the last one year from 27 per cent to 15 per cent. This is quite significant because in 1994 inflation was 46%. The Balance of trade is also recording a significant improvement in 1996 compared to

1995. I believe that my country as an economy will get substantial benefits from the success of IOR-ARC.

I avail myself of this early opportunity to invite, through you, the people and business communities in your respective countries to come to Tanzania and seize the opportunity.

Mr. Chairman,

The IOR-ARC is coming up at the right moment when my country is deliberately looking towards the Eastern horizons for partnership and cooperation. This is an improvement area in the world today but we lacked strong co-operation arrangement. The IOR-ARC avails us that opportunity. It is an opportunity we have decided to seize promptly and seriously so.

We have studied both the Charter and Work Programme and found that both accommodate our concerns comfortably. We are particularly comfortable with the flexibility of the Charter, which is designed in such a way that it will cater for the concerns of all of us as well as possible new members in future. Also the flexibility of the Charter will enable our individual countries to select projects in which to participate such that prior bilateral and regional arrangements entered into by individual countries will be complemented and not interfered with.

The content of the Work Programme is quite satisfactory. However, we expect improvements here and there in future as more members join and of course as we come to the knowledge of new concerns taking into consideration the man-made and natural changes that take place at a great pace everywhere in the world today.

We are further satisfied with the tripartite approach taken by our organisation. This tallies with my government's policy. We consider this approach as one of the most practical ways to ensure faster and balanced growth in our societies. We commend

the Charter and Work Programme and I am glad that both have been adopted by this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the mechanism to co-ordinate the activities of the Association, my government's thinking is that although there are costs associated with running a Secretariat, there should be some form of organising, following up and co-ordinating our activities. In this case Tanzania supports the decision taken to have a small mechanism based in Mauritius to perform coordination activities. Let me take this opportunity to thank the government of Mauritius for undertaking to host this important instrument of our cooperation.

Finally, Mr. Chairman since we have one and the same ocean that brings us together, we should work tirelessly and harmoniously towards unity in the preservation of our Ocean. My delegation therefore fully supports the establishment of a Working Group to work out modalities for accepting new members to the organisation.

Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish the meeting fruitful deliberations and thank you all for your kind attention.