

**Speech by H.E Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, at the inaugural  
Ministerial Meeting of the Indian Ocean Association for  
Regional Cooperation, Port Louis, Mauritius  
March 1997**

**Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Dear Friends,**

May I begin by extending my warmest congratulations to Mr. Paul Berenger, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International and Regional Cooperation of the Republic of Mauritius on taking the Chair at our inaugural meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim countries. I know we can count on your experience to guide our meeting to success.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express on behalf at the Government of the Sultanate of Oman our thanks to the government and people of the Republic of Mauritius for their generosity and kindness in hosting both this and earlier meetings. I also thank all of our senior officials for their efforts in bringing us so far in the development of our new Association.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The initial proposal for the formation of this new association, first put forward by the Republic of Mauritius in 1994, was enthusiastically received as a result of the long and continuing history of close ties among the peoples and states of the Indian Ocean region. The overwhelming enthusiasm for the proposal not only reflected the deep desire of member states to revive historical, economic, commercial and cultural ties between Indian Ocean states, but also their determination to make an effective contribution to the economic development and well being of their peoples, and to the enhancement of the world economy.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Countries of the Indian Ocean Region have often been described as Third World or Developing countries. Today this classification is redundant and may no longer be applicable to the new world of science and new technology to which there must be access for all. As for our new Association, we must endeavor to participate actively and constructively in the development of mankind.

Our countries pursue free market policies and our decision to engage the business and academic sectors in the indicative of the strong will of member countries to promote their economic cooperation within a global standard. The foundation of our new Association marks our commitment in engages positively and fruitfully with the fast changing modern world economy.

The Association will enable us to devote our best collaboration efforts to the development of regional trade and investment opportunities, to the advancement of scientific and technological capabilities, and the realisation of the human potential of our people.

On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like to express our satisfaction in the inauguration of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. And pledge our wholehearted support for in development and long-term success.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.