

General Statement prepared for Ministerial Panel Session

H.E. Sunnu M. Soemarno, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia in Nairobi

The 1st IOR-ARC Economic and Business Conference

Mauritius, 5 July 2013

Your Excellency Hon. Anand Sharma, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Textiles

Government of India, as Chair

And Your Excellency Dr. The Hon. Arvin Boolell, G.O.S.K, THE Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

Government of Mauritius, as Co-Host of our conference,

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Mr. Secretary General of the IOR-ARC

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking our co-host and your able team for the excellent arrangement and very generous hospitality extended to my delegation and myself.

I wish to use this opportunity to extend the regret of the Minister of Trade of Indonesia, His Excellency Mr. Gita Wirjawan, for being unable to attend this meeting, in spite of his wish to participate. I join him in expressing our full confidence in the ability of our co-hosts, as well as the ability of our Chairman to bring this meeting to a productive and successful conclusion.

The theme of The 1st IOR-ARC EBC is "Deepening Economic Linkages for Balanced, Inclusive and Sustainable Growth" is very pertinent and forward-looking.

Yesterday, we've all had a fruitful discussion on the potential of service sector; trade and investment as well as on food security and agribusiness linkages, and ocean economy.

From our discussion, I am optimistic that the IOR-ARC has the capacity to give more impact to the world and to our people. IOR-ARC member countries stretch from southern part of Africa to eastern part of Australia. During the past decade, IOR-ARC countries have improved domestic business environment and encourage corporate sectors to become globally competitive. In short, with the growing IOR-ARC cooperation, we can be a powerhouse of our own economy. One of the measure of the potential of IOR-ARC as an economic region is that intra-regional trade is rising faster than total trade of the region with the rest of the world.

To be able to realize that vision, there has to be a synergy between the government and other stakeholders, particularly the business community. We need to harness the potential of our region by having a strong sectoral and functional cooperation between IOR-ARC countries. More importantly, as was highlighted by honorable ministers in their remarks that we need to engage a more active public-private partnership.

I would like to highlight that the resounding message from our meeting yesterday was regional coherence, deepening economic linkages and cooperation as well as establishing a more solid connection for IOR-ARC to act collaboratively as a forum. Therefore, connectivity would be a natural element to be strengthened.

Our effort to promote connectivity in the Indian Ocean Rim should also include three things as follows:

1. Incorporating actions to improve coordination between our institutions.
2. Integrating efforts to strengthen our people-to-people interaction.
3. Providing activities to promote business-to-business- cooperation. And I am pleased to see that this forum, IOR-ARC Economic and Business Conference can serve as a platform to do so.

In establishing a better regional coherence, IOR-ARC's six main focus of our cooperation, namely Maritime Safety and Security; Trade and Investment Facilitation; Fisheries Management; Disaster Risk Reduction; Academic and Science and Technology Cooperation; and Tourism Promotion and Cultural Exchanges, could be the groundwork of our effort to promote a more comprehensive connectivity in our region.

Indonesia put forward initiative on Disaster Risk Reduction at the 12th Council of Ministers IOR-ARC in India last year by the proposal of establishing the Earthquake and Tsunami Center of Excellence (The ETCE). This is a proposal for an international center of excellence to contribute an understanding, awareness and preparedness face earthquake and tsunami mitigation in Indian Ocean region. The ETCE is expected to contribute in dissemination and sharing sciences, knowledge and experience on earthquake and tsunami mitigation.

We are also continuing our efforts to encourage connectivity and a better people-to-people contact by hosting the International Workshop on Nano Technology October this year.

We also see the advantage of building stronger ties in research and establishing linkages among Indian Ocean Study Center in IOR-ARC countries and we invite more countries to submit the names of designated study center.

To conclude, I would like to extend appreciation to the Government of India for serving us well as the able chair and leader of the Association.

I am confident that with your strong support for the next chair, Australia and Indonesia as vice-chair, we will be able to further advance our cooperation in the next two years.

Thank you.