

**STATEMENT BY  
H.E JOSEPH SALALANG  
DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS,  
MALAYSIA**

**AT**

**THE 5<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING  
INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION  
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION COLOMBO  
SRI LANKA**

**THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2004**

**Mr Chairman**  
**Distinguished Heads of Delegation,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

1. On behalf of the Malaysian Delegation, I would like first of all thank our precious Sri Lanka colleague Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, as well as the Sri Lankan Government for the excellent arrangements and the warm , H.E Mr Lakshman Kadirgaman hospitalities that have been accorded to my delegation and me since our arrival in Sri Lanka, as well as the Sri Lankan Government for the excellent setting and the meticulous preparations made by the Sri Lankan Government for this meeting will undoubtedly contribute towards the success of the meeting
2. I wish to express my appreciation to the Hon, Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as well as the Hon. Hon. Lakshman Kedingamar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, for their excellent and thought provoking speeches delivered at the inauguration ceremony.
3. I note with appreciation that the council of Ministers Meeting has been structured in such a way so as to provide Member States with the opportunity to voice our views and perspective on IOR-ARC and how to visualize the future direction of this regional cooperation in this regard. I believe that our discussions should be centered on addressing the question, and suggesting answers, on how we can concretely move forward in building and enhancing greater cooperation in this region. It is heartening to note that the Committee of Senior Officials have come with proposals on how to implement some recommendations contained in the High Level Task Force Report on how to improve the effectiveness of IOR-ARC.

**Mr Chairman,**

4. We may have the in place the necessary components for buildings the IOR-ARC but these components, how ever would remain as uncompleted sections we have a clear construction plan, and unless we have a clear construction plan, and unless we start assembling the components to form the desired structure. As it is, the three pillars of the Association namely the officials, academia and business sectors, which have been assigned to carry out specific functions, need to come up with new ideas on how to overcome the lack of momentum in IOR-ARC. Given the cross cutting nature of some of the subject matters being discussed it would beneficial to have better coordination between the three different pillars.
5. Malaysia is of the view that if we are to expect any measure to success there **should not** be a proliferation of new initiatives or projects but instead we should concentrate on a few practical projects but instead we should concentrate on a few practical projects which could be of common benefit to

all the members of our Association. However, in circumstances whereby it is difficult for all members to be involved in any given project, due to member states financial and economic ability, we could look into the possibilities of allowing a few like-minded countries to initiate the project. Other countries may wish to join these projects when they are ready to do so. We should also avoid any few projects that duplicate the work currently being undertaken in other international or other regional fora

6. We are well aware that in order to embark on any new initiative, the element of funding is crucial. In this regard, we are agreeable to the recommendation made by the committee of Senior Officials to create a “Special Fund” for implementing projects and programs of IOR-ARC. Due to the limited funds available, we should disburse these funds prudently, based on the recommendations contained in the High Level Task Force Report.

**Mr Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues,**

7. As for the participation of the Dialogue Partners and Observers I am supportive of the proposals made by the Committee to amend the Rules of Procedure of IOR ARC to allow Dialogue Partners and Observers to attend the Working Sessions of the IOR-ARC. This proposal is a step forward for IOR ARC and I would like to encourage the Dialogue Partners and Observers to play a more active role in the implementation of IOR ARC initiatives and projects through the provision of necessary financial and technical assistance, where possible. We encourage the Dialogue Partners to enhance their participation in IOR ARC initiatives and projects through the provision of necessary financial and technical assistance, where possible. We encourage the Dialogue Partners to enhance their participation in IOR ARC including the possibility of contributing to the “Special Fund”.
8. The Malaysian delegation would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Dusoruth the outgoing Executive Director of the IOR ARC Coordinating Secretariat for his tireless and effective work. We welcome the appointment of the new Executive Director, Mr Tuan Zarook Amjadeen Samsudeen. I am confident that the new Executive Director will be capable of continuing the good work in managing and maintaining, if not improving on the commendable work of the Coordinating Secretariat.
9. I wish to express our appreciation to the Government of Sri Lanka for its able and excellent Chairmanship of the IOR-ARC and we look forward to the Islamic Republic of Iran taking over the stewardship of the organisation at the next Council of Ministers Meeting Teheran in 2005.
10. In conclusion Mr, Chairman, I wish to iterate that there is definitely a need for the people of the IOR ARC countries to have a better knowledge and understanding about each other, particularly in terms of societal norms and national cultures to enable us to fully benefit from this rich diversity and at the same time accruing political and economic dividends from such a diversity. Malaysia would like to IOR-ARC as a successful regional endeavour and we

are ready to extend our cooperation to our partners in the Association to achieve this goal.

Thank you