

(Translation)

**Address by H.E. Ambassador Wang Yusheng, China at
The Fifth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of
The Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation**

**Your Excellency Lakshman Kadirgamar,
Distinguished, and
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel greatly honoured to attend the Fifth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation as special representative of H.E Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. On behalf of Minister Li, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for its effective preparation for the meeting and gracious hospitality accorded to the participants.

The Chairman of the Meeting of the Council of Ministers made his Presentation of the report during the morning session. We are glad that the IOR-ARC has made quite positive progress following the agreement on cooperation in certain areas reached at the fourth meeting such as seeking was to facilitate the investment and free trade, promoting the tourism in this region, working out the developing plans in future and strengthening the institutional construction.

As a Dialogue partner to the IOR-ARC, China respects the Association purposes and supports its identified work orientation and cooperation priorities, as China stands ready to work with its members for greater cooperation in the Indian Ocean Rim region. It is gratifying that China has friendly relationships and cooperation with all IOR ARC Members and other dialogue partners. Mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, science, technology and other areas between China and some members has made remarkable headway in recent years. The China IOR ARC trade volume in 2003 exceeded 100 billion accounting for 12 % of China's total foreign trade. China has started or prepared to start bilateral free trade talks with some members and has begun tourism cooperation with about a dozen members. China vigorously implements the "go global" strategy by encouraging well-established Chinese enterprises to invest in and cooperate with countries in the Indian Ocean Rim region. There is also fruitful cooperation between China and many ASSOCIATION members in international economic affairs. As China's area of international cooperation is very much similar to Association cooperation priorities, there is a broad prospect for cooperation between the two sides.

I would like to reiterate that China will continue positively to take part in the Association's activities, strengthen the consultation with the members of the Association and its other dialogue partners, broaden the mutual economic

cooperation with countries in this region and support the Association's effort to achieve the goals.

Mr Chairman,

For all countries in the world, regardless of their level of development or size economic globalisation is both an opportunity and a challenge. Members of the international community are increasingly inter dependent not only in security terms but also in economic terms. Many of us are pondering over ways to create a favourable international environment for the good of our development in the present-day world. It has become a growing consensus therefore, that we seek our security and growth through international cooperation. In light of domestic and international conditions and in a spirit of keeping abreast of the times, the Chinese Government put forward as early as in 1996 a new security concept with such more features as mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination. Last year it went on to initiate the scientific approach to development featuring all round economic and social development that is coordinated and sustainable. The Chinese Government is determined to deepen reform expand opening-up and actively explore comprehensive international cooperation. The ASSOCIATION follows the major principles of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit and consensus building through consultation and advocates unity and win win spirit among its members, which the Chinese Government appreciates. During the meeting, the Chinese delegation feels the keen desire of the ASSOCIATION members for closer cooperation and is informed of ongoing and upcoming measures of the ASSOCIATION for substantive cooperation ASSOCIATION members, which are easily accessible geographically, spread over Asia, Africa and Oceania with over 1.6 billion people, abundant natural resources and vast markets. All this has offered favourable conditions and huge potentials for mutually beneficial cooperation. We are confident that as the Association cooperation unfolds, the organization will play an important role in promoting economic growth of its members and make fresh contribution to the development of the world economy.

May the Fifth Meeting of the Council of Ministers be a complete success.

May the Friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and IOR ARC members and other dialogue partners make fresh headway.