

**Address by H.E. Mr. S.M.H. Adeli, Ph.d**  
**Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

*In the Name of God*

**Honourable Chairman,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to address, on behalf of my country, this sincere and august meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC. I would like to, at the outset, to express my appreciation to the friendly Government of Sri Lanka for the excellent arrangements made for this great event. I hope this meeting will succeed to take another step towards the attainment of the lofty objectives of this body.

**Mr, Chairman,  
Distinguished Colleagues,**

I am happy to note that IOR-ARC has managed to lay down the framework and formulate the programs needed for the achievement of its objectives in the course of the years since its foundation. Fortunately, the IOR-ARC member states, benefiting from a strong political will as well as the required economic potentials, can create the necessary strength and instruments for the accomplishment of their goals. I am personally convinced that this meeting of the Council of Ministers provides a good opportunity for the appraisal of the trend of activities of IOR-ARC and formulation of appropriate policies and strategies for the continuation of cooperation among the member states in accordance with the new world conditions. Since as you are all aware, one of the distinctive characteristics and challenges of our new century is the intensification of globalisation process which is sweeping all over the globe in such a way that its impacts and consequences have transcended many political, economic and cultural boundaries and brought states and nations closer than ever before.

Though this process can potentially contribute to the economic growth and comprehensive development of developing countries, it may, at the same time, prove quite detrimental if associated with monopolistic and unilateralistic approaches.

*Distinguished Colleagues,*

What I would like to stress here is that with the foundation of IOR-Arc, the required framework and cornerstone for cooperation and coordination among the member states have already been laid and the continuation of this cooperation seems now indispensable in view of the current situation of the world.

As overall review of the international economic development in recent years reveal that efforts aimed at bringing countries closer together through the formation of economic groupings follow a global trend.

Regionalism has now emerged as the driving force behind the world trade. Establishment of regional and trans regional economic grade areas reciprocal customs arrangements, preferential tariffs and free trade zones have increased intra regional trade, leading to the growth of the world trade. We believe that regional cooperation can significantly contribute to the expansion of trans-regional and international trade.

Cultural, social and economic commonalities, as a rule, play an effective role in the configuration of regional cooperation. But the establishment of IOR ARC has proved a step beyond regional cooperation and has projected new horizons and prospects before the member states since this body consists of countries at varying degrees of economic development which can as complementary economies, forge wider economic links and closer cultural interaction amongst themselves.

***Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Colleagues,***

One of the objectives of IOR ARC is to concentrate on those types of economic cooperation which afford maximum opportunities to meet and develop the common interest of the member states. To achieve this objective formulation and implementation of programs, which help facilitate trade liberalization, encourage foreign investment, enhance scientific and technological cooperation, promote tourism and develop human resources, will be desirable. Therefore the program discussed in specialized groups should not only address this and other objectives of IOR-ARC but they should also meet the interests of all the member states so that all of them will be sufficiently motivated to support such programs.

We believe so far adequate time and energy has been put for organizational requirements. Now it is the high and the right time to embark on the implementation of priority projects on a fast track basis. The organization developed at this stage laid appropriate ground for the project driven stage to boost the cooperation and image of our grouping. Now based on this, it is highly recommendable that we prioritise our projects and select one or two core tasks to function as the main driving force of our cooperation. PTA and tourism could be indicate of such cooperation that would benefit all member states.

***Mr Chairman,  
Distinguished Colleagues***

I Islamic Republic of Iran believes that IOR-ARC has the potentiality to become an important world regional organisation of developing countries capable of meeting the challenges of this era and contributing to the progress and objectives of its member states.

The achievement of this goal necessitates more consolidation and enhancement of the pillars of our cooperation rather than and any kind of enlargement.

In closing I wish to state that I'm pleased with the successful organization of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC and extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government and People of Sri Lanka for the warm hospitality accorded to us. I hope that the agreement to us. I hope that the agreements and understanding reached in the course of this meeting can set some practical and realistic guidelines for the economic cooperation and the activities of the private sectors of the member states.

I also wish to declare our preparedness to host the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Ministers in 2005 in Tehran, and hereby extend our invitation to all of you.

**Thank you for your attention.**