

His Excellency Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah

Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman

Mr. Chairman,

From the outset, I would like to convey our thanks and gratitude to the Government and people of India for their warm hospitality and for hosting the 12th Meeting of the Council of Ministers & Related Meetings of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) in the beautiful city of Gurgaon.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary General and the Secretariat of the Association for the excellent arrangement and preparations for this meeting.

Mr Chairman,

A lot has been achieved since 1997 when we established this association. However, we believe after 15 years' time has come for us to evaluate and review the achievements, the challenges and obstacles, and to also propose measures that will further improve the work of this Association.

In this regard, we propose the establishment of a "working group" that will be entrusted with this task (of review) with a view to see its report submitted before the forthcoming Ministerial Council meeting.

To show our commitment and solidarity with this Association, we would like to mention here some of the areas that we believe the working group should further examine and those are:

- We believe there are potential benefits for IOR-ARC Member State business community to engage in transport and shipping related collaborative projects, such projects attract investment as well as create domestic employment.
- Therefore we propose the establishment of a regional Indian Ocean Rim Maritime Transport Agency.
- We propose that all fishing vessels operating in the Indian Ocean should register with the Secretariat of IOR-ARC.
- All fees generated from issuing any license by Member State to none Member State should go in to offset program.
- We further propose carrying out an assessment study of the "Management of Fish Stock" in the Indian Ocean which will contain and ways and means on how to sustain and increase the fish stock in this region. Oman will donate \$ 100, 000 USD to carry out the study; the sum will be donated to the Secretariat.

Mr Chairman,

Finally, I wish to conclude my remarks by stressing the importance of such projects which will create economic prosperity if the eco-system and national resources whether on land or in the seas are managed carefully and responsibly for our benefit today and for tomorrows generation.

I thank you Mr Chairman.