

SG Welcome Remarks for Inaugural Session 11:45 on July 4, 2013

H E Dr The Hon'ble Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius

H E Mr Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Textiles, Government of India, Chair of IOR-ARC and Co-host

H E Dr the Hon'ble Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Foreign Trade, Government of Mauritius and Co-host,

Excellencies, Ministers of Trade and Commerce of Member States and Dialogue Partners of the IOR-ARC,

Distinguished Ministers of the Republic of Mauritius

Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Heads of International Orgns, and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Delegates of IOR-ARC Member States

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very warm welcome to all of you who have gathered here today for the First Economic and Business Conference of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, co-hosted by Mauritius and India.

I would like to place on record my profound gratitude to H E Dr the Hon'ble Navinchandra Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of Mauritius for announcing this event during the banquet speech in honour of H E The President of India, who was in Mauritius as the Chief Guest of the Independence Day Celebrations last March.

The Prime Minister's deep commitment to a regional architecture in the Indian Ocean region, an idea first enunciated by the then President Nelson Mandela in New Delhi in 1995, to complement an overwrought multilateral system straining to deliver on growth and development of the economies of the south, displayed a profound understanding of the challenges facing developing nations. Many of us present here today remember the very same Prime Minister launching the IOR-ARC in March 1997. History has come full circle now as we undertake a paradigm shift in our economic engagement.

The theme of this conference "Deepening Economic Linkages for Balanced, Inclusive and Sustainable Growth" carries with it the aspirations of two billion people. Today we give due recognition to the integral part played by businesses in promoting growth and call upon them to invest in the huge potential that exists for strengthening cooperation through trade and commerce in this rim of opportunity.

Let us redeem the promise that this grouping of states, at different stages of development and with diverse capabilities, coming together in a unique bond to realize the prospects that exist for cooperation within the IOR-ARC.

On behalf of the IOR-ARC fraternity, I convey our deep appreciation for the gracious hospitality and excellent arrangements extended by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius to the conference delegations.

Excellencies and Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I once again wish all of you a very warm welcome to the First IOR-ARC Economic and business Conference.

I now invite H E Dr The Hon'ble Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Foreign Trade, Government of Mauritius and Co-host of the conference to deliver his address.

I thank H E Dr The Hon'ble Arvin Boolell for his address and Invite H E Mr Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Textiles, Government of India and Chair of IOR-ARC, and Co-host of the conference to deliver his address.

I thank H E Mr Anand Sharma for his address and invite H E Dr The Hon'ble Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius to deliver the Keynote Address for the First IOR ARC Economic and Business Conference.

I thank H E Dr The Hon'ble Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for delivering the Keynote Address and inaugurating the First IOR ARC Economic and Business Conference.

Group Photograph of Trade Ministers and Heads of Delegations

Thank you very much.

I now invite the dignitaries on the dais to proceed for refreshments

And also invite the distinguished invites to proceed for tea and coffee.