

**ADDRESS BY**

**H.E. Dr. Leonardo Santos Simao  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the  
Republic of Mozambique and Chairman of Council of  
Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional  
Cooperation (IOR-ARC)**

**On the occasion**

**Of the**

**Extraordinary Meeting of Council of Ministers**

**Muscat, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2000**

**Honourable Ministers;  
Distinguished Delegates;  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On 14 January 2000 our former colleague Alfred Nzo passed away in Johannesburg. As we all know, in addition to this full participation in the struggle against the apartheid in South Africa, Alfred Nzo, as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the New South Africa, played an important role for the creation of our Association. For all those reasons, I propose that we send a message of condolences to the Government of South Africa; I also propose that we stand up for a minute of silence in his memory (thank you).

It's a privilege for me to address this Extraordinary Meeting of Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) at the beginning of the new millennium.

Allow me to take this singular and unique opportunity to express my profound appreciation to the Government and the people of the Sultanate of Oman for the generous hospitality offered to us since our arrival in this beautiful City of Muscat.

I also thank you for the excellent arrangements made for the holding of such an important event for the life of the Association.

My gratitude is also extend to the Coordinating Secretariat by the praiseworthy role played in harmonizing our views and positions and by providing us with updated information about projects and activities undertaken within the IOR-ARC.

The meeting we are starting today has been convened on the recommendation by the Second Meeting of Council held in Maputo 30-31 March 1999, with the objective to decide on very important matters that will guide the functioning of the organs of our Association.

During the Breakfast Meeting held in New York on 24 September 1999, in which participated Ministers and Other Representatives of IOR-ARC, we agreed to convene a Meeting of Legal Experts, which successfully was held in Maputo on 8-10 December 1999.

The objective of this meeting was to conclude outstanding issues relating to the Instrument of Acceptance, Rules of Procedure and Headquarters Agreement, with view to giving technical input to these documents. The outcome of the Meeting of Legal Experts has just been considered by the Committee of Senior Officials and submitted to Council for adoption.

In March 1999 in Maputo, Bangladesh, Iran, Seychelles, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates were admitted as members of IOR-RAC, and Egypt and Japan as Dialogue Partners of the Association.

I am very pleased to welcome the honourable representatives from these countries for their admission, because they will bring an additional impetus to the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.

Honourable Colleagues;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Recently the People's Republic of China has applied for Dialogue Partner Status and the Indian Ocean Tourism Organization, the Civil Society Indian Ocean Rim Network and the African Association of Political Science have applied for the Observer Status.

The same way France, Pakistan and the United Kingdom have applied for the second time consecutive for membership and dialogue partner status.

I believe that this growing number of applicants and admissions will diversify areas of cooperation, not only among our Governments, Business People and Academia, but also will encourage the participation of civil society in the IOR-ARC.

In this regard, efforts should be made by members with view to seeking ways on a consensual basis to accommodate any positions to be taken when discussing any matters of relevance.

Trade and Investment constitute the "driving force" of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, so that we should turn fully our efforts towards the implementation of what has been established within the framework of these strategic areas.

The holding of a meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Investment here in Muscat prior the Committee of Senior Officials and Council Meetings enables us to evaluate the progress made in these areas, and then take bold steps forward.

As you may recall, during the Breakfast Meeting in New York it has been noticed that the IOR-ARC Charter has got some gaps in it. Issues regarding interpretation of the Charter, accession, cessation of membership, among others, although being of crucial importance, are not yet reflected in the IOR-ARC Charter. During the Meeting of Legal Experts the same issue has been raised by some delegations.

So, a consideration on these issues aimed at finding a consensual way to encapsulate them in the IOR-ARC Charter could give it an appropriate format.

Honourable Ministers;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As most of us are aware, India and Mauritius have been funding the Chair and Associate Fellows in Indian Ocean Studies for an Initial period of two years, whose term is coming to an end now.

The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade and the Tertiary Education Commission of Mauritius are the institutions that since January 1998 have been supporting the costs of the Chair and Associate Fellows in Indian Ocean Studies.

In this connection and in the light of the will manifested by members during the Meeting of Committee of Senior Official held in Maputo in March 1999, to maintain the Chair, I believe that concerted and effective ways will be found among ourselves to continue the project initiated by Mauritius and India.

I thank you very much.