

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3563
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2002
FORMATION OF INDIAN OCEAN RIM COUNTRIES ORGANISATION
RAMDAS ATHAWALE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India, Mauritius, South Africa and other countries situated along side the Indian Ocean have been working on constituting an Indian Ocean Rim Countries Organisation;
- (b) if so, the steps taken in this direction; and
- (c) the objectives of this organisation and role of India therein?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) & (b) The Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) was formed in March 1997, with the signing of the IOR-ARC Charter at its First Ministerial Meeting, held in Mauritius from 5-7 March 1997. The IOR-ARC consists of 19 member: Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore, South Africa, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Yemen, Bangladesh, Iran, Seychelles, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.

(c) The IOR-ARC is a regional cooperation initiative aimed at promoting economic and technical cooperation, including expansion of trade and investment. It seeks to formulate and implement projects for economic co-operation relating to trade facilitation, promotion and liberalisation; promotion of foreign investment, scientific and technological exchanges, and tourism, movement of natural persons and service providers on a non-discriminatory basis; and development of infrastructure and human resources. The organisation combines officials, businessmen as well as academics as an integral part of its functioning. As a founder member of the IOR-ARC, India plays an active role in the organisation, including in the implementation of cooperation projects.