



DCoC Donor Meeting

IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom

3rd October 2024

Remarks by the Chair of the DCoC/JA Steering Committee

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to address this meeting on the vital framework within our region and the wider world: the Djibouti Code of Conduct, or DCoC, and its Jeddah Amendment. We live in an interconnected world due to global shipping activities and as such, maritime safety and security of our seas are not aspects of concern to our region alone but the world as well. The Djibouti Code of Conduct, which was adopted in 2009, and its subsequent Jeddah Amendment in 2017, represent pivotal frameworks in promoting regional cooperation and improving maritime security across the Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

This agreement urges its signatory States to take action both individually and regionally to improve maritime security and maritime governance, with the overriding theme of “security for a purpose”. The prosperity of nations is hinged to maritime security, as one of the means to attaining it.

Good maritime security will create the conditions that enable the development of the maritime sector and a sustainable blue economy, thus driving towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Djibouti Code of Conduct was very successful in helping to suppress piracy in the waters off the coast of Somalia. Through the Code, many of the regional States have received support in reviewing their laws to include piracy as a crime that can be punished nationally.

This framework has fostered strong regional cooperation through its governance structure, which includes a Steering Committee, two working groups, and the Friends of DCoC Forum, promoting collaboration among member states and partners.

The original DCoC Information Sharing Centres in Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, and Sana’a—focused on counter-piracy efforts, and were most successful at that—has now expanded as a network to include the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Centre for Operational Coordination (RCOC) in Seychelles. Good progress has also been made in reestablishing the regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre ReMISC in Aden, Yemen.

Since its inception, the Code has facilitated 100 training sessions on maritime law enforcement and security, benefiting 1,890 participants across the region. Member states have also received support to update national laws, making piracy a punishable crime. Projects to enhance Maritime



Domain Awareness have been completed in Djibouti, Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Yemen, while civil-military cooperation has been strengthened throughout the region.

Additionally, Somalia has been provided with technical assistance to develop its maritime code, establish its Maritime Administration, and a centralized information hub with a capacity-building matrix has been launched at www.dcoc.org, with a Capacity Building Coordination Matrix for populating regional needs and priorities and tracking capacity-building activities.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have highlighted the central focus of the DCoC/JA, which has been the promotion of regional cooperation. Maritime security is inherently a transnational issue, with challenges that do not respect national boundaries. The Code of Conduct has provided a platform for countries in the region to work together, share information, and develop joint strategies in combatting a multiplicity of threats besides piracy, such as Human trafficking and smuggling, Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances and illegal dumping of toxic waste.

Prioritizing national and regional maritime strategies that will provide the best means of developing the region's maritime sector and a sustainable blue economy, will trigger associated business plans to attract investment in these strategies. It is necessary to continue advocating for sustainable maritime development as a wealth generator.

Of course, a maritime strategy needs to be underpinned by a credible maritime security strategy. The 6th High-level meeting of Djibouti Code of Conduct / Jeddah Amendment signatory States, held in Cape Town in October last year adopted a resolution on "Development of a DCoC signatory States' maritime security strategy", which, inter alia, instructed the DCoC Steering Committee to initiate a project to further consider Goals (or "Ends"), Objectives (or "Ways" of achieving those goals) and Approaches (or "Means") to achieve the overall strategic objective of the Strategy – which is "to increase prosperity through enhanced maritime security and law enforcement throughout all DCoC signatory States", in order to develop a comprehensive delivery and action plan.

The ongoing work on this important objective will be the focus of a major activity in Jeddah in October, and the progress will be reported to the 7th High-level meeting of Djibouti Code of Conduct / Jeddah Amendment signatory States, to be held in Dar es Salaam in November for further action.

The creation of the DCoC Information Sharing Network national centres, the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar, and Regional Coordination Operations Centre in Seychelles are prime examples of how regional cooperation has been institutionalized. These centres play a crucial role in monitoring maritime activities, sharing intelligence, and coordinating responses to security incidents. After a period of progressive capacity building over more than three years, with assistance from many bilateral national efforts and international and regional programmes, such as those led by the IOC, India, UNODC, IMO, Interpol, EU CRIMARIO EUNAVFOR and Combined Maritime Forces, from late 2022 onwards those regional centres have



been coordinating an accelerating schedule of information-led and regionally-coordinated operations at sea to target maritime crime.

While the DCoC and the Jeddah Amendment have achieved much, there is significant untapped potential to do more. The maritime security landscape continues to evolve, with emerging challenges such as the Red Sea attacks on global shipping, cyber threats to maritime infrastructure, climate change impacts on maritime safety, and the increasing use of technology by criminal networks. To address these challenges, the region must continue to build on the foundations laid by these frameworks.

Permit me to draw your attention to the recently developed 8-point action plan, crafted by member states following an extraordinary meeting between Secretary General Mr. Arsenio Dominguez and the region in January. This plan calls for enhanced support for the DCoC ISN, the formulation of national and regional maritime security strategies, and the strengthening of coast guard capabilities in Yemen and Somalia. It also includes additional training and support for the implementation of the ISPS Code to bolster the application of best practices in preventing arms smuggling and other contraband, while safeguarding vessels, ports, and critical coastal infrastructure. We anticipate the regional workload to inflate in coming months and this means that the Secretariat needs support.

We are seeking the continued and generous financial support from existing and prospective partners at this meeting to help activate this plan and prevent the escalating threats in the Red Sea from spreading further into the global south.

For your consideration, we have provided two documents: one is a record of previous contributions to the DCoC Trust Fund, and the second outlines our capacity-building priorities and the suggested work plan. We have also identified areas that we hope will be covered under two proposed EU-funded projects. We kindly request that you review the gaps and inform us of the areas where you can provide funding to support.

Additionally, we would like to highlight the need to develop a regional DCoC training program funded by the trust fund, as was done previously. In the past, the DCoC conducted approximately 20 regional training activities per year, and we have a strong track record of engaging subject matter experts from various partner organizations. We invite you to consider contributing to the common pool so that we can collaborate in building regional capacities.

In conclusion, let us recognize the potential of the DCoC/JA framework to do even more. By continuing to work together, investing in capacity building, and embracing regional organization and cooperation, we can ensure that our seas remain safe, secure, and prosperous for generations to come.

Thank you.