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Inaugural Workshop on the Establishment of the DCoC Working Group on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea

Serena Beach Resort & Spa, Mombasa, Kenya

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Statement by

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On

International Cooperation for Working Group 3

Challenges and Opportunities

Commander Kenyan Navy General Paul Otieno, Ambassador Nicolas Ruge, good friends Mich, Mashudu, Raj, Sasha, distinguished delegates, friends from all over the world.

At the outset, India thanks our very gracious host Kenyan Navy for organizing this momentous event. I must tell you that from the moment I stepped out of the aircraft yesterday; I have been placed at the charge of Lieutenant Nabuto, young navigator from Kenyan Navy and senior Sergeant Kiambi, my designated driver for the day. I can't tell you how meticulous the planning was and how fantastic the driving was. I felt like I was in a fighter aircraft once again after many years and no matter what the obstacles were on the road, Kiambi negotiated them with an ease and deftness that is so characteristic of the Kenyan Navy. Therefore, it is only apt that Kenya is hosting pioneering events such as this which brings together multiple partners for operational coordination. 'Asante Sana', Commander Kenyan Navy and to your team for the same.

Let me tell you all a story. 25 years back, I was flying a Sea Harrier off Goa and I heard this conversation between the ATC (Air Traffic Controller) and the aircraft in the air. The aircraft in the air asked the ATC "Ma'am, what time is it?". Those were days when GPS was not great and people did not really have great navigation systems. So, the aircraft asked the ATC tower "Ma'am, what time is it?". She asked back, "what aircraft are you?" "Are you civil? Are you Services?" So, the pilot says, "How does it matter what service I am from? I am asking you time". So, the traffic controller says "No Sir, it is like this. If you are a civil aircraft, the time is 1 PM, if you are an Air Force aircraft, the time is 1300, (very professional). If you are a Navy aircraft, the time is 3 bells (you know in the Navy you have bells for every watch). The aircraft says "I am neither civil aircraft nor Airforce nor Navy aircraft. I am an Army aircraft." ATC replies "Then for you sir, the time is when the small hand is at 1 and the big hand is at 12 and Sir, if you are a marine aircraft; you are already late for happy hour."

The point I am making, ladies and gentlemen, is that **"intent won't work if you don't have the right partners"**. Unfortunately, all the partners within a nation as well as outside the nation have different organizational cultures and structures, different training systems, different procedures, different capacities, different languages that are used to talk about their challenges. Op coordination needs to ensure that all these partners come together jointly to find the common path to deal with perpetrators.



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What is the problem with perpetrators in maritime security domain? The most important problem and the most difficult one is that **their OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide and Act) loop will always be faster than a Government agency or a State agency** and to break that information flow is the most important aspect of any effort whether it is operational coordination or otherwise. I strongly feel that “What you don’t know, you don’t see; What you don’t see, you don’t measure; What you don’t measure, you don’t analyse and what you don’t analyse, you don’t act upon”.

The first pillar of any maritime collaboration is **information sharing**, followed by **capability development**, **capacity building**, and then **operational coordination** and **public messaging** overall to dissuade the detractors. As, all our friends, partners, seniors have said earlier, “you can’t work alone” and therefore India works bilaterally, plurilaterally, quadrilaterally and multilaterally whether it is via DCoC, Colombo Security Conclave, BIMSTEC, CGIMA, CMF, Friends of Gulf of Guinea, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) that we co-founded and so many other constructs that help us navigate this uncertain future.

But most importantly with DCoC, India has ensured that in the last two years; we collaborate strongly and results as you can see are the **DCoC Information Sharing Network SOP** wherein we have facilitated DCoC in doing so. We conduct the **Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW)** for DCoC at IFC-IOR, the next edition of which, will be in November 2025 first week. The **very first DCoC international Liaison Officer Major Brian will be joining India’s IFC-IOR** very soon this month. India is assisting about 5 States in DCoC in their **National Maritime Information Sharing Centres (NMISCs)**, helping DCoC in the ‘**Assistance Matrix**’, (earlier CB Matrix) and we are willing to work with you for **operational coordination** as well.

As I have always said earlier, India is wedded to DCoC and at a wedding you say, “I do” not “I will try” and for that ‘doing’ and ‘continuous doing’, I have with me, ladies and gentlemen, the Indian delegation. I am Commodore Nitin from MEA, a naval aviator. I have with me Group Captain Srihari from the Ministry of Defence. He is an Air Force pilot who has also flown with Navy. Captain (IN) Shirdikant, our resident Defence Attaché at Nairobi, a surface warfare officer and Commander Nikhil Verma, an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) officer as well as a submariner. Between the four of us, we bring to you, ladies and gentlemen, expertise in surface warfare, under-sea warfare, aerial warfare and whatever you think we can help you with in this domain in op-coordination for security. **The size and diverse composition of Indian delegation should be sign enough of our seriousness and commitment to the DCoC JA project.** Together, ladies and gentlemen, we need the ability to **detect**, **track** and **attribute**; followed by the ability to **deter** and **respond**.

I stand before you not as a rep of a single nation but as a voice for shared purpose, building trust, ensuring security and forging solidarity. In the forthcoming sessions, the Indian delegation will share with you our perspectives and offer opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in everything from information sharing to operation coordination to legal finish.

Finally, the Indian delegation also brings to you our Hon’ble Prime Minister’s Vision of ‘**MAHASAGAR**’ (**Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions**) which means ‘Ocean’ and most importantly our national message ‘**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**’; - **one earth, one family one future**. That, ladies and gentlemen is truly how India sees the world. We hope you do too.

Thank You.