



High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the DCoC/JA,

Dar es Salaam, 28-30 November 2024

Opening Remarks for Mr. Metse Ralephenya, RSA

Chair, Djibouti Code of Conduct Steering Committee

Good morning, esteemed colleagues, distinguished representatives, and partners.

It is my privilege to welcome you to this important gathering. As we convene for the 7th High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment, I extend my sincere gratitude to the host, the United Republic of Tanzania, and to all stakeholders prioritizing their participation in these vital discussions on maritime security.

Over the years, the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) has evolved into the leading forum for maritime security in the region. It has been a cornerstone of regional cooperation, shaping policies, setting standards, and providing essential training. Since its inception, the DCoC has achieved remarkable milestones:

- Training over 1,800 maritime professionals across the region.
- Establishing regional information-sharing centres in Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, and Sana'a, which played a pivotal role in suppressing piracy from 2009 to 2016.
- Encouraging signatory states to adopt national legislation criminalizing piracy, promoting accountability and justice.

The Jeddah Amendment, introduced in 2017, further expanded our focus to include human trafficking, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and other maritime threats. This evolution highlights our commitment to inclusivity and to addressing emerging challenges while safeguarding the maritime domain.

In this spirit of inclusivity, we also celebrate the creation of the Friends of the DCoC, a platform that embodies our dedication to engaging a broader community of stakeholders. This initiative reflects the openness and collaborative ethos that underpin the DCoC/JA.

Recently, we witnessed a historic moment at the Seapower for Africa 2024 symposium in Cape Town. African Chiefs of Navies affirmed their unwavering support for the objectives of the DCoC and the Jeddah Amendment. Their declaration of commitment provides renewed impetus for our work and underscores the importance of regional cooperation. In response to this momentum, the DCoC is embarking on a transformative initiative to expand its governance structure. We propose to establish Working Group 3, dedicated to the coordination of operations at sea. This group will consist of regional navies collaborating closely with likeminded international naval partners to enhance our collective maritime security capabilities.



None of these achievements would be possible without the steadfast dedication of the DCoC Secretariat. Their phenomenal efforts continue to drive our progress and ensure the effective implementation of our initiatives. On behalf of all of us, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Secretariat for their indispensable contributions.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, whose commitment to our work and unwavering support remain vital. His leadership inspires us to strive for greater achievements, and we look forward to his continued engagement as we advance our shared goals.

As we move forward, significant challenges remain. Piracy, illegal trafficking, and environmental threats persist, jeopardizing navigation and coastal livelihoods. Strengthening operational coordination and enhancing the DCoC Information Sharing Network are critical to addressing these threats.

Our current initiatives, including the ongoing development of the Regional Maritime Security Strategy, are pivotal to this effort. These programs are built on the foundation of regional cooperation among member states and partners, and we must collectively ensure their success.

Over the past year, we have focused on implementing a whole-of-government approach through the application of the IMO model. Moving forward, the strategy must evolve into a whole-of-region approach, working hand in hand with our international partners.

I urge all of us here today to actively support the DCoC's 8-point action plan. This plan has the potential to amplify our past successes and lay the groundwork for a secure and prosperous maritime domain. While we celebrate the technical contributions of our partners, we must also acknowledge the financial investments required to sustain these initiatives. Together, we must reaffirm our commitment to adequately resource this program to ensure its tangible and lasting impact.

Let us seize this opportunity to work toward a unified framework that guarantees security and fosters economic prosperity in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. I look forward to our productive discussions ahead and am confident that our collective efforts will bring us closer to achieving our shared vision.

Thank you.
