CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE WORKING GROUP 3 ON OPERATIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AT SEA

Background

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1.   The Seventh High-Level Regional Meeting (HLM) on the Implementation of the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC/JA), held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, from 28–30 November 2024, considered the evolving maritime security challenges in the region and emphasized the importance of strengthening civil–military cooperation.

2.   In response, the Meeting adopted **Resolution 1 on the Establishment of Working Group 3 on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea**. DCoC/JA Signatory States, as well as Friends of the DCoC, were invited to nominate suitable personnel from navies, law enforcement agencies, and civilian authorities to serve as members of the Working Group. The resolution further mandated that the inaugural meeting of Working Group 3 elect a Chair and Co-Chair and develop Terms of Reference, Concept of Operations and a Work Plan.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS (CONOPS)

The concept of operations (CONOPS) serves as a comprehensive framework for the DCOC member states to collaboratively counter maritime security challenges in Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR) and the Gulf of Aden, with an aim to foster a secure and stable maritime environment by strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing operational capabilities of member states through coordinated efforts based upon the core pillars, namely, information sharing, capability development /enhancement, capacity building, operational coordination and public messaging that assist in forging stronger and cohesive region partnership.

1. Purpose

To enhance collectively maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden against piracy,   armed   robbery of ships,   and   other maritime   crimes   by promoting cooperation, interoperability, and coordination among coastguard and naval authorities and maritime law enforcement agencies within DCoC member states.

2. Operational Objectives

This CONOPS covers the operational environment for:
   i.   **Enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)** through the promotion of sharing of maritime security information among members that includes means to monitor and assess maritime activity aimed at timely response to threats. This will be implemented through National and Regional Information Sharing Centres.
   ii.   **Building National, Regional Capacities and Capabilities** by identifying relevant training   and assistance   required   to raise the competency of   maritime security staff and agencies.

iii. **Coordinate Operational Responses** by setting up mechanisms for common operations and deconfliction to deal with maritime threats in a more effective way.
iv. **WG3 will develop means toenhance an effective legal finish between participating Signatory States.** The Working Group 3 will operate within the mandate of involved agencies and will not be an executive agency in its own right.

3. Operational Environment

The operating area is the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf ofAden. As the area is strategic, safety on shipping lanes and coastal areas must be guaranteed through cooperation.

4. Roles and Responsibilities
i. **National Authorities:** Implement national maritime security policies, establish national information sharing centres that will coordinate with regional partners.
ii. **Regional Coordination Centres:** Facilitate information exchange and coordination among member states.
iii. **International Partners:** Provide technical assistance, training, and resources to facilitate regional programs.
iv. **Common definitions/approach to data/information:** develop a lexicon for terminologies and SOPs for processes to ensure a legal finish

5. Organizational Structure
i. **Chair:** Rotating Chair with elections held biennium in the main plenary
ii. **Secretariat**: The DCoC Secretariat will continue to provide support for WG3. Consideration will be made for Member States to second additional officers to support this work.
iii. **Steering Committee**: the Chair and Co-Chair of WG3 join the existing DCoC Steering Committee.
iv. **Annual Plenary**: Reviews and progress to be reported in annual DCOC HLM to include updates of strategic priorities and joint action plans.

6. Command and Control

To establish a clear Chain of Command and Control (C2C), based on the evolving threat scenario, WG3 will designate a specific Regional Maritime Authority or Member State to serve as the lead agency to plan, coordinate, de-conflict, and synchronize the resources and actions of the participating stake holders. Key actions include developing a Common Operating Picture (COP) by processing and fusing the information flow from multiple sensors and agencies through the information sharing centers, developing actionable intelligence and guiding operational tempo to ensure that the activities are aligned with specific objectives aimed at neutralizing the threat. This will enhance situational awareness and facilitate informed decision making resulting in coordinated execution of the mission through

a unified command structure with an effective decentralized control andexecution mechanism for effective outcomes.

7. Operational Procedures

WG3 to develop MOUs for cooperation procedures that will include:

i.   **Information Sharing:** Utilize existing networks through the network on national and regional maritime information sharing centres to exchange maritime security information between member states.Encourage and incorporate inputs from engagements with community as sources of information.
ii. **Training and Capacity Building:**
     Conduct periodic joint training courses for the development of maritime security personnel's expertise and knowledge.
iii. **Joint Operations:**
     Conduct joint operations and patrols to counter sea threats.

8. Resource Allocation

The Working Group will allocate identified resources, including personnel, equipment and finance to enable the effective implementation of the CONOPS. Encourage use of technology (Satellites and maritime autonomous systems) as cost effective alternatives to augment existing platforms. A fund for WG3 operations at sea will be established through the F/DCOC.

9. Development of a Regional Maritime threat Program

The Working Group will be responsible for identification of a regional threat profile/risk register that will be an annexure anddeliverables of the DCOC Regional Maritime Security Strategy (RMSS)

10. Coordination and Collaboration

The Working Group will develop regular meetings and channels of communication between member states to ensure constant coordination and cooperation. It will consult international counterparts for access to additional assistance and experience.

11. Communication and Coordination

i.   **Operational Coordination:** Use of platforms like IORIS, NISHAR, SEAVISION, and other integrated situational awareness systems as maybe identified.
ii. **Strategic Coordination:** Scheduled meetings, secure lines of communication, and national contact points.
iii. **Public Communication:** Joint statements, maritime awareness campaigns, and transparency programs. The WG3 will also collaborate with the DCOC Secretariat in hosting its achievement on the website.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation
Working Group 3 will be evaluated through success on:

    i.   Number of joint operations conducted
    ii.   Reduction in response time to maritime events
    iii.   Increase in interoperability tests
    iv.   Constructive feedback from training and exercises
    v.   Enhanced efficiency in shared asset management

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ANNEX A

LISTOFMEMBERS

RegionalCountries

Bahrain
Comoros
Djibouti
Ethiopia
Eritrea
Egypt
Jordan
Kenya
Madagascar
Maldives
Mauritius
Mozambique
Oman Seychelles
Saudi Arabia
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
United Republic of Tanzania
Yemen
United Arab Emirates

F/DCoC(atinvitationoftheChair)
Denmark
India
United Kingdom (MTO/FCO/BPST EA)
United States of America.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

European Union (EEAS, EUNAVFOR/ATLANTA CRIMARIO, EUCAP Somalia) *
Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

AFRICOM
CMF
IFC-IOR
INTERPOL
ReCAAP
RCOC
RMIFC

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