

## Session 1: Progress Since the 7th HLM

### DCoC (JA) Update – Recap of the Dar es Salaam Meeting and Actioned Resolutions (Slide 1)

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good morning.

It is a great honour and privilege to present to you the progress in the implementation of the DCoC/JA since the 7th High-Level Meeting (HLM), held in Dar es Salaam, U.R Tanzania from 28-30 Nov 2024.

My remarks will highlight: (slide 2)

1. Key achievements of the DCoC/JA;
2. A recap of the Dar es Salaam HLM and its resolutions;
3. Key milestones achieved since; and
4. Emerging priorities – notably the operationalisation of Working Group 3 (WG3), which marks a transformational step in moving from policy to practice.

#### 1. Key Achievements of the DCoC/JA (slide 3)

Since its adoption in 2009 and expansion through the 2017 Jeddah Amendment, the DCoC/JA has become the primary regional framework for cooperation against piracy and other illicit maritime activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) and Gulf of Aden.

Notable achievements include: (slide 4)

**Expanded Scope:** Transitioned from piracy suppression to a holistic framework addressing maritime security and Blue Economy objectives — including countering smuggling, trafficking, IUU fishing, and maritime terrorism, while promoting marine environmental protection and sustainable ocean governance.

• **Structured Governance:** The Steering Committee provides strategic oversight, supported by three thematic Working Groups, a dedicated Secretariat for technical coordination, and the Capacity-Building (Assistance) Matrix aligning partner support to national and regional priorities.

- **Operational Information Sharing:** The DCoC Information Sharing Network (ISN) connects national and regional centres through multi-agency National Maritime Information Sharing Centres (NMISCs).
- **Regional Ownership:** Regional States now lead maritime security initiatives, set priorities, and co-chair activities, while welcoming the involvement of international partners in the spirit of a whole-of-stakeholder approach.
- **Partnerships:** The DCoC has enhanced cooperation with a broad range of donors and international partners, under the umbrella of the Friends of the DCoC (FoDCoC), dedicated to advancing the objectives of the Jeddah Amendment through targeted support to capacity building, information sharing, and operational coordination initiatives.

## 2. Recap of the 7th HLM – Dar es Salaam, 28–30 November 2024 (slide 5)

The 7th High-Level Meeting hosted by the United Republic of Tanzania, jointly organised by IMO and UNITAR, marked a milestone in advancing regional coordination and operational cooperation.

Key outcomes and resolutions included: (slide 6)

- **Adoption of Resolution 1:** Establishment of Working Group 3 (WG3) on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea.
  - o WG3 will focus on strengthening civil–military cooperation, interoperability between navies, coast guards, law enforcement agencies, and industry, and ensuring that operational coordination remains consistent with national and international law.
  - o Participants agreed to nominate members from navies, law enforcement, and civilian authorities; develop draft Terms of Reference (TORs) and a Work Plan; and invite partners to fund its activities.
- **Operationalisation of NMISCs:**
  - o The HLM and NFP meeting reiterated the urgency of establishing National Maritime Information Sharing Centres in all Member States, with IMO providing technical assistance.
  - o The Secretariat was tasked to update the Assistance Matrix with each country's NMISC status and identify capacity gaps.
- **Legal and Institutional Strengthening:**

- o Member States committed to advance the “legal finish” process — ensuring that operational actions at sea translate into lawful outcomes ashore.

- o Agreed to update TORs for the Steering Committee and Working Groups, including formal recognition of WG3, and align leadership transition procedures to begin annually on 1 January.

- **Regional Maritime Security Strategy (RMSS):**

- o The meeting endorsed continued development of the RMSS and its Risk Register, linking WG3’s role to operational implementation.

- **Shared Vessels of Interest (VOI) Database:**

- o Agreed to establish a regionally owned VOI database to track suspicious vessels, enhance maritime domain awareness, and support joint operations.

- **Support from Friends of DCoC:**

- o Partners committed to strengthening the CB Matrix as a real-time tool for tracking support, improving confidentiality protocols, and aligning donor assistance with regional priorities.

### **3. Key Milestones Since the 7th HLM (slide 7)**

#### **3.1 Working Group 3 (WG3):**

- The WG3 on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea has been formally established, chaired by Kenya with Djibouti as the Deputy chair. Its inaugural workshop, hosted by Kenya with financial support from Denmark and UNITAR, developed TORs, a five-phase roadmap, and a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the WG. These will be presented for adoption during its first meeting in the margins of this HLM tomorrow.

- WG3 embodies the shift from strategy to execution — from coordination to collaboration at sea.

#### **3.2 Strengthening of National Mechanisms:**

- At least five states have successfully established or operationalized high-level, multi-agency NMSCs or equivalent structures (e.g., Kenya, Tanzania, Maldives, Somalia’s NMCC, and Comoros

- IMO, through the SSA has supported Kenya, and Tanzania in developing a roadmap for the establishment and operationalization of their

NMISCs, and a plan of action in place to provide similar support to the other member states under the CRP-REWIO,

### **3.3 Advancing the Regional Maritime Security Strategy (RMSS):**

- Building on the Jeddah workshop outcomes (Nov 2024), the RMSS drafting process continues, focusing on risk-based prioritisation, gender inclusion, and sustainability. More support needed to sponsor two regional workshops to finalise.

### **3.4 Enhanced Partner Coordination:**

- The EU Crisis Response Project for the Red Sea and WIO and Safe Seas for Africa (SSA) are providing direct equipment, training, and institutional support to NMISCs and coastguards.

## **4. Reflection – From Policy to Practice**

The Dar es Salaam HLM solidified a shared regional vision for collective maritime action. The creation of WG3, establishment of NMISCs, and continued RMSS development signal a decisive move from dialogue to delivery.

As IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Domínguez noted: (slide 8)

“Maritime security is a shared responsibility. Our collective response must be rooted in prevention, constant vigilance, innovation, and strengthened regional and international cooperation.”

This spirit defines the DCoC’s evolution — from fragmented responses to coordinated regional solutions.

## **5. The Way Forward – Consolidating the Gains (slide 9)**

To sustain the momentum and ensure alignment with the DCoC/JA 8-Point Action Plan, six key priority themes continue to guide implementation:

- 1. Regional Ownership and Leadership + inclusivity**
- 2. Strengthened Institutional Architecture**
- 3. Legal and Institutional Reforms**

#### **4. Tangible Law Enforcement Successes**

#### **5. Donor and Partner Engagement (FoDCoC and Others)**

#### **6. Sustaining Momentum and Future Priorities**

**The Way Forward:** These pillars underpin the next phase of DCoC implementation — moving from national alignment to regional impact, from cooperation to interoperability, and from planning to measurable action at sea. (slide 10)

##### **5.1 Accelerate WG3 Operationalisation**

- Finalise WG3 TORs, CONOPS and SOPs.
- Launch joint tabletop and sea exercises through RCOC and RMIFC.
- Promote legal finish and post-interdiction coordination.

##### **5.2 Strengthen National Systems**

- Complete establishment of NMISCs and NMSCs in all States.
- Standardise data-sharing protocols and integrate with the regional ISN.

##### **5.3 Sustain Regional Strategy and Financing**

- Finalise and adopt the RMSS and Risk Register.
- Mobilise resources via the DCoC Trust Fund and partner frameworks.
- Emphasise measurable indicators – response times, joint operations, capacity gaps closed.

#### **6. Conclusion – Connected Waters, Shared Responsibility (slide 11)**

##### **Distinguished Participants,**

The 7th HLM in Dar es Salaam was not only a meeting but a turning point. It reinforced commitment to operational cooperation, legal harmonisation, and strategic alignment.

With Working Group 3 now established, NMISCs advancing, and the RMSS nearing completion, the DCoC has entered its implementation phase – where cooperation translates into visible security outcomes at sea.

Together, through trust, commitment, and partnership, we will continue to safeguard our shared waters — ensuring that the Western Indian Ocean remains a secure and prosperous maritime domain for all.

**Thank you.**