



## **Inaugural Workshop on the Establishment of the DCoC Working Group 3 On Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea,**

**Serena Beach Resort & Spa, Mombasa, Kenya  
1-4 September 2025**

**Opening Remarks by Major General Paul Owuor Otieno, MGH EBS, 'ndc' 'psc' (K)  
Commander, Kenya Navy**

Distinguished delegates,  
Representatives of the International Maritime Organization,  
UNITAR,  
the Kingdom of Denmark,  
and the Indian Ocean Commission,  
Esteemed colleagues from DCoC Signatory States and Friends of the DCoC,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is both an honour and a privilege to welcome you to Mombasa, the maritime heart of Kenya, for this Inaugural Workshop on the Establishment of Working Group 3 under the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) and its Jeddah Amendment. On behalf of the Kenya Navy and the Government of Kenya, I extend our warmest greetings and sincere appreciation for your presence and commitment to advancing maritime security in our region.

I take this opportunity to extend a special welcome to the representatives of the 22 Signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct. Your presence here today is a testament to our shared commitment to regional maritime security and cooperation. I also warmly welcome our implementing and strategic partners—IMO, UNITAR, the Kingdom of Denmark and the Indian Ocean Commission, and other Friends of the DCoC including ACSS, CRIMARIO, CMF, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, INDIA, RCOC, RMIFC—whose continued support and collaboration have been instrumental in advancing the goals of this important initiative.

This gathering is not just a meeting—it is a pivotal moment in our collective maritime journey. The establishment of Working Group 3 on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea is a direct response to the call made during the High-Level Meeting in Dar es Salaam in November 2024. It reflects our shared recognition that maritime threats—whether piracy, smuggling, illegal fishing, or environmental degradation—are transnational in nature and require a unified, operationally focused response.

The Djibouti Code of Conduct, since its inception in 2009 and its subsequent Jeddah Amendment in 2017, has provided a robust framework for regional cooperation in combating piracy and other illicit maritime activities. Its core objectives—enhancing information sharing, strengthening maritime law enforcement, and building capacity for coordinated operations—remain as relevant today as ever. Working Group 3 is a critical mechanism for operationalizing these objectives, translating policy into practice, and ensuring that our collective maritime security architecture is both responsive and resilient.

As the Kenya Navy, our constitutional and strategic mandate includes the protection of our maritime sovereignty, the safeguarding of sea lines of communication, and the coordination of maritime operations in support of national and regional security. We are deeply aware that no single nation can secure the seas alone. It is through collaboration, interoperability, and mutual trust that we can effectively respond to the complex and evolving threats in the Western Indian Ocean and beyond.

This workshop provides a unique opportunity to lay the operational foundation for Working Group 3 and craft a roadmap that will translate our strategic intent into coordinated action at sea. Kenya is proud to host this inaugural meeting and to contribute to its leadership. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to supporting the outcomes of this workshop—not only through participation but through action. We are ready to provide the necessary operational, institutional, and diplomatic support to ensure that Working Group 3 becomes a cornerstone of regional maritime cooperation.

As we embark on this important work, let us be guided by the words of Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who once said:

“The sea is a vast and complex domain, but it is also a shared space. Maritime security is not just about ships and sailors—it is about partnerships, persistence, and purpose.” (Admiral Michael Mullen served as the 17th Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff from October 1, 2007, to September 30, 2011).

Let us embrace that purpose today. Let us build partnerships that endure. And let us persist in our shared mission to make our seas safer, more secure, and more resilient for generations to come.

Finally, I urge each of us to approach this workshop not just as participants, but as architects of a new era of maritime cooperation. Let us be bold in our ideas, clear in our commitments, and united in our resolve. The success of Working Group 3 will depend on the strength of our collaboration and the courage of our collective action. Let us ensure that the outcomes of this workshop not only meet but exceed the expectations set forth in the Djibouti Code of Conduct for the benefit of our individual countries and agencies represented here and the entire Western Indian Ocean at large.

It is now my distinct honour and privilege to officially declare the Inaugural Workshop on the Establishment of DCoC Working Group 3 on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea—formally open.

Thank you.