



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

**Serena Beach Resort & Spa, Mombasa, Kenya
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Opening statement by Special Representative for Maritime Security of Denmark, H. E Nicolai Ruge

Commander of Kenya Navy, Major General Paul Otieno
Chair of Djibouti Code of Conduct Jeddah Amendment, Mr. Metse Ralephenya.
Representatives of IOC, UNITAR, and IMO.
Military representatives – officers.
Ladies and gentlemen.

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We all depend on maritime security for global growth and development. Therefore, maritime security is also a concern for Denmark, despite being a country far away from where we are gathered today.

Denmark is surrounded by water and has been a seafaring nation for centuries. Today, and despite being a small country, Denmark is the 9th largest maritime nation in the world. I guess, for example, that you all know of the lightblue containerships from Maersk?

Ladies and gentlemen,

when we consider the threats to global maritime security, we must remember that not all threats are ON the sea - we must also recognize the threats coming FROM the sea.
In combatting international cross-border maritime threats we need to stand together. Otherwise, we will not prevail. If we can't stand together, we will leave the playground to the criminals, as they know how to work together.

Let me make three points.

First of all, together we must avoid being SEABLIND! For two reasons; We would miss the opportunities offered by the Blue Economy. And we would miss recognizing the threats and potential risks on and from the sea.

Secondly, when it comes to maritime threats off the coast of Africa, which affects us all, the international community can help cure the symptoms, but the enduring solution to cure the patient lays with the affected countries in the region. Warships can be deployed for counter-piracy missions, for example. But the long-term solutions to countering the problem can only be developed here in the region.

From the Danish side we therefore acknowledge and appreciate the regional initiatives and much enhanced regional responsibility we have seen from the improved implementation of the DCoC instrument. That you, yourself, in the region, recognize the needs of a whole-of-government approach, making full use of all of the competences, skills and capabilities that each nation can bring to the table, both civilian and military.

So, a third and final point is that working together and sharing capabilities, acts as a “force multiplier”, increasing effectiveness and reducing costs. And when you take responsibility for your own region, it only encourages the international community to support you further.

Recognizing the potential of national, regional and international naval forces to assist maritime law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies to carry out their duties is a huge step in enhancing the effectiveness of maritime security. However, this will require close cooperation and coordination between navies and law enforcement authorities in the region. But most of all it will require trust and confidence in each other.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude with a few words on some policy developments in Denmark. In February this year, the Government launched a new Global Strategy for Maritime Security. I will present that strategy in further details later.

Also, in late 2024, the Government launched a much broader strategy, entitled “*Africa’s Century*” with the explicit objective of strengthening Denmark’s engagement with African countries. The overall focus is on more equal partnerships, on being better at listening to Africa’s voices and on supporting African-led solutions to African problems. In other words, you shall lead the way to find the enduring solutions that will work in your region, and Denmark and the international community shall support you making it happen.

In some cases that support invariably has to materialize itself in economic terms. I am in that respect proud to say that Denmark remains steadfast in its commitment to meeting the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income as official development assistance. As we have done for the past 45 years.

It is in that spirit that Denmark is here today. To help facilitate that you, across the region, can find solutions and instruments that will improve maritime security and benefit you – as well as the rest of us that depend on maritime security for global growth and development.

I wish the working group great success in its endeavours!

Thank you.