



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 IMO Project Manager, Mr. Kiruja Micheni

His Excellency, Danish Ambassador – Mr. Nicolai Ruge
The Kenya Navy Commander – Major General Paul Otieno Owuor
Representatives from our Sponsors – Denmark, UNITAR, and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)
Distinguished Representatives from DCoC Signatory States
Esteemed International Partners
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

It is my singular honour to welcome you to the Inaugural Workshop of Working Group 3 on Operational Cooperation and Coordination at Sea, under the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment.

This inaugural workshop is convened as a direct result of Resolution One of the High-Level Meeting (HLM) held in Dar es Salaam in November 2024, which called for the establishment of this Working Group. It reflects the collective vision and ambition of the DCoC Signatory States to strengthen regional maritime cooperation and coordination, anchored firmly in the implementation of the Jeddah Amendment. As the specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is proud to support this initiative. Our mandate compels us to foster collaboration among Member States to ensure safe, secure, and sustainable maritime operations.

On behalf of IMO, I extend our sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Denmark, UNITAR, and the Indian Ocean Commission for their generous sponsorship and continued support to the DCoC architecture. Their commitment to maritime security and regional cooperation is deeply valued. We are also profoundly grateful to the Kenya Navy for hosting this important workshop in Mombasa. Their hospitality and logistical support have been instrumental in bringing us together.

I warmly welcome our partners and Friends of the DCoC who have joined us today. Your presence is a testament to your commitment to regional maritime security. We kindly urge you to remain open from the onset to supporting the Signatory States in achieving this great inspiration and vision—where regional Navies and Coast Guards are at the forefront of efforts to coordinate operations at sea and address illicit maritime threats.

Regional cooperation is not just a strategic necessity—it is the cornerstone of maritime security in our shared waters. No single country can address the complex and evolving threats alone. It is only through collaborative frameworks, joint operations, and mutual trust that we can effectively safeguard our maritime domain. We have already seen promising examples of such cooperation, and we shall hear more about them in the upcoming sessions. These include:

- The Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) in Seychelles, under the Indian Ocean Commission.
- The Indian Led Coordination through the IFC-IOR and through the coordination at sea in the wake of the Red Sea Crisis.
- The Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and the SHADE mechanism, which have demonstrated multinational collaboration in combating piracy and maritime crime.

As we gather here, we must reaffirm our collective commitment to advancing the objectives of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, particularly in light of its Jeddah Amendments, which emphasize enhanced cooperation at sea to address piracy, trafficking, illegal fishing, and other transnational maritime crimes. To move forward effectively and in line with the objectives of this workshop, we must establish mechanisms for coordination of operations at sea. This includes developing a robust Concept of Operations, clear Terms of Reference, and a practical roadmap for the Working Group moving forward and I am confident that we have the best team this week to be able to deliver the same which shall then be forwarded at the 8th DCoC High-Level Meeting scheduled for 12-14 November 2025 for adoption and implementation.

As I conclude, I wish to give a rallying call: for the success of this initiative, it is imperative that we begin to view Navies not only as defence agencies, but as multifaceted actors in maritime governance, capable of contributing to law enforcement, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection. Furthermore, we must explore the deployment of sea riders—a proven mechanism for enhancing interoperability, building trust, and facilitating real-time information sharing among maritime forces.

Let me close with a quote that captures the spirit of our mission:

“To reach a port, we must set sail – Sail, not tie at anchor – Sail, not drift.” – *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

Let us use this opportunity to build a strong foundation for operational cooperation, guided by mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a vision for a safer and more secure maritime domain.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive and engaging workshop.