



**DCoC/JA Friends of the DCoC 6 Meeting**

**Virtual via Teams**

**Wednesday, 17 September 2025**

**Opening Remarks of the DCoC Chair**

**Distinguished guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this meeting of the Friends of the Djibouti Code of Conduct. Since the adoption of the DCoC and its Jeddah Amendment, we have shared a common commitment: to ensure safe, secure, and resilient seas in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. Thanks to your continued support and close partnership, we are seeing real progress—strengthening regional frameworks, building practical tools, and expanding cooperation to safeguard trade routes and protect coastal communities.

Between July and September, an IMO consultant supported by the Secretariat has engaged in a series of consultations and assessments designed to deepen collaboration with partners. These included visits to Bahrain and Egypt, and virtual meetings with the African Union Commission, United States Africa Command, India, and representatives of the shipping industry. Conducted under the EU's Safe Seas for Africa project, these exchanges offered valuable insights into what is working, where gaps remain, and how to better align our collective efforts. This work will inform the development of a stronger Engagement Strategy to bring regional and international actors into closer alignment and improve cooperation in addressing threats to safe navigation.

We have also seen tangible progress under the SSA project, with a five-day workshop in Kenya which brought together national stakeholders to improve inter-agency coordination and advance work on a National Maritime Security Strategy. In parallel, pitching sessions were held on 5 August for the enhancement of the DCoC Website and Members Only portal, which hosts the Assistance Matrix, (formerly the Capacity Building Matrix). Following an independent technical review, Byte City Inclusive Solutions Ltd, a Kenyan software solutions company, was recommended as the vendor best placed to deliver a secure, scalable, and compliant platform—one that prioritizes compliance, accessibility, data security, and good governance. This upgrade will be a key deliverable reported on at the upcoming High-Level Meeting in Mauritius to be held from 12 - 14 November 2025. A prototype sample will be shared briefly by the Secretariat in this meeting.

Earlier this month, we marked another important milestone with the formal establishment of Working Group 3 (WG3) in Mombasa. Hosted by the Kenya Navy and jointly organized with the IMO, funded by the Kingdom of Denmark, UNITAR, and the Indian Ocean Commission, the meeting brought Member States and partners together to define a dedicated forum for operational coordination and cooperation at sea. WG3 will plan and execute joint maritime operations, improve information sharing, and drive capacity-building efforts to address piracy, maritime terrorism, smuggling, human trafficking, and IUU fishing. The workshop concluded with four important outcomes: Terms of Reference, a Concept of Operations, a phased Roadmap, and a framework for resource mobilization and sustainability. WG3 will meet again in the margins of the High-Level Meeting in Mauritius this November.

Under the Crisis Response Project for the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean, practical backing to the newly established Working Group 3 on operational coordination and cooperation is outlined. By aligning regional capacities with common priorities through capability assessments, harmonized standard operating procedures, and targeted technical support, the project will convene dedicated workshops to operationalize WG3, while also providing equipment and training to enhance interoperability among signatory States.

It also builds coast guard capabilities in frontline States such as Djibouti and Yemen, ensuring law enforcement agencies are ready to respond to transnational threats.

In addition, we would like to thank India for extending invitations to all DCoC signatory States to participate in the 3rd edition of the Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW), scheduled to take place at the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram, near New Delhi, from 3 to 5 November 2025. The Indian Ocean Region, home to over 150,000 transiting ships annually, remains one of the world's most economically vital yet fragile maritime spaces, facing persistent threats such as piracy, contraband smuggling, irregular migration, IUU fishing, and hybrid maritime challenges.

With these developments in mind, let me now turn to an area that remains at the very heart of the Djibouti Code of Conduct—capacity building. Our initiatives continue to evolve to meet emerging challenges.

- **Information Sharing Centres:** Work continues on establishing National Maritime Information Sharing Centres in Mauritius, Comoros, and Kenya, with support from India.
- Kenya has benefitted from targeted support to strengthen its National Maritime Information Sharing Centre (NMISC), including the establishment of inter-agency coordination mechanisms and specialized training on information sharing. To guide its development, IMO facilitated a national workshop that brought together key stakeholders to assess existing structures and formulate a clear roadmap for the NMISC's operationalization. These efforts are designed to ensure that the Centre evolves into a central hub for maritime domain awareness and national coordination.
- In the United Republic of Tanzania, significant progress was made during a national workshop held from 4 to 7 August 2025. The workshop produced a practical roadmap for the NMISC, outlining institutional, legal, and operational frameworks, identifying priority

areas for technical assistance, and laying the foundations for long-term sustainability. At the regional level, integration with the MASE centres—RMIFC in Madagascar and RCOC in Seychelles—continues to advance, while the re-establishment of the Regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre in Aden is being supported by UNODC under the forthcoming Crisis Response Programme.

- **Sub-Working Groups:** Three thematic sub-groups under Working Group 2 are being activated: IUU Fishing (led by Tanzania), Port and Ship Security/Protection of Coastal Installations (led by Ethiopia), and Marine Environment Protection (led by Mauritius). Each will be guided by concept papers setting out terms of reference, operational guidelines, and partner engagement frameworks.
- **Regional Tools:** A regional Vessels of Interest database is under development within the IORIS platform, which will significantly enhance maritime situational awareness across signatory States.

Above all, our focus remains on ensuring that these initiatives deliver results on the ground—improving coordination, building national resilience, and delivering practical benefits for coastal communities and seafarers alike.

Together, these efforts reflect our shared determination to strengthen the DCoC as a cooperative framework and to deliver results on that matter. With your partnership and continued commitment, I am confident we can move further, faster, towards a safer and more secure maritime domain.

Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*