



FRIENDS OF THE DCoC/JA MEETING NO. 5

Virtual via Teams

Tuesday 18 March 2025

Record of the Meeting

1. The Djibouti Code of Conduct (hereinafter referred to as DCoC/JA), facilitated a meeting of the Friends of the Djibouti Code of Conduct (FoDCoC,) on behalf of signatory States to the Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (the Djibouti Code of Conduct), (hereinafter referred to as "the Jeddah Amendment"), and States eligible to sign these instruments.

2. The meeting was attended by the following DCoC Steering Committee members:

KENYA SEYCHELLES SOMALIA SOUTH AFRICA YEMEN

And by the following Implementing partner States:

DENMARK UNITED KINGDOM
INDIA UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

And by the following International Organizations and Programmes:

AUXILIUM WORLDWIDE	IMO	RCOC
CRIMARIO	IOC	RMIFC
EUCAP	INTERPOL	UNITAR
EUNAVFOR ATALANTA	ISS	UNODC
EUROPEAN UNION	JMSC	
IFC-IOR	OCIMF	

The full list of participants is attached as **ANNEX A**.

Aim

3. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the progress made in implementing the DCoC/JA and to reinforce the DCoC agenda for joint efforts in addressing maritime security concerns in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. It also called on implementing partners to plan impact-driven regional activities on various topics, including the establishment

of Working Group 3 on Operational Coordination and Cooperation at Sea, the finalization of the Regional Maritime Security Strategy, and the development of the DCoC Engagement Strategy. Additionally, discussions focused on the development of the Vessels of Interest Database, support for National Maritime Information Sharing Centres, and capacity-building initiatives through the Capacity Building Matrix. The agenda is attached as at **ANNEX B**.

Opening Remarks and Working Group Updates

4. In his opening remarks, Mr. Kiruja Micheni (IMO) acknowledged and appreciated the implementing partners for their dedication to strengthening regional frameworks and advancing collective solutions to promote safety and security of navigation in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. He recalled the success of the High-Level Meeting held in Dar es Salaam in November 2024, describing it as a significant milestone in enhancing regional maritime security. DCoC Member States' commitment to deepening cooperation, strengthening capacity building, and fostering an inclusive approach to maritime security threats, was reaffirmed.

5. Mr. Micheni pointed that the Steering Committee convened in February 2025, to assess regional progress and define the strategic direction for the coming year. This was followed by a virtual meeting of the DCoC National Focal Points at the beginning of March, where discussions centred on reviewing the implementation of the Jeddah Amendment, identifying emerging opportunities, and gathering input on regional projects aimed at strengthening maritime security capacities. A roadmap to advance the resolutions of the last High-Level Meeting was outlined to ensure commitments made translated into concrete action and lasting impact.

6. The Friends of the DCoC were lauded for their support to the DCoC/JA in finding common solutions to shared challenges. Emphasis was made on strong partnerships and continued contributions in achieving a secure and resilient maritime domain. IMO outlined key initiatives, including strengthening the regional information-sharing network, establishing DCoC Working Group 3 on operational cooperation at sea (with its inaugural meeting scheduled for 5-8 May 2025, in Mombasa), and developing a DCoC Engagement Strategy to enhance communication among Member States and partners, including international naval actors.

7. Additionally, plans were highlighted to advance the Regional Maritime Security Strategy, establish a common maritime security lexicon for standardized terminologies, and create a regional database of Vessels of Interest to support information sharing and Maritime Domain Awareness. Mr. Micheni emphasized that while progress had been made, much remained to be done before the next High-Level Meeting in October 2025. He called on the Friends of the DCoC to continue supporting these efforts, ensuring sustained commitment, coordination, and resources to collectively enhance regional security, promote freedom of navigation, and safeguard maritime trade.

8. The DCoC Chair, Mr. Metse Ralephenya (RSA), echoed the IMO in his speech, emphasizing significant advancements in maritime security efforts in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. He stated that Member States were implementing resolutions from the 2024 High-Level Meeting, focusing on enhancing information sharing through National Maritime Information Sharing Centres (NMISCs) and integrating them with regional bodies such as RMIFC (Madagascar) and RCOC (Seychelles). He noted that progress was being made in re-establishing the Regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre (ReMISC) in Aden with support from the UNODC. Additionally, he mentioned that the DCoC was strengthening regional collaboration by deploying a DCoC International Liaison Officer from Kenya to India's Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) as well as planning for the inaugural meeting of Working Group 3 on Operational Cooperation and

Coordination at Sea which has been scheduled in May. He added that the security situation in the Red Sea has improved following the recent ceasefire by Hamas; however, the situation remains volatile and requires close monitoring. His remarks are attached as at **ANNEX C**.

Overview of Projects: Proposed Danish Project

9. Colonel Jens Lindvig (Denmark) briefed the meeting on Denmark's close dialogue with IMO Nairobi office regarding the secondment of a senior maritime officer at the P4 level. He noted that a revised project proposal was underway following their last discussions and that the IMO Human Resources department would reach out to the embassy for final coordination, though the process was progressing well. He added the proposal would eventually be presented to Copenhagen for approval, with positive indications that Denmark would support the posting.

10. Colonel Lindvig highlighted Denmark's support for Working Group 3, noting that discussions had been held with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). He stated that both Denmark and UNITAR had agreed to support the inaugural meeting in Mombasa, scheduled for the week of 5 to 8 May, with the exact date yet to be finalized. He added that a final confirmation from Copenhagen would be communicated in the coming days.

Safe Seas for Africa project

11. Ms. Giulia Nicoloso (European Commission), provided an update on the progress of the Safe Seas Africa initiative. She reported that all contracts with INTERPOL, UNODC, IOC, and IMO had been signed by the end of 2024, with the IOC contract already concluded in July. These agreements enable continued support for both national and regional maritime security centers within the regional maritime security framework. She noted that INTERPOL and UNODC were currently in their inception phases, emphasizing their complementary roles in addressing maritime criminality.

12. She added that INTERPOL was focusing on strengthening national maritime law enforcement agencies with IMO enhancing regional coordination among different agencies to promote a multi-agency approach at both national and regional levels. Meanwhile, UNODC was concentrating on the legal aspects of maritime crime, particularly managing apprehended criminals, improving domestic legal frameworks, and supporting prosecutors. Additionally, she highlighted UNODC's efforts in providing legal expertise to the RCoC and RMIFC. Ms. Nicoloso underscored the European Commission's commitment to ensuring synergy among these organizations.

Crisis Response Project

13. Mr. Ondrej Votaska (EU) briefed the meeting on the European Union's ongoing efforts to support maritime security initiatives in the region. He stated that they had been cooperating closely with the IMO over the past several months to develop a project that directly responds to the DCoC 8-Point Action Plan. This initiative aimed to enhance EU engagement in the region by complementing ongoing projects while also addressing emerging crises. He announced that preparations for the project had been finalized and that the contract was ready for signature, pending resolution of one final issue, which he expressed hope would be resolved soon. He provided an overview of the project's structure, noting that it would be implemented by a small consortium, ideally led by the IMO, with strong support from CRIMARIO and UNODC.

14. He further elaborated that the project would consist of two main components. The first component would focus on strengthening the DCoC's information-sharing network (ISN),

including support for National Maritime Information Sharing Centers (NMISCs) in target countries, assistance to the ReMISC Centre in Aden, conducting maritime exercises, and enhancing surveillance and analytical capabilities. Additionally, it would facilitate the interface with the Indian Ocean Regional Security (IORS) framework. The second component would focus on supporting the coast guards of Yemen and Djibouti, with EU NAVFOR playing a role in these efforts. Mr. Ondrej confirmed that the EU had allocated a budget of €4 million for the project and expressed gratitude to partners from IMO, CRIMARIO, and UNODC for their collaboration in its preparation. Lastly, he mentioned that efforts were also underway to extend the CRIMARIO initiative into its third phase, scheduled to begin after the summer, with a continued focus on engagement with the region and close cooperation with the DCoC.

DCoC Website/Members Only Portal upgrades

15. Ms. Esther Njonde (IMO) provided an overview of the planned enhancements to the DCoC website and the Members-Only portal, which will be funded under the Safe Seas Africa (SSA) programme. She detailed the proposed upgrades, including a website redesign, search engine optimization, improved content management, enhanced event registration features, and upgraded web analytics. She also emphasized the introduction of accessibility features, such as a language translation panel for Arabic and Portuguese and an accessibility panel to accommodate differently abled users.

16. Furthermore, she highlighted the integration of an automated feedback mechanism. The Members-Only portal would be restructured to improve capacity-building tracking, monitoring, reporting, and document management. Additionally, new administrative protocols would be implemented to ensure smooth leadership transitions. The presentation is attached as **ANNEX D**.

Plenary (All)

17. Referring to the IMO presentation on enhancements to the Website/Members Only portal, Mr. Russell Pegg (OCIMF) was concerned that the IMO component, which aims to enhance international and regional cooperation, did not explicitly mention industry stakeholders. Since maritime security efforts ultimately affect seafarers and shipping companies, he questioned where the industry's input is considered in decision-making. He suggested that industry perspectives should be more proactively included in presentations and discussions.

18. Additionally, Mr. Pegg pointed out that IMO was present at SHADE (Shared Awareness and Deconfliction) in December, where a Single Regional Information Sharing Framework was established. He was concerned about the lack of discussion on how DCoC's efforts would integrate with existing information-sharing mechanisms. Without proper coordination, there would be unnecessary duplication of efforts, leading to inefficiencies and wasted resources.

19. Mr. Micheni responded to OCIMF that the DCoC engagement strategy, which was in the pipeline for development, plans to enhance collaboration with the maritime industry. The industry is identified as one of the key stakeholders in this strategy, meaning that the DCoC aims to align its efforts with industry interests, ensuring that both security initiatives and industry needs contribute to a shared goal of improving maritime security while also considering the operational concerns of shipping companies and seafarers.

20. Commodore Nitin Parvataneni (MEA, India) discussed various aspects of India's engagement with the DCoC and related initiatives. He began by stating that India was awaiting

inputs and confirmation from Kenya, regarding positioning of a DCoC International Liaison Officer (ILO) at the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), assuring that India was ready to proceed once the nomination was finalized by the agreed upon DCoC-JA Member State.

21. He expressed gratitude to the Chair for highlighting that India's proposal to revise the CB matrix had been accepted, acknowledging the Chair's detailed presentation on the revised version. He reiterated India's full support for this initiative and inquired about the preferred method for sharing procedures and technical experts. Additionally, he emphasized India's preference to redesign the matrix as an 'assistance matrix' – a tool to enhance transparency and efficiency for both members and non-members. Noting the EU's financial support to the website/members only portal enhancements, he requested that further clarification on the specifics of the CB matrix could be addressed offline.

22. He affirmed India's commitment in supporting DCoC countries, as was also expressed by Mauritius in the recent National Focal Points meeting, where work on their National Maritime Information Sharing Centre (NMISC) was ongoing.

23. He announced India's proposal to host the second Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW) at IFC-IOR, Gurugram, in Q4/2025, with dates to be finalized. Invitations would be sent once details were confirmed, and coordination with the DCoC Secretariat would ensure proper representation of DCoC representatives while resolving ambiguity with the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) participants.

24. He welcomed the Vessels of Interest Database as a progressive step and offered IFC-IOR's assistance in information sharing. On Working Group 3, he reiterated India's support, despite initial concerns about the need for a credible information sharing network before the commencement of an operational group. He emphasized the urgency of timely invitations for the May 2025 WG3 workshop, urging the DCoC Secretariat to send them promptly so all stakeholders could nominate officials in a timely manner.

25. Commodore Nitin clarified that India, at the previous HLM, had already agreed to deconflicting its MISW Workshop tabletop exercises (TTX) with CRIMARIO organized events and would run its TTX on the IFC-IOR software. He requested that Para 14 of the 05 March 2025 NFP meeting (only for Member States) report be kindly amended as it seemed to be an erroneous indication of India's statement at High Level Meeting (HLM) in Dar-Es-Salaam. He reiterated that DCoC states were invited to propose scenarios for the tabletop exercise, ensuring that India's exercise would be tailored to their interests while avoiding overlap with other ongoing initiatives.

26. India recommended the IMO consultant Vice Admiral AK Chawla (Retd) as a consultant for the DCoC Engagement Strategy, the Regional Maritime Security Strategy, and facilitation of the Working Group 3 establishment workshop. It was noted that there was interest in engaging a consultant for these initiatives, and India reiterated its earlier recommendation of Vice Admiral Chawla, emphasizing his prior contributions to the Regional Maritime Security Strategy Workshop in Jeddah.

27. Additionally, the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), the renowned Delhi-based think tank specializing in maritime issues, was mentioned and calls were made to the Secretariat to extend invitations to both Vice Admiral Chawla (Retd) and NMF to contribute to these efforts.

Summary of Discussion and Way Forward

28. Having heard the discussions and presentations, the adopted the summary of the discussion and way forward as follows:

- .1 The industry had adopted the recently developed maritime lexicon, which would be reflected in the upcoming Best Management Practices (BMP), expected to be published in two to three weeks.
- .2 Suggestions were made to include Industry perspectives in DCoC discussions and provide ways on how DCoC's efforts would integrate with existing information-sharing mechanisms.
- .3 IMO explained that efforts were underway to collaborate with participating states and partners to develop a comprehensive list of suspicious vessels. Under the crisis response project, a mechanism would be explored to establish and operationalize a tracking system of suspicious vessels. Once a network of national centers was fully established, vessel monitoring would become more efficient, allowing seamless handover across maritime boundaries.
- .4 The meeting was reminded of the need to establish strong structured national frameworks that feed regional centres in order receive and disseminate information through a whole-of-government approach, and operational needs. Informed by the DCoC Strategy and Roadmap, the Secretariat had shared a NMISC status matrix aimed at capturing existing systems, identifying gaps, and mapping partner support.
- .5 Invitations to the upcoming Inaugural meeting for the establishment of Working Group 3 on operational cooperation and Coordination at sea would be sent out to implementing partners and industry stakeholders. The invitations have been shared with National Focal Points.

Vote of thanks:

29. The Chair appreciated the Friends of the DCoC for their commitment and continued support for the work of the DCoC. He noted that he is looking forward to engaging with the Friends in developing capacities within DCoC states and by extension, the region.

30. There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1505 hours EAT.

ANNEX A- LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

No	Name	Country/Organization
1.	Lavani Said	Comoros
2.	Capt. Daniel Adam	Seychelles
3.	Yonis Adan	Somalia
4.	Metse Ralephenya	South Africa
5.	Capt. Yeslem Mubark	Yemen

6.	Dr. Ian Ralby	Auxilium Worldwide
7.	Martin Cauchi-Inglott	CRIMARIO
8.	Dave Nattrass	
9.	Col. Jens Lindvig	Denmark
10.	Naima Ibrahim	EUCAP
11.	Lt Cdr. Javier Fraga	EUNAVFOR ATALANTA
12.	Dr. Michelle Stallone	European Union
13.	Nicoloso Giulia	
14.	Vosatka Ondrej	
15.	Commodore Nitin Parvataneni, MEA	India
16.	Captain (IN) Pranav Anand, MoD	
17.	Commander Ashwath Mythreya, NSCS	
18.	Commander Abeer Sharma, IFC-IOR	
19.	Commander Saurabh, IFC-IOR	
20.	Tony	Interagency Shipping MSCIO
21.	Fabienne Chassagneux	INTERPOL
22.	Maria Kotsovou	
23.	Amezquita Bautista Erika	
24.	Kirillas Anastasia	
25.	Souxes Dimitrios	
26.	Lattanzi Lorenzo	
27.	Raj Mohabeer	Indian Ocean Commission
28.	Hassani Ahamada Soilihi	
29.	Pooja Jhinni	
30.	Timothy Walker	ISS
31.	Dr. Carina Bruwer	

32.	Joyce Awino	Kenya
33.	Russell Pegg	OCIMF
34.	Capt. Sam Gontier	RCOC
35.	Alex Ralaiairivony	RMIFC
36.	Theo Girard	Skylight
37.	Christophe Jozef	UNITAR
38.	Carolina Martinho	
39.	Rodrigo Contreras Cardona	UNODC
40.	Alexandra Gaunt	United Kingdom
41.	Malcolm Brown	
42.	Oliver Meehan	
43.	Delvin D. W. Jones	United States of America
44.	McFadden Crystal L	
45.	Christopher M. Spangler	
46.	Sankar, Parvathy	
47.	Kiruja Micheni	IMO
48.	Winnie Maina	
49.	Esther Kung'u	

ANNEX B - Agenda

<https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Agenda-Friends-of-the-DCoC-Meeting-18-March-2025.pdf>

ANNEX C - Opening Remarks by the DCoC Chair Mr. Metse Ralephenya

<https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Opening-Remarks-by-DCoC-Chair-at-the-FDCoC-Meeting-held-virtually-on-18-March-2025.pdf>

ANNEX D – Website and Members Only Portal Upgrade - made by the Secretariat

<https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Website-and-Members-Only-Portal-Upgrade-made-by-the-Secretariat-for-the-FDCoC-Meeting-held-on-18-March-2025.pdf>
