



DJIBOUTI CODE OF CONDUCT/JEDDAH AMENDMENT

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING No. 13

Virtual via Teams

Thursday, 11 December 2025

Record of the Meeting

1. A meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, 2017 (DCoC/JA), was held virtually, via TEAMS on Thursday, 11 December 2025
2. It was chaired by Mr. Metse Ralephenya Director at Department of Transport-Republic of South Africa, and current Chairperson of the DCoC. The following attended the meeting:
 - REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA- Chair of the DCoC
 - KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA – Vice Chair of the DCoC
 - YEMEN- Chair of Working Group 1 (WG1) and SC Member
 - COMOROS – Vice Chair of Working Group 1 (WG1) and SC Member
 - SEYCHELLES – Chair of Working Group 2 (WG2) and SC Member
 - SOMALIA – Vice Chair of WG2 and SC Member
 - DJIBOUTI – Vice Chair of WG3 and SC Memberand by representatives of IMO as the Secretariat.

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

Aim

3. To set the DCoC agenda following the 8th HLM held in Mauritius for 2026, call for the adoption of the DCoC Engagement Strategy, address concerns raised by IMO HQ regarding mandate and update National Focal Points on the outcomes of the SC concerning the implementation of the DCoC/JA.

Opening Remarks, Updates on

4. Mr. Metse Ralephenya (RSA) opened the meeting by welcoming participants and commending the success of the last High-Level Meeting held in Mauritius in November. He expressed appreciation for the strong engagement demonstrated in Mauritius by Member States, Friends of the DCoC, and other stakeholders, emphasizing that there is significant enthusiasm and substantial work ahead.
5. He highlighted one key concern raised by the IMO's TCID Director regarding the format of the HLM. The Director felt that Member States were not sufficiently involved under the

current structure and recommended that the DCoC adopt the meeting style used by IMO Committees (such as MEPC, MSC, and FAL). Member States agreed to this recommendation, and preparations are underway to adopt the IMO-style format for the next HLM.

6. Under the new approach, all stakeholders will need to submit written papers in advance outlining the issues they want to raise, the outcomes they seek, and proposed decisions. To support this transition, the NFPs will need to agree on deadlines for submissions, considering translation needs for both English- and French-speaking countries.

7. Mr. Ralephenya noted that the next HLM is tentatively planned for October, as November is not ideal due to end-of-year commitments. He expressed confidence that the new format is achievable if everyone works collectively and contributes to shaping the process.

8. Ms. Mashudu Nepfumbada (RSA) revised the agenda to have the realignment of the DCoC and multilingualism inclusion in different forums for non-English speaking countries. She presented the DCoC Value Proposition as follows:

- Proposal was made to print the Code as a booklet
- Schedule fixed meetings to check our action plans
- SC remains in its role based on Terms of Reference.
- WG3 -relevance and coordination in line with IMO mandate
- Adoption of IMO style of meetings and standards, processes and procedures. Fixed annual date to be set possibly in October.
- Adjust seating to give member states priority
- Consider Day 1 of the HLM to be a conference, two panel members and Host from the country
- Inclusion of Industry stakeholders
- Chair and Deputy Chair to host the HLM and
- Agenda to be set timely with speakers submitting papers prior the HLM.

The presentation is set as **Annex B**.

9. Mr. Kiruja Micheni (IMO) commended South Africa for the quality of the draft and emphasized the need for a formal revision to ensure the document is fully aligned with expectations, noting that sharing it with Member States for their inputs would be a valuable next step. Capt. Ibrahim Althomali (KSA) added that the draft would be useful going forward but raised questions regarding the regional invitations to host DCoC events and the related requests made to the NFPs.

9. Capt. Althomali recommended that invitations for any DCoC-related events should not be issued directly from one country to another. Rather, they should be channelled through the DCoC Secretariat and formally communicated to the National Focal Points (NFPs). He noted that this approach would streamline responses, promote consistency, and ensure that participation aligns with established DCoC procedures.

Agenda

7. The meeting adopted the revised agenda which is attached as **Annex C**.

IMO Updates - The Engagement Strategy

8. Ms. Winnie Maina (IMO) explained that, based on France's contribution, there was agreement with the overall direction and objectives of the Engagement Strategy, while clarification was requested in several areas. She noted that France emphasised the need to strengthen references to national ownership and associated commitments, particularly with regard to the establishment of National Maritime Information Sharing Centres (NMISCs). She further indicated that France had identified a number of typographical issues and proposed additions, including clearer references to national, regional, and international cooperation where these had not been sufficiently reflected. France also encouraged maintaining neutrality with respect to the information-sharing tools to be used in the region. Overall, the proposed changes did not alter the core principles of the Strategy but were intended to enhance clarity and alignment. The copy of the Engagement Strategy with aforementioned changes is provided as **Annex D**.

Plenary: India's Inclusion in the DCoC and Working Group Three

9. The meeting was presented with the request for India to join the DCoCJA from the Republic of Mauritius. Noting that this was a repeat issue, the Chair noted that it would fundamentally change the DCoC/JA mechanism from a regional to an international organisation. He argued that membership should remain strictly based on geography, as is the case with other regional codes of conduct.

10. Ms. Mashudu Nepfumbada (South Africa) expressed full alignment with the Chair's position. She stated that membership should remain limited to the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden region, consistent with comparable frameworks like the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. She reaffirmed that South Africa does not support India's membership request. Capt. Ibrahim Althomali (KSA) stated his agreement with limiting membership to regional states, noting that opening membership to non-regional actors would complicate future decisions. He added, however, that not all Friends of DCoC contribute equally and suggested exploring a way to acknowledge or differentiate Friends based on their level of support. He emphasized that while KSA supports India's continued engagement, the country can find other ways to contribute to the regional efforts.

11. Capt. Yeslem Mubark (Yemen) supported the Chair's position, acknowledging India's valuable contributions but insisting that such support does not justify granting membership. He recommended maintaining India's status as a Friend of the DCoC and engaging them through bilateral arrangements or MoUs without expanding membership beyond the region.

12. Mr. Yonis Adan (Somalia) noted that India has raised this issue repeatedly over a long period. While agreeing that India should not become a full member to avoid setting a precedent for other non-regional countries, he suggested exploring a way to grant India a more elevated or "special" designation within the Friends of DCoC category. He explained that this could help recognize India's value to the region and respond to their repeated requests without undermining the regional character of the mechanism.

13. To conclude the issue, it was highlighted that allowing membership based on contribution would set a precedent that could oblige the DCoC to admit other highly supportive countries such as Denmark or the United States. He reaffirmed that while contributions are welcomed, membership must remain geographically defined. It was clarified that India

currently participates as an observer, and that the DCoC does not categorize “Friends” into different tiers.

14. Members discussed concerns raised by the IMO Director that Working Group 3 (WG3) appeared to operate beyond the IMO’s mandate. The Chair explained that, despite this concern, Member States established WG3 in response to the Secretary-General’s call for tangible, practical solutions, as current DCoC mechanisms allow only information-sharing without operational follow-through. He suggested that Member States may need to engage IMO leadership to seek guidance on structuring WG3 in a way that balances practicality with institutional boundaries.

15. South Africa supported the need for caution, recalling that during the Mombasa inauguration, navies highlighted significant legal and coordination challenges associated with cross-border maritime operations. It was reported that structures such as SADC and presidential proclamations define how South Africa, Mozambique, and Tanzania conduct joint operations, and that similar legal complexities would affect any WG3 framework. RSA recommended reviewing WG3’s Concept of Operations, Terms of Reference, and proposed operational model to ensure alignment with IMO’s mandate and avoid implementation challenges.

16. Somalia and the IMO underscored the sovereignty of Member States and the non-binding nature of the DCoC. It was stressed that states can enter bilateral or multilateral MoUs independently of IMO authority, and that WG3 should continue its work.

Summary of Discussion and Way Forward

17. The Chair requested for the DCoC Value Proposition document be circulated promptly to all regional stakeholders for familiarization of proper procedures for future DCoC High-Level meetings.

18. Flexibility would be exercised for other regular DCoC meetings.

19. It was agreed that Member States are free to develop operational cooperation mechanisms, while advising that clarification with IMO leadership would help avoid institutional conflicts and strengthen DCoC outcomes. The Chair concluded that further, more detailed discussions on WG3 would be required in a future session.

20. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1325hrs EAT.

Annexes:

- Annex A- List of Participants
- Annex B- The DCoC Value Proposition document
- Annex C – Agenda
- Annex D – Engagement Strategy (with track changes)

- **Annex A- List of Participants**

Name	Country
Metse Ralephenya	Republic of South Africa
Mashudu Nepfumbada	Republic of South Africa
Capt. Ibrahim Althomali	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Capt. Yeslem Mubark	Yemen
Anfifdine Ali	Comoros
Capt. Daniel Adam	Seychelles
Yonis Adan Adan	Somalia
Lt. Saad Ibrahim Ali	Djibouti
Kiruja Micheni	IMO
Winnie Maina	IMO
Esther Kung'u (Njonde)	IMO

Annex B- The DCoC Value Proposition document

<https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Annex-C-%E2%80%93-The-DCoC-Value-Proposition-document.pdf>

Annex C – Agenda

<https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Agenda-SC-Meeting-11-December-2025.pdf>

Annex D - Engagement Strategy (with track changes)

<https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Annex-D-%E2%80%93-Engagement-Strategy-with-track-changes.pdf>
