



Chairman's talking points

- 1) The DCoC has been resolute in calling for concerted efforts to protect the safety and security of shipping in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, including the Red Sea area.
- 2) In January this year, we issued a statement echoing the IMO SG's calls to protect seafarers, ships, and cargoes to ensure the safety and security of global supply chains. In our statement, we reiterated the need for the international community to work closely with regional states in:
 - a. Addressing the resurgence of piracy.
 - b. Increasing naval presence, for which we are grateful that a number of international partners have stepped up their efforts.
 - c. Enhancing protection measures in ports.
 - d. Denying weapons to perpetrators by stepping up customs checks and border controls to deter weapons smuggling.
- 3) The actions we have been advocating are consistent with the spirit and provisions of the DCoC/JA, and we remain committed to providing regional solutions to regional challenges in every way we can.
- 4) Troubled by the increased attacks against ships and signs of a resurgence off the coast of Somalia, in March 2024, we issued another statement making an URGENT APPEAL FOR ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE AGAINST ESCALATING INCIDENTS OF VESSEL ATTACKS IN THE RED SEA AREA AND THE RESURGENCE OF PIRACY IN THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN.
- 5) Given the nature of these attacks, we have been warning of the potential risk of an ecological disaster. The problem we now face with the Greek-flagged MV Sounion, which is in danger of spilling more than 150,000 tonnes—or one million barrels of crude oil, potentially the largest oil spill in recorded history, should be a wake-up call for all of us.
- 6) We expect that following this incident, oil tankers and other ships will avoid the Red Sea area, but we know that that will not be the end. This will only transfer the risk to the wider Western Indian Ocean, as Houthi rebels may seek out targets farther out in the Indian Ocean, much like what happened when vessels started avoiding the coast of Somalia to avoid being attacked by pirates, which led pirates to change tactics and attack ships far from the Somali coast.
- 7) The purpose of this meeting is, therefore, to reinforce the need for us to work together in addressing our common challenges.



- 8) We have taken the liberty to invite our international partners to share their perspectives because this not just a regional problem but affects us all. We are thankful for their support.