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UNODC's contribution to the 2015 report of the United Nations Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea

The UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) has expanded its focus area beyond the counter piracy realm into other forms of crimes occurring on sea, as well as looking into new geographical areas. Part of the new approach has been to develop an Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC) with the purpose to provide a regional network between states in order to coordinate their responses to maritime crime concerns at the diplomatic, strategic and capacity-building levels. The Forum will partner with regional and international organizations with a common interest in combating maritime crime and enhancing regional coordination such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The overall aim is to have a forum which will promote a shared understanding of the maritime crime issues facing Indian Ocean States and associated states that are on the various trafficking routes. Further it will formulate strategies to combat maritime crime and enhance the sharing of intelligence, coordination on investigating and prosecuting maritime crimes, as well as promote capacity development to strengthen the ability of States to combat a range of maritime crime threats. The IOFMC will be a voluntary initiative for states in the region that aims to increase their understanding of maritime threats, enhance cooperation between members, and promote access to capacity building initiatives. The IOFMC will initially focus on three crime pillars including heroin trafficking, trafficking in persons / smuggling of migrants, and wildlife and forest crime. Across these three pillars, the Forum will operate at two levels, such as a technical level and an overarching political and strategic level. The Ministerial meeting will be open to include other maritime crimes affecting members in the region and allocate priorities and resources for IOFMC work.