

DPPA Inputs for the Next Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea - June 2019

VIII

Maritime safety and security and flag State implementation

124. *Emphasizes* the importance of promptly reporting incidents to enable accurate information on the scope of the problem of piracy and armed robbery against ships at sea and, in the case of armed robbery against ships at sea, by affected vessels to the coastal State, underlines the importance of effective information-sharing with States potentially affected by incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships at sea, notes with appreciation the important role of the International Maritime Organization and the important contribution of the Information Sharing Centre of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, based in Singapore, which aspires to be recognized as a centre of excellence within its purpose and mandate, and notes the Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade – Gulf of Guinea mechanism, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations covering the high-risk area, the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre, based in Madagascar, and the Regional Maritime Centre for Operational Coordination in Seychelles;

Coast of West Africa- Gulf of Guinea

- Maritime crime and piracy off the coast of West Africa continue to pose a threat to peace, security and development in the region. Oil related crimes resulted in the loss of nearly \$2.8 billion in revenues to Nigeria in 2018, according to government figures.
- During the last quarter of 2018, 15 incidents of maritime crime and piracy were reported in the Gulf of Guinea. In 2019, the sub-region experienced a rise in piracy, armed robbery against vessels and other maritime crimes.
- According to the International Maritime Bureau, issued on 16 January 2019, the Gulf of Guinea featured a high number of piracy and armed robbery attacks at sea, with 22 incidents reported in the first quarter of 2019. The region also accounted for all the worldwide crew kidnappings during the same period, as 21 crew members were kidnapped across five separate incidents reported in the coastal countries of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo.
- During the reporting period, 15 attacks were recorded in the ECCAS zone of the Gulf of Guinea, seven of which occurred off the coast of the Republic of the Congo. On 2 January, 18 hostages were released from the Bakassi peninsula in Cameroon. On 22 February, three Chinese fishing vessels were attacked resulting in eight people taken hostage. At the time of writing, they remained in captivity.

Coast of East Africa

- On 21 April 2019, two fishing vessels were attacked by suspected pirates in the Indian Ocean, 280 NM off the coast of Somalia, while on 16 October 2018, a bulk

carrier was attacked 340 NM off the coast of Somalia in the Somali Basin. While attacks off the Somali coast remain low, these two attacks indicate that the threat of piracy remains around the Horn of Africa. In both cases, due to internationally recognized best practices implemented by the crew and on-board private security, the attacks were unsuccessful.

- In February 2019, the ongoing maritime boundary dispute between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Kenya escalated over oil-prospecting rights within the disputed area. Tensions remain between the two countries over their maritime boundary, and the proceedings initiated with the ICJ in 2014 are still pending.

XIII

Regional cooperation

335. *Notes with appreciation* efforts and initiatives at the regional level, in various regions, to further the implementation of the Convention and to respond, including through capacity-building, to issues related to maritime safety and security, the conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity;

336. *Invites* States and international organizations to enhance their cooperation to better protect the marine environment;

Coast of West Africa- The Gulf of Guinea

- During the reporting period, international support to combat maritime crime and piracy continued to focus on bolstering the operational capacity of maritime agencies to patrol their waters and strengthening the capacity of the criminal justice chain to detect, investigate and prosecute cases of piracy and maritime crime. UNODC supported the Liberian Coast Guard to enhance their capacity to perform regular maintenance, through the secondment of a maritime engineer as well as the provision of spare-parts, and radio equipment. Similar support was provided in Sierra Leone.
- Gulf of Guinea countries continued to build up their collective maritime security response capacities in the various coordination zones through the Inter-Regional Coordinating Centre (ICC) and the Regional Centres for Maritime Security in West Africa and Central Africa (CRESMAO and CRESMAC, respectively). The United States Navy and the navies of 33 other countries conducted two weeks of maritime training in the Gulf of Guinea to improve maritime safety and monitoring of the West Africa coastline. The training exercise included 2,500 personnel, 95 ships and 12 aircraft, with the participation of countries in West Africa, Europe and North America.
- During the first International Security and Safety Exhibition in Central Africa, held in Yaoundé, from 12 to 15 March 2019, national and international security experts discussed strategies for combatting maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, among other issues.
- On 8 May, Equatoguinean and Spanish authorities reported on a joint naval operation that had rescued 20 crew members on a Maltese-flagged merchant vessel that was

being assaulted by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea on 5 May. Ten pirates were reportedly arrested.

Coast of East Africa

- On 8 May 2019, Senegal, on behalf of the African Group, submitted a draft resolution entitled “Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965”. The draft resolution recalls the GA resolution (2017) requesting the ICJ to render an Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 and welcomes the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ dated 29 February 2019. In light of the Court’s Opinion, the draft resolution demands the end of the colonial administration of the Chagos within six months and urges the UK to cooperate with regard to the facilitation of the resettlement of Mauritian nationals. It also calls upon the Member States to cooperate with the UN in the areas mentioned. It decided that the UN shall recognize and give full effect to the indivisibility of the territory of Mauritius. On 22 May 2019, the General Assembly supported the resolution.
- In May 2019, IMO undertook a needs assessment of the Somali Maritime Administration that will allow a capacity building plan to be finalized in 2019. The Somali Maritime Administration Department (SMA) and Somali Port Authority were respectively formed in December 2018 and January 2019. These important steps have enabled the FGS to move towards maritime governance over Somali territorial waters as well as facilitate growth of the blue economy.
- In November 2018, participants from 184 countries gathered in Nairobi for the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, the first global event of its kind. Hosted by Kenya and co-hosted by Canada and Japan, the conference was designed to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and focused on two pillars: accelerated economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation and sustainability; and climate change and controlling pollution. Participants made commitments in 10 sectors and thematic areas to advance the sustainable blue economy and committed roughly \$172.3 billion. While those present agreed on the critical role of the ocean, seas, lakes and rivers in realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they expressed the need to take urgent action to address the continued negative impact of human activity on the viability of these resources.
- In October 2018, the last meeting of the Maritime Security Coordination Committee (MSCC) was held. The MSCC promotes continuation of the wider technical coordination efforts between Somali representatives and the international community. Encouraging progress has also been observed in the development of Somalia’s Maritime Police, funded by the European Union, and assisted by EUCAP Somalia, UNODC and UNSOM, to build the Somali Navy/Coast Guard Service together with the help of Turkey, which provided training to select Somali defence/naval personnel. The FGS-FMS National Maritime Coordination Committee unfortunately did not meet during the reporting period.

- On 15 June 2018, DPPA signed a Cooperation Framework with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in line with the Secretary-General's priority to strengthen cooperation on the peace and security pillar with regional partners. The framework focuses on the priority areas of mediation and preventive diplomacy, maritime security, counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, reduction of underlying causes of conflict, electoral assistance and women, peace and security.
- On 29 April 2018, representatives of 25 countries in the region or with commercial economic interests in Western Indian Ocean met in Balaclava (Mauritius) attended the first Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security in Western India Ocean. The Conference, organized by the Republic of Mauritius, as Chair of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Secretary General of IOC, with the support of the European Union (EU), adopted a Ministerial Declaration with an Action Plan that focused on cooperation mechanisms, fight against illegal fishing and maritime trafficking, terrorism, environmental crimes and maritime pollution.