

United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

Inputs for the next Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea June 2022

General Assembly resolution [76/72](#)

II Capacity-building

OP13. Calls for capacity-building initiatives to take into account the needs of developing countries, and calls upon States, international organizations and donor agencies to make efforts to ensure the sustainability of such initiatives;

Coast of East Africa

- During the reporting period, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) continued to support the revitalization of the National Maritime Coordination Committee (NMCC), the highest inter-ministerial decision-making body for Somalia on maritime affairs, under the auspices of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) Maritime Directorate. Two NMCC technical level meetings were convened from 12 to 14 October 2021 and on 6 March 2022, involving the FGS and Federal Member States (FMS) representatives from various Ministries. The meetings provided a platform to reflect on the status of the NMCC, identify maritime priorities and reach agreements on a way forward, recognising the economic opportunities that the maritime domain offers to Somalia. UNSOM also delivered capacity-building sessions to FMS parliamentarians to enhance awareness on the role and importance of parliamentary action in the maritime domain.
- The Somalia Maritime Administration (SMA) has made considerable progress in strengthening Somalia's maritime sector. UNSOM and the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP) continued to work closely with the Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport representatives by providing strategic guidance and support to achieve initial operational capabilities. Progress has been reported in the areas of legal compliance, ship registration and operationalization of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, with increasing inter-ministerial coordination achieved between the Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport and the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Internal Security. From September 2021 to date, the SMA Working Group convened monthly meetings, comprising representatives of the FGS and international partners.
- As part of the cross-sectoral initiatives in the maritime sector, UNSOM and EUCAP continued advancing the Women in the Maritime Sector (WiMS) initiative, launched in September 2019. Five WiMS State Consultative Conferences were convened in the FMS between October and November 2021 with participation of FGS representatives and FMS

stakeholders, followed by a National Consultative Conference on WiMS in Mogadishu on 29 December 2021.

IV Peaceful settlement of disputes

59. Notes with satisfaction the continued and significant contribution of the Tribunal to the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with Part XV of the Convention, and underlines the important role and authority of the Tribunal concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention and the Part XI Agreement;

Coast of East Africa

- On 12 October 2021, the International Court of Justice delivered its judgment concerning Maritime Delimitation in the Indian Ocean (Somalia v. Kenya).

VIII Maritime safety and security and flag state implementation:

136. 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;

181. Notes the ongoing work of the International Maritime Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant actors in relation to disembarkation of persons rescued at sea, underscores in this regard the need to implement all relevant and applicable international instruments and the importance of cooperation among States as provided for in those instruments, and emphasizes in particular the importance of full respect for the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with applicable international law;

Coast of West Africa-Gulf of Guinea

- The efforts deployed by the maritime authorities in the Gulf of Guinea continue to contribute to the amelioration of the security situation. During the first quarter of 2022, there were no reported crew kidnappings within the Gulf of Guinea, compared to 40 crew kidnappings in the same period in 2021. The efforts of the regional and international navies have also resulted in a reduction in piracy and armed robbery incidents from 16 in the first quarter of 2021 to seven over the same period in 2022.

- Armed robbery and theft are the main threat to maritime security, with the anchorage zones mostly off Ghana and Angola being the most impacted as nine out of 13 incidents occurred therein. Incidents in the territorial waters and high seas have decreased mainly due to the implementation of the “Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum and Shared Awareness and Deconfliction” initiative, with its tools for information sharing and communication, the presence of international navies in the Gulf of Guinea, regular patrols by coastal navies and the deployment of naval assets within the framework of the Deep Blue project in Nigeria.
- Despite these efforts, the risk of piracy continues to exist in the Gulf of Guinea. On 29 January 2022, around 59nm SSW of Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, around 9-11 pirates armed with guns boarded and hijacked a drifting tanker. All crew were taken hostage and detained on the bridge before being moved to the crew mess room. All communication and navigation equipment were switched off and the bosun was instructed to paint over the vessel’s name which was written on top of the bridge. After around six hours, the cargo operations were stopped and the pirates disembarked and escaped with part of the tanker’s cargo as well as cash, crew personal belongings, and ship’s properties. All crew were reported safe.

Coast of East Africa

- On 3 March 2022, the authorization granted by Security Council resolution 2608 (2021) for States and regional organizations cooperating with Somalia to use all necessary means to fight piracy off the coast of the East African country expired. On 9 March 2022, in an official statement, EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA confirmed that it will continue to protect vessels of the World Food Programme and other vulnerable vessels, countering drugs trafficking, contributing to the implementation of the weapons’ embargo on Somalia and monitoring other illicit activities at sea, such as the illegal export of charcoal and illegal, unreported and unregistered fishing.
- From 13 to 15 September 2021, in Mogadishu, UNSOM facilitated a joint virtual training on Climate and Inclusive Security organized by the UN Environmental Advisor to Somalia and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The training focused on the interlinkages between climate change, maritime security and gender equality, and was coordinated through the Maritime Directorate in the Office of the President. The course provided participants with practical tools to integrate climate and environmental considerations into analyses and identify entry points to design cross-sectoral policy solutions. A total of 32 officials (including two women) from the Federal Government and the Federal Member States attended, enhancing their knowledge of the ‘Blue Economy’ and need for ‘Blue Governance’ in Somalia.

- On December 2021, the United Nations Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia operationally closed. The Trust Fund, which operated for over a decade, invested nearly USD 15 million in building the Somali and regional capacities to prosecute and detain pirates as well as to address the root causes of piracy.

Middle East -Lebanon

- Between September 2021 and April 2022, Lebanese authorities reported 24 actual or attempted boat movements from Lebanese shores, carrying over 1,100 individuals (mostly Syrians). Since April 2022, Italy overtook Cyprus as the main intended destination for such movements. On 23 April, an outbound boat carrying an estimated 84 passengers, predominantly Lebanese citizens as well as Syrian and Palestine refugees, capsized in Lebanese territorial waters following a collision with a Lebanese Armed Forces vessel. Forty-seven passengers died or were declared missing. An official Lebanese investigation is ongoing amidst accusations from survivors that the Lebanese Armed Forces vessel caused the collision. The Lebanese Armed Forces Navy blamed the operator of the boat carrying the would-be migrants for the incident.

XIII Regional cooperation

33. Also welcomes ongoing activities for capacity-building so as to address maritime security and protection of the marine environment of developing States, and encourages States and international financial institutions to provide additional funding for capacity-building programmes, including for transfer of technology, including through the International Maritime Organization and other competent international organizations;

Coast of West Africa-Gulf of Guinea

- The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), as mandated by the Security Council, continued to support the joint efforts of regional institutions such as ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) in the implementation of, and follow-up to the conclusions of the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Gulf of Guinea on maritime safety and security held on 24 and 25 June 2013 in Yaoundé.
- On 31 March 2021, ECOWAS unveiled the headquarters of the West Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre (CRESMAO) in Abidjan. CRESMAO is an essential tool for implementing the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy which

was adopted on 29 March 2014. The inauguration of the CRESMAO is a landmark in the operationalization of the Yaoundé architecture on maritime security.

- On 21 September 2021, United Nations entities launched a consultative mechanism to support regional efforts aimed at addressing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. The launch was the outcome of joint technical preparations by UNOWAS and ECOWAS and was based on the conclusions of the meeting of the Special Representative for Central Africa, the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, the Presidents of the Commissions of ECOWAS and of the Economic Community of Central African States, and the Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission held on 18 March 2021.
- An annual multinational maritime exercise was started on 11 March 2022 and was co-organized with the United States Naval Forces for Africa with the involvement of Morocco. The exercise, called "Obangame Express", aimed at supporting the operationalization of the regional maritime security architecture. Maneuvers off the coast of Senegal and Gambia were complemented by a symposium from 16 to 18 March in Senegal that brought together the chiefs of staff of navies and coastguards.
- A high-level seminar on maritime security was held at the Nigeria Commission of ECOWAS in Abuja, Nigeria from 4-5 April 2022. The seminar was organized in the framework of the Support Project for Integrated Maritime Security in West Africa (SWAIMS) and funded by the European Union. An agreement was finalized for the delivery of 30 Rigid Hull Boats and forensic equipment for an estimated budget of 50 million EUR to help ECOWAS coastal Member States to fight against Maritime Insecurity and enhance the capacity to enforce the rule of law in their territorial waters and adjoining exclusive economic zones.