

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 2021

General Assembly resolution [75/239](#)

VIII Maritime safety and security and flag State implementation

OP119. Notes the themes for the 2019 and 2020 World Maritime Day, “Empowering women in the maritime community” and “Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet”, respectively;

Coast of East Africa

- The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP) enhanced cooperation amongst Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and its Federal Member States (FMS) to advance the Women in the Maritime Sector (WiMS) initiative, launched in September 2019. The initiative is led by the FGS Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport (MPMT) and Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, with a draft Action Plan already endorsed by eight FGS line-ministries. Despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, there has been progress in increased collaboration among the FGS and FMS, with focal points nominated by FMS to mainstream the WiMS initiative across Somalia and consolidate a concurrent Action Plan that can be presented to international community to secure additional support. The first meeting between the FGS, FMS and international partners was convened virtually on 24 February 2021, with FMS Focal Points expressing their strong interest in the WiMS initiative and their commitment to promote future engagements to strengthen its implementation.

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OP133. 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 insecurity continues to pose increasing threats to human security across West and Central Africa. Cross-border criminality, including human trafficking and illegal immigration, remains a worrying cross-cutting issue in both West and Central Africa.

According to the International Maritime Bureau, the Gulf of Guinea accounted for 95 percent of the 135 kidnappings of crew members in 2020 globally.

- Between January and March 2021, the Inter-regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea based in Yaoundé recorded 20 security incidents in the Gulf of Guinea compared to 45 incidents in the previous quarter, indicating a sharp decrease of about 55 percent. However, a total of 40 crew members were kidnapped by pirates in three incidents during the period, an increase compared to the 31 seafarers abducted during the previous quarter.

Coast of East Africa

- From 15 to 18 March, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held public hearings in the case concerning Maritime Delimitation in the Indian Ocean (Somalia v. Kenya). Kenya confirmed its decision not to participate in the oral proceedings and instead to submit written evidence. The Court's deliberation commenced after the conclusion of the hearing.
- The Somalia Maritime Administration (SMA) made significant progress in strengthening Somalia's maritime sector. UNSOM provided strategic guidance and support to FGS Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport (MPMT)/SMA to achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in the following four areas: legal compliance, ship registration, crew certification and the establishment of a Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC). Since September 2020, the SMA Working Group (WG), comprising of the members of the MPMT and international partners (UNSOM/EUCAP/UNODC/IMO/WFP/FAO), convened monthly virtual meetings. On 10 May 2021, the SMA WG members endorsed an Action Plan as a capstone document that will guide and measure progress on the SMA's pathway to declaring IOC in late 2021, which will enable the SMA to perform the responsibilities mandated by international maritime law and subsequent national regulations.
- As part of assistance provided to Somali officials to facilitate the development of an effective legal framework for the governance of Somalia's maritime zones and the sustainable development of its resources to allow it to conform with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and related instruments, UNSOM and the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in the Office of Legal Affairs (DOALOS/OLA), supported by other international partners (including EUCAP, UNODC, IMO, FAO and WFP), delivered a 'Technical Training Programme in Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for Maritime Law Enforcement Authorities'. A total of 33 maritime law enforcement authorities and officials from the FGS and FMS attended the 7-day course spread over 4 weeks between 10 November and 9 December 2020. This technical training programme was funded through a UN Administered Trust Fund and further enhanced Somalia's maritime governance capacity.
- UNSOM provided support to the SMA, facilitating the re-activation of the SMA Legal Sub-Working Group, chaired by the SMA Head of Legal Affairs Department. Meetings resumed on 30 March 2021 with the participation of UNSOM, EUCAP and IMO, and are convened bi-weekly to advance discussions and foster collective work, engagement towards the development of a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for Somalia.
- From 19 to 27 April 2021, UNSOM supported the delivery of a virtual training on Article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea organized by the

DOALOS/OLA involving 20 participants from FGS and FMS maritime authorities and academia.

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OP154. Emphasizes the progress in regional cooperation, including the efforts of littoral States, on the enhancement of safety, security and environmental protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, and the effective functioning of the Cooperative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (the Cooperative Mechanism) to promote dialogue and facilitate close cooperation between the littoral States, user States, shipping industries and other stakeholders in line with article 43 of the Convention, notes with appreciation the convening of the twelfth Cooperation Forum, in Indonesia on 30 September and 1 October 2019, the twelfth Project Coordination Committee Meeting, in Indonesia on 4 October 2019, the forty-fourth Tripartite Technical Experts Group Meeting in Indonesia on 2 and 3 October 2019 and the twenty-second and twenty-third Aids to Navigation Fund Committee Meetings, in Malaysia on 25 and 26 April 2019 and on 26 and 27 September 2019, notes with appreciation the important role of the Information Sharing Centre of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, based in Singapore, and calls upon States to give immediate attention to adopting, concluding and implementing cooperation agreements at the regional level;

Coast of East Africa

- On 24 September 2020, UNSOM supported a high-level one-day conference in observance of World Maritime Day 2020 organized by the Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport (MPMT), Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Species and Ministry of Health, under the theme ‘Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet’. Fifty participants from a range of maritime stakeholders, including civil society organizations, coastal community and academia, attended the event, which was also joined virtually by FMS officials and representatives of the international community. The event addressed women’s representation and role in the shipping industry, and highlighted the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the maritime sector, with participants collectively stressing the need for increased coordination and interagency approach to address challenges and climate related risks concerning maritime transport, navigational safety, protection of the marine environment, and maritime security and safety.

IX Marine environment and marine resources

OP200. Acknowledges the request by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, in paragraph 6 of its resolution 2/10 of 27 May 2016, to the United Nations Environment Programme to step up its work, including through its Regional Seas Programme, on assisting countries and regions in the application of the ecosystem approach to managing the marine and coastal environment, including through enabling intersectoral cooperation in integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning;¹

Coast of East Africa

- During the reporting period, UNSOM supported 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 Special Envoy of the President of

¹ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/71/25), annex.

Somalia for Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Horn of Africa affairs. Significant progress was made in reviewing coordination mechanisms between maritime governance structures against the Somali Maritime Resources and Security Strategy goals, National Development Plan priorities and Mutual Accountability Framework 2021 commitments. Two NMCC Technical Level meetings were convened on 3 September and 30 December 2020, advancing Somalia's maritime governance and blue economy priorities through an integrated approach, including maritime security, gender and environmental cross-cutting issues, as well as to increase focus of international assistance.

IX Marine environment and marine resources

OP204. Recognizes the importance of improving understanding of the impact of climate change on oceans and seas, and recalls that, in "The future we want", States noted that sea level rise and coastal erosion are serious threats for many coastal regions and islands, particularly in developing countries, and in this regard called upon the international community to enhance its efforts to address these challenges;

Pacific

- In July 2020, DPPA, in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) and the Office of Legal Affairs, held an online briefing session for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on the implications of sea-level rise for maritime boundaries. Member States were briefed by experts from the Office of Legal Affairs on the relevant provisions of the law of the sea and current work being undertaken by the International Law Commission. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) also provided an update to Member States on their work on maritime boundaries in the Pacific region. Member States shared views on ongoing work in this area and future priorities for SIDS. This event formed part of a wider series of ongoing discussions on different aspects of climate-related security risks in SIDS.

XIII Regional cooperation

OP330. Invites States and international organizations to enhance their cooperation to better protect the marine environment;

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) have been both mandated by the Security Council to support the joint efforts of regional institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (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. Despite those efforts, maritime organized crime and piracy at sea continue to threaten the stability of the Gulf of Guinea's coastal areas, and states' economies.

- On 18 March 2021, the Special Representatives of UNOWAS and UNOCA facilitated a virtual high-level meeting on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, attended by the Presidents of the ECCAS and ECOWAS Commissions and the Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission. The meeting was a timely opportunity to review key challenges facing regional coordination mechanisms on maritime security and paved the way for enhanced collaboration and cooperation.
- During the virtual meeting, participants agreed collectively on the need to establish a plan to support the functioning and operationalization of regional coordination mechanisms on maritime security, to convene the Fourth Annual Meeting of Heads of Institutions of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea , to undertake joint high-level advocacy missions to Member States, and to intensify joint advocacy with international partners in order to address the challenges to peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea. In addition, the UN Peace Building Commission will convene a meeting on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea in June to further advocate for enhanced international commitment and support to national and regional efforts to strengthen maritime security in the region.