

## **Proposals for strengthening the DCoC/JA as the leading forum for maritime security coordination in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden**

### **Introduction**

These proposals are intended to reinforce the role of the DCoC/JA as the premier forum for maritime security coordination in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. This will be achieved through increased regional participation, strategic partnerships, comprehensive MDA capabilities, capacity building, and information sharing.

While commendable progress has been made in developing measures to improve maritime security, given the importance of the framework in delivering regional solutions for regional challenges, much more needs to be done to reach the desired end state.

These recommendations are therefore intended to strengthen the DCoC/JA to play its rightful position in leading the coordination of maritime security efforts in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

### **Scope of the Jeddah Amendment**

The Jeddah amendment outlines a range of threats to maritime security on which participating states agreed to cooperate to the fullest extent possible to combat them. These are:

- 1) Piracy and armed robbery against ships;
- 2) Maritime terrorism;
- 3) IUU fishing;
- 4) Trafficking in arms;
- 5) Trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances;
- 6) Illegal trade in wildlife and other items in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
- 7) Illegal oil bunkering;
- 8) Crude oil theft;
- 9) Human trafficking;
- 10) Human smuggling; and
- 11) Illegal dumping of toxic waste.

In addition to the above, participating states have agreed to subsequent resolutions to collaborate in dealing with new and emerging threats, such as cybersecurity and threats from drones against ships.

While commendable progress has been made in developing measures to improve maritime security, not enough attention has been given to addressing some of those threats. Fortunately, several regional programmes are dedicated to combating these threats, and in effect are supporting the objectives of the Jeddah amendment. To ensure effective coordination and support for these initiatives, it is essential to establish connections and provide assistance where needed.

**(NB –The region is presented with an historic opportunity to provide critical leadership and direction, ensuring a genuine alignment with regional needs and priorities).**

Since it was established, the DCoC Working Group Two (Capacity Building Coordination) has made great strides in its efforts to ensure better coordination of effort. The development of the Capacity Building Coordination Matrix has provided a powerful tool to articulate the maritime security priorities and training needs of the signatory states. Most of the signatory States have now populated the matrix. Our priority must now shift to engaging with donors and implementing partners, to invite them to provide assistance in line with those needs. If that is not done, NFPs may lose the interest and motivation to keep the matrix updated.

It is therefore proposed to extend the scope of WG2 to create necessary sub WGs for coordinating different thematic areas covered under the code of conduct and to embrace existing mechanisms, thereby avoiding any duplication of effort. For example, a sub-working group on IUU fishing may strive to coordinate its work with existing programs and regional mechanisms and embrace the work of key partners such as FAO, INTERPOL, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, etc. To ensure overall coordination is maintained under the umbrella of the DCoC, signatory States will be invited to nominate Chairs of those sub-working groups with the relevant competencies. These appointed Chairs will have the crucial responsibility of supporting the secretariat in leveraging the efforts of the participating Friends of the DCoC and the dedicated programs.

The sub-working groups will play a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication, collaboration, and alignment of regional efforts under the DCoC/JA. They will serve as liaisons between participating states, the secretariat, and relevant stakeholders. By leveraging their expertise and knowledge, they will ensure ongoing projects are coordinated, best practices are shared, and the overall impact is maximized. The DCoC Capacity Building Coordination Matrix will be used to show the link to regional needs and provide a clear and transparent tool displaying the ongoing work, implementing partners, accomplished programmes, and progress made.

Through this coordinated approach, the DCoC will establish a robust framework for addressing many of the threats to safety and security of navigation and create an enabling environment for economic development. By dedicating specialized focal points to each thematic area, the DCoC will enhance its ability to tackle these threats comprehensively now and in the future.

The proposed thematic areas are:

- 1) Piracy and armed robbery against ships;
- 2) New and emerging threats to maritime security - maritime terrorism, drones and cybersecurity;

- 3) IUU fishing ;
- 4) Trafficking in arms, narcotics and psychotropic substances;
- 5) Illegal trade in wildlife and other items in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
- 6) Threat to the maritime environment; and
- 7) Human trafficking and smuggling.

Under each of the thematic areas it is suggested that forums be established as follows:

No	Thematic Area	Sub Chair (DCoC)	WG	Existing mechanisms & programmes	Implementing partners and lead agency
1	Piracy and armed robbery against ships,				
2	New and emerging threats to maritime security - maritime terrorism, drones and cybersecurity				
3	IUU fishing				
4	Trafficking in arms, narcotics and psychotropic substances,				
5	Illegal trade in wildlife and other items in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,				
6	Threats to the maritime environment				
7	Human trafficking and smuggling,				

Ultimately, the aim is to establish a well-coordinated, region-wide response to maritime security threats ensuring the safety of security of navigation and which puts the DCoC/JA at the forefront of these efforts.