



Concept Note

STRATEGIES TO COMBAT PIRACY IN EASTERN AFRICA

Objective

To facilitate in the development of a regional response strategy to combat piracy for law enforcement agents

Background

The total number of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden and off the East coast of Somalia so far in 2009 has already overtaken the figure for all of 2008, according to statistics from the International Maritime Bureau's (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre. In 2008, there were 111 incidents compared with 114 attempted attacks in 2009. Of these attacks, there have been 29 successful hijackings in 2009 compared with the 42 vessels hijacked in 2008. However, this year has seen a surge in activity off the east coast of Somalia, with 43 attacks so far compared to 19 in the whole year 2008. There has also been an increase in the number of vessels fired upon in these regions: from 39 instances in 2008 to 54 cases already this year.

In addition, the number of crew members taken hostage is set to rise if the trend maintains. In 2008, a total of 815 crew members were taken hostage while the total number of hostages taken in these regions during 2009 already stands at 478.

The escalating piracy attacks in 2009 has resulted in increasing calls for more local, national, regional and international efforts to tackle piracy off the Somali coast. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 2008 passed several resolutions to allow countries to send warships into Somalia's waters to control piracy. These currently comprise the EU, NATO, US, China, India and Japan. However, the presence of these navies seems not to have deterred the pirates.

Several reasons have been posited for the problem of piracy in the region. These include the political instability in the Horn of Africa, failure of the Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the other Somalia administrative units to

exert adequate control over their territories, the precedent set by the payment of ransom to pirates fuelling attacks, the military response which is not well coordinated, and the legal complications of prosecuting the pirates.

The Workshop/Seminar

Fighting piracy clearly requires joint efforts by the regional and international community as it is evident that a single strategy is not adequate to address the problem. Restoration of order in Somalia is a matter of priority. However, the law enforcement community in the region has a greater role to play when one considers that piracy is as much a criminal enterprise as it is symptomatic of other security concerns in Somalia and the region.

Consequently, the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO), Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) intend to hold a workshop to discuss certain key elements of the piracy problem which the regional law enforcement agents could take into consideration in combating the problem. The meeting in acknowledging the mechanisms that already exist will facilitate the crafting of complimentary measures for the national agents to respond to the crisis regionally,

The proposed meeting seeks to discuss among other issues the following:

- The nature and severity of the problem and the actors involved
- The factors facilitating piracy in the region
- Connection with other maritime security concerns (environmental crime, terrorism)
- The existing mechanisms to combat the piracy
- The legal constraints to addressing piracy
- The role of regional law enforcement agencies and the creation of a centre for piracy response in the region
- Create a framework of action on how to implement the same.

Participants

About 35 people are expected at the meeting. Participants will include representatives from seven coastal countries – namely, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Seychelles, Sudan and Tanzania. These will come from the marine police and/or coast guards, the navies, the Interpol NCB, port or marine authorities and selected legal representatives. The resource persons will be drawn from Interpol

Headquarters, academia and or the security research institutions, an industry representative (shipping, insurance, fishing, etc) and a UN/AU expert.

Date and Venue

The meeting will be held at Whitesands Hotel, Mombasa, Kenya on **the 29th- 30th June, 2009**.

The Organising Institutions

EAPCCO aims at addressing all forms of cross-border crimes. The Interpol Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa serves as the Permanent Secretariat for EAPCCO.

HSF is an independent, non-governmental foundation, whose mission is to promote democracy, peace and development. Their activities include addressing issues of human security and conflict resolution in Africa with an aim of sensitizing policy makers on security concerns in the affected countries.

ISS is an independent and non-profit applied policy research organisation with offices in Pretoria, Cape Town, Addis Ababa, Abidjan and Nairobi, and liaison offices in New York and Brussels. The Institute has extensive experience of working with governments and civil society to develop practical and feasible responses to current challenges to human security.