

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 1012TM MEETING

23 JULY 2021
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. 1012(2021)

COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1012th meeting held on 23 July 2021 on the State of Maritime Security in Africa,

The Peace and Security Council.

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Victor Adeleke, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of July 2021 and the statement by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, as well as the presentations by the Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), H.E. Ambassador Fiorentina Adenike Ukonga, the Chief of Training and Operations, of the Nigerian Navy, Rear Admiral Abraham Olema Adaji, as well as by the representative of the Chief of Naval Operations of Tanzania, Commodore Msafiri Mtalika Hamis;

Mindful of the close link between peace, security, and development particularly, with regard to the maritime domain, as integral elements for Africa's overall economic growth and integration, as well as general wellbeing of African people;

Acknowledging the need for collaborative approaches in line with the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050), United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982 and other relevant UN resolutions to effectively combat the menace in Africa's maritime domain;

Deeply concerned about the persistence of threats to safety, and security facing the maritime domain in some regions of the continent, particularly Africa's blue economy, posed by a number of threats, such as climate change, piracy, dumping of toxic waste, smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, illegal unregulated and unreported fishing (IUUF) as well as smuggling of illicit drugs, goods and weapons, which deplete Africa's maritime resources and; **determined** to find lasting solutions to all maritime security threats facing the Continent;

Recalling AIMS 2050 and its Plan of Action adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in January 2014, Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.496 (XXII)]; and Decision [Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.I (VI) adopted by the AU Extraordinary Summit held on 15 October 2016, in Lome, Togo, which adopted the Africa Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa; **also recalling** Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCLVIII)] adopted at its 858th meeting held on 16 July 2019 on the status of implementation of the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa (Lome Charter), Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXXXIV)] adopted at its 834th meeting held on 21 March 2019, and Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLXXXII)] adopted at its 682nd meeting held on 25 April 2017, as well as the outcomes of the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya from 26 to 28 November 2018; and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council.

1. **Expresses deep concern** over the challenging situation in some regions and areas of Africa's maritime security domain for reasons including the continued transformation of the nature of the threats and their overlapping characteristics;

2. **Condemns in strongest terms** the illegal exploitation of Africa's maritime resources and the dumping of toxic waste in Africa's maritime domain, as well as all crimes committed at sea, including piracy, mercenarism, trafficking of weapons, humans and illicit drugs, and **calls** for stern measures to be taken against perpetrators, including bringing them to justice;
3. **Reiterates the importance** of the Lome Charter as an African instrument for promoting peace , security and safety in Africa's maritime domain, which are the necessary prerequisites for sustainable development and growth and for the general wellbeing of African people;
4. **Commends** all Member States that have signed and ratified the Lome Charter; **encourages** those that have not yet done so, and while bearing in mind the ongoing review of the annexes of the said instrument, to consider to sign and ratify the Charter and **also encourages** Member States to deploy all necessary efforts in the implementation of AIMS 2050 and its Plan of Action;
5. **Also commends** the sustained efforts being deployed by the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the GGC, including within the framework of the International Coordination Centre (Yaounde Maritime Security Architecture); **notes** the capacity challenges facing the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centres (MMCCs), their Regional Maritime Coordination Centres (RMCCs) and the International Coordination Centres (ICCs) in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea; **appeals** for redoubled efforts in the mobilization of the required financial, material and human resources to enable these MMCCs, RMCCs and ICCs to more effectively discharge their mandates and, to this end, **requests** the AU Commission to provide necessary support in these efforts;
6. **Emphasizes the importance** for Member States to find comprehensive solutions to the multidimensional fundamental root causes and drivers of maritime insecurity including the socioeconomic drivers, and **also emphasizes** that security and military measures should be part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to address maritime insecurity;
7. **Calls** on the AU Commission in collaboration with existing structures, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) to promote further cooperation, dialogue, sharing of best practices, coordination and creation of Maritime Task Force among African littoral States; and in this regard, requests the AU Commission and strategic partners to support this endeavor;
8. **Stresses** that the primary responsibility for ensuring maritime security and safety rests with the concerned littoral Member States and, in this regard, **underscores the importance** for all coastal and island countries to further strengthen their national defence and security capacities, in order to ensure the security and safety of their territorial and maritime spaces, as well as the importance of sharing experiences and best practices, enhanced collaboration and cooperation, including with regional and international partners, among others, through capacity building, maritime information and intelligence sharing, joint exercises, as well as coordinated and joint operations, and **emphasizes** that any complementary international and/or regional cooperation should be undertaken in a manner that respects the national sovereignty of the concerned littoral States and their national ownership and priorities;

9. **Underscores the importance** of regional cooperation in the promotion of maritime security in Africa, as well as enhanced cooperation and collaboration between all concerned RECs/RMs in the promotion of maritime security and safety in Africa and, in this regard, **commends** the enhanced cooperation and collaboration between ECCAS and ECOWAS;

10. **Welcomes** the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on 22 July 2021 between the AU Commission and the GGC;

11. **Underlines the** importance of ensuring that the African Standby Force also has the required naval capacity for promoting maritime security and safety in Africa;

12. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.