

CONTACT GROUP

ON PIRACY OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA

The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was created on January 14, 2009 pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1851. This voluntary ad hoc international forum brings together those stakeholders affected by Somali piracy: countries from the region, Western Europe, Middle East, Asia and the Americas, Industry, seafarer's organisations and NGOs. The Contact Group coordinates political, military and non-governmental efforts to tackle piracy off the coast of Somalia, ensure that pirates are brought to justice and support regional states to develop sustainable maritime security capabilities.

Message from the Outgoing Chair

Dear Friends,

As the year draws to a close, so does our mandate as Chair. It was an honour and pleasure to have served in this role. A first for the region. I thank one and all for having supported us in fulfilling the core objectives of the CGPCS.

The two-year mandate that we served enabled us to achieve some key results. But, as recent piracy attacks have shown this year, we cannot close shop. All systems should remain in place, as long as the root causes of piracy remain.

One major accomplishment was that together we put to rest the doubts on the CGPCS' method of work. The 20th Plenary Communique speaks to this. Henceforth, we can focus on the core objectives of the CGPCS, especially since the UNSC has renewed our mandate.

Regional maritime capacity building should continue. Stability and economic opportunity should be restored in Somalia which, more than ever, needs our support.

Soon after the 20th Plenary, we paid a good will visit to Mogadishu, another first. It was a concrete show of support to Somalia, and a message to the piracy kingpins that we remain defiant. The visit last month to Seychelles of Ambassador Yusuf-Garaad, Foreign Minister of the FGS, also shores up the work of the CGPCS.

At the international level, we did not shy away from our responsibility to insist on continued vigilance to deter the threat of piracy, including the call to the major naval forces to maintain their valuable operations in the region, and to the shipping industry to adhere to BMP4. The acts of bravery of our seafarers and our naval forces buttress all efforts to bring impunity at sea to legal finish.

Seychelles has assured the IOC and Mauritius, which take over from 1st January 2018, that we will remain steadfast in our support. Similarly, I call on the entire community to lend their support.

May I, on behalf of our team and the Government of Seychelles, wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2018!



Seychelles CGPCS Secretariat Team - Mr. Raymond St Ange, Ambassador Barry Faure, Mr. Jacques Belle and Ms Renette Nicette

Barry Faure
Secretary of State
Department of Foreign Affairs, Seychelles

Message from the incoming Chairman

The Republic of Mauritius, as Chair of the Indian Ocean Commission, is honoured to take over the chairmanship of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS).

In our globalised world, the Eastern and Southern African and Indian Ocean States as well as States outside our region have been directly or indirectly impacted by the scourge of piracy.

Thus, following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851 of 18 December 2008, a concerted approach was adopted to contain this problem. It has been instrumental in curbing the acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Together with the international community we have reacted promptly with a view to safeguarding our coastal economies from inevitable crashes. However, we cannot boast to have addressed effectively future risks. The attack in the 2nd quarter of 2017, just after the publicly-announced end of NATO's Operation OCEAN SHIELD, is a sufficient demonstration of possible resurgence of piracy. While notable progress has been made to support the Federal Government of Somalia as well as the Federal States, there are miles ahead to eradicate the root causes of piracy.

Mauritius has remained an unflinching supporter in the fight against piracy. Recently 12 Somali pirates have been imprisoned and tried in Mauritius. We have under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and through the EU funded MASE (MARitime SEcurity) programme established a Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar and a Regional Centre for Operational Coordination (RCOC) in Seychelles. I am sure that these two centres would as per the Djibouti Code of Conduct consolidate further the regional information sharing network.

As Chair of the IOC, I am also convening a Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security in the first quarter of 2018. The focus of the Ministerial Conference will address all maritime security challenges, such as drugs, firearms and human trafficking, terrorism and extremism, safety and rescue at sea, natural disasters and, obviously, piracy. I do believe that this event would be an opportunity to all CGPCS Stakeholders to chart out a costed new orientation for the CGPCS.

I commend Ambassador Barry Faure, Secretary of State of the Republic of Seychelles, for having over the last two years geared successfully the CGPCS. His legacy to render the Indian Ocean region a safer region and to achieve our objective of zero seafarers and ships detained by pirates will no doubt be continued.

For the coming two years at the chairmanship of the CGPCS, I am inspired by the moto "United we stand divided we fall" attributed to Aesop in his fable "The Four Oxen and the Lion". This demonstrates the necessity to collectively address the issue of piracy. Individual action is bound to fail. As I said at the CGPCS meeting in Balaclava earlier this year: "Piracy, like other crimes, threats and marine risks, knows no borders, that is why cooperation is essential to ensure maritime safety and peaceful development of the entire region". We shall spare no effort to lobby for a permanent status for the CGPCS and to extend and deepen its mandate and powers for a sustainable growth of our economies.

In doing so, we will be in line with the 2030 UN Agenda that calls for strong partnerships to pave the way for an authentic sustainable development. As Chair of the IOC I shall also ensure that the CGPCS participate fully in the implementation of the AU Integrated Maritime Strategy of 2050.

I look forward to meeting you in New York for the 21st plenary session of the CGPCS so that we continue to strive to bring stability in the region for the benefit of all.



H.E S. Lutchmeenaraidoo
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and
International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius
Chairman of the CGPCS 2018-2019

Seychelles Chair of the CGPCS welcomes renewed resolution on antipiracy by UN Security Council

Ambassador Barry Faure, current chairman of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, CGPCS, has welcomed the UN Security Council Resolution 2383 (2017) decision on 7th November 2017 to renew for another year international naval forces to continue its fight against piracy off the Coast of Somalia.

"This decision as announced by the UN Security Council follows on the strong recommendations that were made by the CGPCS at its 20th Plenary which was held earlier in the year in Mauritius, that the international community not lose ground on the achievements of the community which to date has seen a drastic reduction in acts committed by pirates within the region and off the coast of Somalia," said Ambassador Barry Faure, CGPCS Chairman and Secretary of State for Maritime Security at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The 20th Plenary affirmed and commended the Seychelles for its steady and successful chairing of the CGPCS, as well as member states and regional organizations and other partners who have supported anti-piracy missions since the first UN Security Council Resolution 1851 of 2008 supporting efforts for international maritime forces to take action against Somali pirates.

"To date the CGPCS community, from large nations to small island states, foreign military naval units, private organizations and NGO's, have all come together with one aim, and that was to see an end to piracy in our region. We agree, however, that as long as there is instability in Somalia, that the risks of piracy will remain; and this is why we reiterate the call for the continuation of international naval presence," added Ambassador Faure. **END**

G7 high level meeting on maritime security

Ambassador Barry Faure, in his capacity as Chair of the CGPCS, participated in the G7 high level meeting on maritime security which was held in Rome on 20th November 2017. Ambassador Faure who was a panelist at the meeting intervened on "*The experience of Seychelles in fighting impunity at sea*".

The CGPCS Chair took the opportunity of this meeting to reiterate the call for the international naval forces to maintain their presence in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean region.



Participants at the G7 meeting

Visit of EUNAVFOR Flagship ITS VIRGINIO FASAN

Ambassador Barry Faure, Chair of the CGPCS met with Rear Admiral Fabio Gregori of the EUNAVFOR flagship ITS VIRGINIO FASAN on 23rd November 2017. The flagship was in Seychelles for the transfer of 6 suspected pirates apprehended in the Southern Somali Basin.

The Seychelles government accepted the suspects for possible trial based under an arrangement for the transfer of suspected pirates between the EU and Seychelles signed in August 2009. The Seychelles Marine Police escorted the handover team in boats supplied by the Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), with funding from the Government of Denmark.

The six Somali nationals could face 30 years imprisonment if convicted. The Attorney General's Office said that "the suspected pirates will serve their time in Seychelles' prison if they are found guilty by the court, but if their country decides to have them repatriated to serve their sentence in Somalia, this can be made possible".



Rear Admiral Gregori and Ambassador Faure touring the ITS Virginio Fasan

The delegation made up of Rear Admiral Fabio Gregori, other EUNAVFOR officials and the Italian Consul Claudio Izzi, also met with President Danny Faure at the State House in Victoria on 24th November 2017.

President Faure told the delegation that Seychelles, an archipelago in the western Indian Ocean, is grateful for the work the EUNAVFOR has been doing to assist the island nation. "Your presence over the years when the scourge of piracy took a toll on the country has been invaluable, and once again your quick action in the recent operation has sent a strong message. We look forward to further consolidating our strong partnership".

The support of Seychelles is crucial in deterring future pirate attacks in the region. "This kind of immediate action is very important in the mission to counter piracy in the Indian Ocean. Without this we would have been obliged to release them, thus, sending the wrong message," said Rear Admiral Gregori.

"Piracy is affecting free trade. It is true that we had observed a decline in their operation at sea for a while now, but we should always be on the lookout. Their recent attacks show that they are still being funded and waiting for the right time to attack," added the Rear Admiral.

President Faure and Rear Admiral Gregori also discussed the present maritime security exercises being conducted and plans to intensify and expand the orientation of surveillance in the region to ensure the security of surrounding waters. The EU Naval Force is in Seychelles for joint maritime security interactions with the Seychelles People Defence Forces and other maritime forces.



Rear Admiral Gregori, Minister Maurice Loustau-Lalanne, Ambassador Faure, the British High Commissioner and guests onboard the ITS VIRGINIO FASAN

The Rear Admiral's visit to Seychelles was very timely as the EU prepares to start the negotiations on whether to extend the mandate of Operation Atalanta to 2020 and also the official visit of the Somalia Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Yusuf-Garaad Omar, from 25th November, in Seychelles.

**Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia
H.E. Ambassador Yusuf-Garaad Omar, 25-28th November 2017**

Ambassador Yusuf-Garaad Omar called on President Danny Faure and Vice President Vincent Meriton during his two day visit in Seychelles. Regional maritime security and related topics was the subject of discussions during the meetings. Ambassador Omar indicated that "We are cooperating with Seychelles by making sure we can control our own territorial waters. We are exchanging information and contingency on maritime security," also adding that his country is hoping for a safe sea for everybody.

Ambassador Omar had the opportunity to visit the Montagne Posée prison and met the suspected Somali pirates being detained. He also had a guided tour of the Regional Fusion and Law Enforcement Centre for Safety and Security at Sea (Reflecs3), Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) and National Information Sharing and Coordination Centre (NISCC).

The Foreign Minister of Somalia also visited the Indian Ocean Commission accompanied by the CGPCS Chair.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Headquarters is found in Seychelles. The CGPCS Chair, met with the new Executive Secretary, Dr Christopher O'Brien, on 26th October, to update him on the CGPCS and, equally, to learn about the latest developments at the IOTC.



The Chair, Ambassador Barry Faure and the new Executive Secretary of IOTC, Dr Christopher O'Brien

IUU Fishing is clearly a concern and the body has it on top of its agenda. There is an obvious nexus between the IOTC and the CGPCS in terms of the work that can be done to assist Somalia, which joined the IOTC as a member in May 2014. Going forward, the IOTC wishes to participate in the CGPCS.

On 27th November, the CGPCS Chair returned to the IOTC, this time in the company of Ambassador Yusuf-Garaad Omar, Foreign Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia.



The Foreign Minister of Somalia, CGPCS Chair and the Executive Secretary of IOTC

Discussions focused on concrete steps that could be taken to support Somalia. Somalia has been increasing its participation in Commission meetings, Dr O'Brien explained. The IOTC had been running training courses for the benefit of member states, including Somalia. A course is planned in 2018 in Seychelles on data collection which would also see the participation of Somalia.

Dr O'Brien further explained that IOTC had been receiving reports on IUU Fishing in Somalia since 2015. EU Operation Atalanta, whose mandate is to fight piracy, transmits cases of IUU Fishing to the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs at the European Commission in Brussels, which then communicates this to the IOTC. It was agreed that it was critical for Somalia to put in place a governance regime for the licensing of vessels in the waters of Somalia. This is important in the fight against IUU Fishing, to deter corruption and to recover revenue that is otherwise disappearing into illegal networks.

UNODC & PIRACY

UNODC held discussions, under the Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), with the Foreign Minister of Somalia and Seychelles Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs/CGPCS Chair on the transfer of 14 convicted Somali prisoners and 1 released Somali person to Somalia. GMCP facilitated the transfer of six Somali nationals on 14th December and the second batch of inmates on 17th December to Mogadishu, Federal Republic of Somalia, to serve out their sentences.

The Somali government agreed to accept the prisoners under the agreement between Somalia and Seychelles on the transfer of sentenced persons signed in February 2011.



The Foreign Minister of Somalia Ambassador Yusuf-Garaad and Ambassador Faure, middle, with UNODC and Seychelles delegations

GMCP also provided a law enforcement advisor and Somali interpreter.



The Somali interpreter and Advisor

Finally in Seychelles, GMCP's engineering consultant conducted a technical assessment on patrol boats of the National Drug Enforcement Agency (NDEA). The technical assessment will help UNODC to provide necessary capacity building support to improve the operational capabilities of NDEA to combat against drugs trafficking in the Indian Ocean. The consultant also inspected the condition of an Iranian dhow seized by Seychelles to assess the maintenance requirements in order to continue to utilize it as a training asset.



GMCP engineering consultant and NDEA representative

GMCP's Communications Expert has also been working with the Kenyan Maritime Police Unit and Rural Border Patrol Unit officers under the Indian and Pacific Programme.

UNODC's mentors are working with the Prison Intelligence Unit (PIU) at Hargeysa Prison in Somaliland, to improve security at the prison for staff as well as prisoners. The PIU has received Dynamic Security training and mentoring. The maritime mentors have also completed training and mentoring plans for 2018 in Bossaso. Short training sessions were held for the past months at the Garowe Prison at the Academy on targeted subjects which last a maximum of 2 hours to complement basic training. UNODC Prison Mentors from Garowe have also conducted an assessment of the facilities' compliance with the Mandela Rules at the Mogadishu Prison Court Complex Phase 1A where construction is now at 96% completion. - **Source UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme Update.**

CRIMARIO'S ACHIEVEMENTS

From October to December 2017:

- Successful completion of its 26 weeks training of Malagasy (15) and Comorian (10) trainees at the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Antananarivo on October 25, enhanced by a graduation ceremony chaired by the Prime Minister of Madagascar, with the ambassadors of EU, Comoros, France, Mauritius and Seychelles;
- Clarification meeting gathering their partners on the development of the regional information sharing platform IORIS, held in Seychelles with the participation of Polymorph, commissioned to develop the platform. The meeting presented an opportunity to answer any pending questions prior to the start of the coding.
- Cordial rapprochement between the MASE program and CRIMARIO project and the realization of a cooperation which resulted in the participation of CRIMARIO in the MASE meeting on maritime safety held in Mauritius on 7-8 December;

The effective implementation of the key CRIMARIO information sharing activity will be achieved as soon as the two regional centers (RMIFC and RCOC) become equipped with IORIS platform and able to utilize the tool for the exchange of information and incident management. - **Source EU CRIMARIO communication.**

See CRIMARIO's link <http://mailchi.mp/07cd13c461e4/crimario-newsletter-oct-november-2017> for the October-November Newsletter.

Clarification meeting in Seychelles prior to start coding IORIS



The technical meeting being chaired by Ambassador Faure extreme left

Handing over of the CGPCS to the Indian Ocean Commission

On 1st December 2017, Ambassador Barry Faure, Chair of the CGPCS, symbolically handed to the IOC Presidency represented by its Secretary General Mr. Hamada Madi, the Chairmanship of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia for a two year mandate, 2018-2019.

The event took place in two phases, one which consisted in the transfer of dossiers, experience and knowledge to staff of the IOC and key personnel from the office of the Chair of Council (Mauritius), the Mauritian Defence Ministry and Coastguard.



Handing over of the administrative dossier to IOC



Ambassador Faure, CGPCS Chair, Mr. Raj Mohabeer of the IOC, personnel of the Chair of Council, Defence Ministry and Coastguard and the CGPCS Secretariat Team

The official handover ceremony took place in the evening in the presence of representatives of the regional and international organizations and the diplomatic corps.



Official handing over to the Secretary General of the IOC



Partial view of invited guests at the ceremony

Satisfied with the work accomplished during his tenure, Ambassador Faure, in his presentation said "We have been able to set up more appropriate mechanisms to combat piracy and the IOC's take-over of the CGPCS is a natural continuation, as this regional organization has always been involved in the fight against piracy and other threats and risks at sea through its Seychelles-based anti-piracy unit, the MASE program and also by co-presiding since 2014, the CGPCS working group focused on the development of regional capacity". The Chair further added that "despite the advances made in the measures put in place to fight against piracy, recent events remind us of how important it is to remain vigilant and to continue the collective efforts to ensure safety on the heavily used maritime routes, eastern and southern Africa and the Indian Ocean".

"Somali piracy is a reality and we, the small island states of the Indian Ocean, are the most vulnerable. The Republic of Seychelles was the first country in the Indian Ocean to assume the presidency since the establishment of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. We wanted, during these two years of mandate, to lead by example and be proactive in coordinating exchanges and developing strategies to find innovative methods to effectively address this problem that goes beyond our

region. We have worked extensively with the Indian Ocean Commission as part of the CGPCS and I am confident in its ability to meet expectations and most importantly to keep up the pace. The Republic of Seychelles has finished its mandate but will remain active in the collective fight against piracy", said Ambassador Faure.

For IOC Secretary General Hamada Madi, who represented H.E. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, head of Mauritian diplomacy and President of the IOC Council, this new responsibility "will enable IOC to continue and expand the work of Seychelles in Chair of the CGPCS. We count on the effective involvement of all members of the Contact Group because we are bound by common interests. Securing the maritime routes of the Indian Ocean is a challenge that goes beyond the region. It's especially a challenge that we can meet collectively," he said during his speech at the handing over ceremony.

In addition the European Union, IOC's first partner in promoting maritime safety in the Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) region, has confirmed its support for the Commission of the Indian Ocean for this new mandate.

"The Maritime Safety Program (MASE) demonstrates our support and commitment to address issues related to maritime insecurity. The establishment of the Regional Coordination Operational Centre in Seychelles and the Regional Information Fusion Centre based in Madagascar will help to better coordinate the exchange of information and act effectively", stressed the Ambassador of the European Union, Mrs. Marjaana Sall.

The CGPCS in 2018. A comment on strategic priorities for the incoming chairmanship

Professor Christian Bueger, Cardiff University

With the 20th plenary the CGPCS has successfully consolidated its work and reconfirmed its position as the institution where global responses to piracy in the Western Indian Ocean are coordinated. The CGPCS continues to fill a major gap in the global maritime security architecture and provides a function that no other institution can. The piracy incidents occurring in 2017 have demonstrated why the CGPCS is still required and reconfirm why it must continue its vital work.

The revival of the Working Group on Operations at Sea tasked to evaluate the threats and risks to shipping was an important reaction to the current spike in piracy. It will be a priority for the incoming chairmanship to ensure that the working group meets as soon as possible and that it receives full support from those conducting threat and risk analyses, whether naval operations, the industry, non-governmental organisations such as Oceans Beyond Piracy, or academia.

Professor Bueger also emphasized on future communication strategy the CGPCS will need to address; inter-linkages between piracy and other sources of maritime insecurity; among others. Please consult the website www.lessonsfrompiracy.net where the full comment on the strategic priorities for the incoming chairmanship can be consulted.

Christian Bueger is Professor of International Relations at Cardiff University and Honorary Professor at the University of Seychelles. He is one of the principal investigators of the Lessons Learned Project of the CGPCS and editor of the www.lessonsfrompiracy.net. Further information is available at <http://bueger.info>.

Seychelles' achievements and legacy

It was at the 18th plenary session of the Contact Group on Piracy Off the coast of Somalia (CGPCS) held at the UN Headquarters, New York between 7 to 8 July 2015, that Seychelles was awarded the Chairmanship for 2016, taking over from the European Union. The 19th Plenary further extended the Seychelles mandate for a further year.

The two-year mandate that we served enabled us to achieve some key results that we leave as our legacy to the CGPCS Community. Our work has been acclaimed by the UNSC which in November further extended the mandate of the CGPCS.

First, we put to rest the doubts arising from the 19th Plenary on the CGPCS method of work, particularly on whether it should be meeting and with what frequency. It was agreed that the CGPCS should continue to meet annually, although the Chair may call an extraordinary plenary should the need arise. Henceforth, we can focus on the core objectives of the mandate of the CGPCS.

Secondly, we settled the structure of the CGPCS. The structure is now streamlined and is more agile. Coupled with this, we have agreed on a strategic communication policy to share unclassified information as soon as they are released, and to use digital media options in bringing the message to various audiences and stakeholders.

Thirdly, we have revived the Working Group on Operations at Sea (WGOPS). This is Co-chaired by the UAE and India with Seychelles joining in January 2018. The main agenda items are Threat Assessments, Naval Coordination, Naval-Industry Coordination and Best Management Practices.

Fourthly, we have kept up the momentum since the 20th Plenary. We paid a good will visit to Mogadishu, a first in the CGPCS. This was followed by the visit of the Foreign Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia to Seychelles. Both visits bolstered the work of the CGPCS.

Fifthly, we kept up the call for vigilance for all stakeholders, particularly the international naval forces and the shipping industry. The most recent attendance of the chair at the OBP meeting of 16th November in London, the Rome 20th November G7 High Level Meeting on Maritime Security and the EU Our Ocean Conference in Malta, where the President

of the Republic of Seychelles delivered a statement at the High Level Panel on Maritime Security; all attest to this.

Sixthly, we can say that we have left a lasting legacy to the region with the leadership remaining in the region as the IOC under the leadership of Mauritius take over the Chairmanship in 2018 and 2019. **END**

