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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1128TH MEETING

19 DECEMBER 2022
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1128 (2022)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1128th meeting held on 19 December 2022 on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea:

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on maritime security, particularly, Communiqué [[PSC/PR/COMM.1012 \(2021\)](#)] adopted at its 1012th meeting held on 23 July 2021, on the State of Maritime Security in Africa; and Communiqué [[PSC/PR/COMM.1090 \(2022\)](#)] adopted at its 1090th meeting held on 28 June 2022, on Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea;

Also recalling the relevant international instruments that govern the use of oceans and maritime spaces, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2634 (2022) adopted at the 9050th meeting on 31 May 2022, calling on Gulf of Guinea Countries to criminalize piracy, armed robbery at Sea under Domestic Laws;

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Victor Adeleke, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of December 2022, and the statement by H.E. Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, as well as the presentation by the Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), H.E. Florentina Adenike Ukonga;

Also noting the statements by the Representatives of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre, Yaoundé (CRESMAO/CRESMAC), the Coordinator of the Experts for the Establishment of the Combined Maritime Task Force (CMTF), the Chief of Naval Staff of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Chief of Naval Staff of the Republic of The Congo, as well as the statements by the Representatives of Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the European Union (EU) Delegation to the African Union;

Reaffirming the commitment to ensure full implementation of Decision [Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(VI)] adopted by the AU Extraordinary Summit held on 15 October 2016, in Lomé, Togo, which adopted the Africa Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa; and the Africa Maritime Transport Charter (AMTC) and the Plan of Action;

Reiterating the need to ensure the full operationalization of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (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 the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, developed following the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2018; and

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

1. **Expresses grave concern** over the growing insecurity posed by pirates and organized criminal networks in the Gulf of Guinea, including illegal fishing, armed robbery at sea, and dumping of toxic waste;

2. **Strongly condemns** all illicit maritime acts, including terrorism, piracy, armed robbery against ships, kidnappings, gunrunning, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, drugs and human trafficking committed in the Gulf of Guinea, and **calls for** the prosecution of those who perpetrate, encourage, finance or facilitate such acts, including the masterminds of criminal piracy networks;
3. **Underscores** the need for adherence and implementation of the relevant regional and international instruments and frameworks aimed at addressing maritime insecurity in the region, including the Yaoundé Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa and **encourages** all countries of the region that have not yet done so, to fully adhere and implement the Yaoundé Code of Conduct;
4. **Commends** all Member States of the Gulf of Guinea region, the regional bodies, particularly ECCAS, ECOWAS, and the Gulf of Guinea Commission for their proactive engagement and collaborative efforts undertaken to address and prevent maritime crimes and offenses; **also commends** all international partners supporting the countries of the Gulf of Guinea region to effectively combat maritime security threats in the region;
5. **Takes note** of the efforts made to establish the CMTF in order to advance maritime security and blue economy, and **encourages** the alignment of the activities of the CMTF with the Gulf of Guinea Commission; in this regard, **urges** the countries of the Gulf of Guinea region to further enhance the institutional capacities of their national navies, law enforcement and border control agencies, and to strengthen efforts in mobilizing predictable and adequate financial resources for regional maritime security initiatives in the Gulf of Guinea, such as the Yaoundé Maritime Security Architecture and CMTF;
6. **Welcomes** the efforts of the Chiefs of the Naval Staff that met in Port Harcourt- Nigeria in May 2022 to advance the establishment of the Regional Maritime Task Force for the Gulf of Guinea and **calls on** all Member States of the region, including stakeholders, to support the setting up of the Regional Maritime Task Force;
7. **Stresses** that the primary responsibility for combating maritime crimes rests with the concerned coastal Member States of the Gulf of Guinea region, in this regard, **calls upon** Member States in the region to put in places measures that ensure permanent presence of African naval forces at sea, also calls on other relevant stakeholders, including the captains of industries to support security agencies in the fight against maritime crimes and illicit acts;
8. **Calls on** Member States of the region to ratify the relevant regional instruments and harmonize their national laws in order to criminalize maritime offenses, as well as strengthening judicial cooperation, including extradition of maritime offenders and facilitation of hot pursuit; and **encourages** regional organizations and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to strengthen cooperation on maritime safety and security in the region;
9. **Underscores** the importance of Member States of the Gulf of Guinea region, RECs/RMs, and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, to continue to work together in addressing maritime security challenges in the Continent, including ensuring that necessary measures are taken to break the

linkage between drug traffickers, gunrunners and terrorist groups on the Continent with a view to stifling their activities on land;

10. **Encourages** the AU Commission to assist Member States of the region, including considering to convene the inaugural meeting of the Committee of the Heads of African Navies and Coastguards (CHANS); in this regard, **reiterates** its call for the AU Commission to establish a body of experts or a Task Force to coordinate, share knowledge and make recommendations on maritime security to provide technical expertise to Member States and other stakeholders in delivering on the AU 2050 AIM Strategy and the Lomé Charter;

11. **Further encourages** the AU Commission to conduct the First Regional Maritime Command Post Exercise in order to increase preparedness and synergy of the Navies of the region to respond to the threats in the Gulf of Guinea, within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF) and CMTF;

12. **Looks forward** to the successful organization and outcomes of the first maritime conference of ECCAS on the theme: *“Governance and Security of the ECCAS maritime space and the development of a sustainable Blue Economy in Central Africa”*, scheduled to take place in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo in early 2023;

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