

(As delivered)

**“Piracy, the curse of maritime transport”  
Seminar on Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea  
28 March 2012, Brussels**

**Session 1 “Orchestrating the response”  
Keynote speech by Koji Sekimizu  
Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization  
“Coordination and co-operation: activities of IMO and the way forward”**

Vice-President Mr. Kallas,  
Minister Sohn,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As piracy continues to plague shipping and put the lives and livelihoods of seafarers at serious risk, we must continue to work hard to ensure meaningful and substantial progress in the fight to combat this insidious criminal activity. We must change and stem the tide towards complete eradication. A coordinated response, across several different fronts, is the only way forward and, from this point of view, the holding of this Seminar is timely and I appreciate Vice-President Kallas for inviting me to address the Seminar today.

As the specialized agency of the United Nations with, among other things, a responsibility for the safety and security of international shipping, the International Maritime Organization has been among those actively advocating and working towards just such a coordinated approach. This is based on our long involvement in combating piracy, not just Somali-based but in other parts of the world too.

IMO was, for example, instrumental in establishing the framework for collaboration among the littoral States of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and the South China Sea that proved so successful in helping to almost eradicate piracy in what used to be the world’s major hotspot.

More recently, it was IMO that first drew the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia to the attention of the United Nations Security Council; and, since then, we have been in the vanguard of counter-piracy efforts, often on our own initiative, and often in collaboration with others.

IMO has built on its experience in combating piracy in Asia to address the situation off Somalia. The IMO-led Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) was the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance co-operation against piracy and armed robbery. ReCAAP entered into force in 2006 and many of the positive lessons learned from it are now incorporated in the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which is providing a framework for information sharing, review of national legislation, training and capacity building in the region affected by Somali piracy, and is working alongside other important initiatives such as the EU Critical Maritime Routes Programme.

In October 2011, the Singapore-based ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre joined the information sharing network under the Djibouti Code of Conduct and extended the reporting area to cover the Indian Ocean coastal States.

Aside from the Djibouti Code of Conduct, IMO has worked in many ways to strengthen the protection of persons, ships and cargoes in piracy-infested areas and also preserve the integrity of shipping lanes of strategic importance and significance.

IMO and industry guidelines, enshrined in the so-called Best Management Practices, have provided practical measures to protect vessels and steps have been taken to ensure that ships' crews are aware of how to access naval protection and implement effectively the preventive, evasive and defensive measures recommended by IMO and the industry. The Organization is also addressing the carriage of privately contracted armed security personnel aboard ships and has developed guidelines on the subject for flag, port and coastal States.

IMO has helped promote greater levels of coordination among navies, and further co-operation between and among States, regions and organizations and the coordination of military and civil efforts. I welcome the most recent decision of the European Union to extend the operation of EUNAVFOR until December 2014 and to continue to take strong actions in dealing with pirates off the coast of Somalia. Defence of shipping and individual ships by naval forces is important, but more direct action addressed to stop pirates is also important. I appreciate the statement made by Mr. Brian Simpson of the European Parliament this morning. Our membership of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia has been an important element of these efforts.

The establishment of a regional training centre in Djibouti, in partnership with the EU, is another significant, tangible step towards creating regional capability to counteract pirate activities. When operational, the Djibouti Regional Training Centre will be available for regional training and for the training of Somali coast guards and other law enforcement personnel.

The word "Somalia", in a maritime context, leads almost exclusively to thoughts of piracy. And yet, as has been so clearly highlighted, piracy is but one manifestation of the widespread and deep-rooted problems that beset that country and its people. Piracy is a symptom; and, while a symptom can be treated and its effects can be alleviated, real progress can only be made by addressing the cause.

Since the beginning of this year, I have met with UN Secretary-General Ban on a number of occasions to discuss how we can strengthen capacity building for anti-piracy activities. Mr. Ban agreed that capacity building in Somalia and neighbouring countries should be enhanced through co-operation between IMO and the UN, UN specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations, founded on IMO's existing capacity-building activities under the Djibouti Code of Conduct. With his encouragement and support, we are now preparing a number of important events in mid-May.

First, IMO will be hosting a high-level meeting on 14 May, to review the progress being made towards implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct.

Then, on 15 May, an IMO Conference on capacity building to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia will be held, and I will use this occasion to invite all UN agencies and the EU to discuss how we can strengthen our co-operation in capacity-building efforts.

And on 16 May, we are holding a high-level segment of the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee to discuss the many facets of the issue of arms on board merchant vessels. IMO's traditional position has been that this is a matter for individual Governments to decide upon.

As a truly global industry with many stakeholders, shipping benefits from harmonization of procedures, adoption of common minimum standards and clarity with respect to national legal regimes. This is the core of the Organization's work. However, policy on the use of Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP) is not common among Member Governments and, across the shipping industry. There are no agreed minimum performance standards for private armed guards and ships using private armed guards are subject to many, diverse legal regimes at present. There is, therefore, the need for a full, high-level policy debate among Member Governments on how the international community should deal with the issue of private

armed guards and, in particular, the need to arrive at practical solutions to the issue, while recognizing the reality of the situation in which private armed guards are employed and the diverse positions of Governments.

There are a number of issues related to the deployment of private armed guards on board ships which require further consideration if practical solutions are to be found and appropriate information and guidance are to be promulgated to those affected.

Among these issues are:

- the need for coordination of Governments' policies on the use of private armed guards and for guiding principles covering firearms on board;
- standards for, and regulation of, private maritime security companies;
- embarkation, disembarkation and carriage of firearms and security equipment through the territory and territorial waters of port and coastal States;
- the purchase, transport, storage and disposal of firearms by private maritime security companies ashore;
- the need for clear and unambiguous roles and responsibilities of all involved to ensure that on-board activities of private armed guards are fully in line with agreed rules of engagement and standards of operation, including determination of the obligations, liabilities of those involved, management, monitoring, as well as the reporting on, and investigation of, any actions taken by private armed guards in the performance of their duties.

All of these will be the subject of debate during the high-level segment of the MSC on May 16<sup>th</sup>, and I am confident that this will provide the right venue for discussion on this very important issue and enable significant progress to be made in the international community.

IMO will also continue to support the work of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in implementing the National Security and Stabilization Plan in areas within IMO's competence; and to facilitate the dialogue between the Transitional Federal Government and the regional authorities through the "Kampala Process".

Such activities may include assisting Somalia to accede to, and implement, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, (SOLAS) and the ISPS Code.

Implementation of the ISPS Code will be a catalyst for the development of port security programmes and procedures to enable ports in Somalia to comply with international standards, thus promoting trade by sea and providing additional security for humanitarian shipments.

Secure port areas could also serve as a basis for the expansion of security-controlled zones in coastal areas, policed by land-based security forces, which could eventually form the basis of an effective coastal monitoring regime. They could, in due course, also serve as secure operating bases for maritime police, coast guards and fishing vessels.

This latter point is very important, since it touches on the need to create viable alternative sources of income for those Somalis who have turned, or may be tempted to turn, to crime. In this respect, and, again, through the Kampala Process, we will undertake to select appropriate officials from all regions of Somalia to study at IMO's World Maritime University and International Maritime Law Institute, with a view to their developing and leading the Somali maritime administration in the future.

In partnership with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and others, we will also seek to develop transparent customs and clearance procedures and to facilitate maritime transport through Somali ports.

And, in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), we will endeavour to help develop a sustainable Somali fisheries sector. Key areas for IMO could include fishing vessel safety, general seamanship training, assistance with developing maritime situational awareness and developing maritime law enforcement and fishery-protection capability.

Looking further afield, IMO plans to create a Regional Co-operative Mechanism for the protection of the Southern Shipping Lanes through the Mozambique Channel and southern and western Indian Ocean. The main effort of the naval forces engaged in countering piracy is, quite rightly, focused on the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. As a result, ships operating in the south-western Indian Ocean have little guarantee of protection from international naval forces against pirates. There are, however, significant existing and emerging threats to maritime security in this area. The "protection of the southern shipping lanes" initiative is aimed at combining counter-piracy and maritime capacity-building projects within one single overarching apparatus, to deliver a programme for the development and protection of the maritime domain in the south-west Indian Ocean. The aim is that the signatory States to the Djibouti Code of Conduct will work together, supported by IMO and other development partners, to create a regional co-operative mechanism to this effect.

IMO will also continue with its capacity-building programme in the region in support of core objectives under IMO competence, for example the enhancement of maritime safety and the development of search and rescue facilities, and of maritime situational awareness.

Considerable emphasis is now being placed by IMO on capacity for full implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct. This was noted, and encouraged, in the communiqué adopted by the conference on Somalia that took place in London in February.

We are all here today because we share a collective duty and a collective responsibility to do whatever we can to help the people of African countries, including Somalia, to be able to live their lives under conditions of proper governance and under the protection of an effective rule of law.

None of us can achieve this alone; but each of us has a contribution to make, and IMO's focus and commitment remain as strong as ever.

Thank you.

---