

**Speech of Ms. Cécile Tassin Pelzer
Counsellor
European Union Delegation to the Republic of Mauritius, for the Union of the Comoros
and the Republic of Seychelles**

*First meeting of the Focal Points for Maritime Security of the Eastern and Southern Africa
and Indian Ocean region*

7-8 March 2013, Mahé, Seychelles

Mr. Joël Morgan, Minister for Home Affairs and Transport of the Republic of Seychelles,

Mr. Jean-Claude de l'Estrac, Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission,

Mrs Genevieve Iancu, French Ambassador, local representative of the European Union Presidency,

National Focal Points from Member States and Regional Organisations of the Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean region

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

- I am delighted, on behalf of Ambassador Mariani, to be present at this first meeting of the National Focal Points for the Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean region for the fight against piracy & promotion of regional maritime security.

- This meeting is long due, and I would like to thank the Indian Ocean Commission, and in particular its Anti Piracy Cell, for organising this event as well as the Government of Seychelles for hosting it.

- I welcome the participation of several Focal Points from countries and regional organisations of the Eastern and Southern Africa – Indian Ocean region, the coordinator of the IRCC, representatives of EU Member States and representatives of some partner international organisations and anti-piracy programmes.

- This first meeting of the Focal Points of the region, which is being organised under the EU-funded Start-up MASE project, is an important step in the implementation of the **Regional Strategy for the Fight against Piracy and promoting Maritime Security**, which was adopted by the second Regional Ministerial Conference held in Mauritius in October 2010 and co-chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mauritius, Arvin Boolell.
- The meeting of Focal Points, which should be organised on a regular basis, is a Technical Steering Committee with the responsibility to oversee and validate the overall direction and orientation of the Start-up MASE project, and later on of the MASE programme, and for their timely and effective implementation. The objective of this platform is to ensure regional ownership in line with aid effectiveness principles that are central to any action of the European Union. The meeting of Focal Points also aims at preparing the regional Ministerial Meetings which serve to provide overall political guidance.
- Therefore, I am sure that all of us here would agree that Focal Points have a key role to play in the successful implementation of the programmes, and of the regional Strategy.
- Allow me to provide you with some information on the MASE programme which will take over from the ongoing Start-up project when it ends on 12 June 2013. With an amount of 37.5 Mio EUR from the 10th European Development Fund, the MASE programme will be implemented over 5 years by four Regional Organisations, namely IGAD, EAC, COMESA and IOC. The programme is at an advanced stage of the approval process in Brussels following extensive regional consultations with all stakeholders concerned. Its five pillars derive from the Regional Strategy, and build on the Start up MASE project, [namely:
 - Result 1 (IGAD): Somalia Inland Action Plan is implemented
 - Result 2 (EAC): National/regional legal, legislative and infrastructural capability for Arrest, Transfer, Detention and Prosecution of Pirates is developed and/or strengthened

- Result 3 (COMESA) : Regional capacity to mitigate financial flows that relate to piracy while also addressing the structural vulnerability factors and minimise the economic impact of piracy is strengthened
 - Result 4 (IOC): National and regional capacity for maritime tasks and support functions are enhanced;
 - Result 5 (IOC): Regional coordination and information exchange is improved;]
- I wish to confirm the EU (EC and its Member States) commitment to the security of the region, to promote economic growth and support regional economic integration through a comprehensive approach combining political and diplomatic efforts with military and legal actions, development assistance and strong international coordination. The EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta operation has been extended up to December 2014. The EU has launched in July 2012 EUCAP Nestor a new programme to enhance the maritime capacities of initially four countries in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean, with its Headquarters in Djibouti. EUCAP Nestor staff have already been deployed in Seychelles, and have started to initiate cooperation with the Seychelles Coast Guards.
 - Moreover, the EU has been providing support through the Instrument for Stability and the Start-up MASE project to Kenya, Seychelles, and Mauritius to support their capabilities for the prosecution and detention of suspected pirates. The EU acknowledges that a stable region and a peaceful Somalia are interdependent, and is to date the biggest donor in Somalia having committed EUR 315.4 million since 2008 for governance, security and economic growth. The EU is also working on a New Deal for Somalia.
 - The EU is engaged in the region by working closely with key international and regional partners such as UNODC (EU and its Member States is the largest contributor to the Counter Piracy Programme of UNODC), INTERPOL, the African Union under the framework of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and the Djibouti Code of Conduct supported by the International Maritime Organisation.
 - We have come a long way since the adoption of the Regional Strategy in October 2010 and the signature in December 2011 of the Start-up MASE project. I commend the efforts that countries of the region have undertaken to be at the forefront of the fight against piracy and promotion of maritime security, particularly Seychelles. There

is a consistent record of **downturn in pirate activity** – no ship has been successfully pirated since May 2012. Only a few verified attacks on merchant ships have been reported since then. EUNAVFOR reports that in 2 years time (January 2011 – January 2013) there were 32 ships and 745 hostages held. Today is 4 and 108 respectively. This is a result of 4 combined factors – (i) best management practice, (ii) private armed security teams on board of commercial ships, (iii) naval action, (iv) changing dynamics ashore. However there is **no room for COMPLACENCY** to believe that the problem is solved. It is not. Pirates' capability and intent remain, even if at markedly lower levels – progress remains fragile and reversible. . Therefore, efforts must be maintained & strengthened to promote regional maritime security, and secure economic growth.

- At the end of this first meeting of Focal Points, we should have a clear picture of the activities that have been implemented up to now and of the remaining planning and draw the lessons learned for the implementation of the MASE programme. On the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of this meeting, we should also have the arguments to convince other countries of the ESA-IO region to appoint their Focal Points rapidly in order to establish a dynamic network to prepare for the next Ministerial Meeting and to support the implementation of the Regional Strategy and Action Plan.

Thank you for your kind attention.