



Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia Strategic Meeting

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

1 February 2016, Mumbai, India,
Hotel Taj Lands End

Your Excellency, Mr. Joel Morgan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chair of the
Contact Group,

Representative of the Indian Government,
Representatives from regional and international organisations,
Representatives from the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished members of the Contact Groups, ladies and gentlemen,

It has been an honour for the Indian Ocean Commission to participate in this very rich and thought provoking meeting of key stakeholders involved in the fight against piracy off the Coast of Somalia. Let me thank the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and Transport of Seychelles, the very committed chair of the Contact Group for giving me the floor. My thanks also to the Government of India for the hospitality and perfect organisation of the meeting.

Excellency, ladies and gentlemen,

Our first objective today has been to take stock of the current situation which we have done. We have noted that changing circumstances and new threats, perhaps even the temptations of complacency in some partners, are making it necessary to revisit our strategies for the up-coming plenary session and to the United Nations.

There is no doubt that the Contact Group has done a good job and achieved a level of success. But we now have to make sure that our success does not compromise the conditions of success.

It is imperative to add that the Office of the Prime Minister and the Federal Government of Somalia thank the International actors in the eradication of piracy. However, we need to state that the federal Government of Somalia also recognises the need and assistance needed to rebuild Somalia, curb illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste in our territorial waters.

The message we should be taking from this meeting is clear. We have not reached the end of the road. I think that we are at a crossroad. There has not been successful attack lately, but there are still too many hostages, prosecuting kingpins is very limited and the risk for future attacks and threats are still present.

We are grateful to the International Community which has put significant effort and means in the fight against piracy in our region. The costs of its activities have been estimated to several billions of euros per year. We do understand that it cannot afford to permanently spend such amount of funds every year although this is our common interest. But other emerging challenges such as migration in the Mediterranean are putting lots of pressure to divert resources and attention



away from the fight against piracy. We are worried by what we see as a form of aid fatigue.

Let's be realistic; the region will remain highly dependent on the International Community for many years to come. Let us recognise that it is also in the interest of the International Community to support maritime security operations in the region.

We have started taking our share of responsibility. Our regional organisations are ensuring that the challenges of maritime security are owned by our Member States as well. The process towards an improved ownership by the region will be crucial for the effectiveness of our partnership with the International Community as part of the MASE programme, as well as with all the members of the Contact Group.

While we commend the effort of individual countries of the region we need the International Community to maintain its effort until the region attains a much higher level of maritime capability. More efforts should be made to build regional capacity. I invite the International Community to take full part in the establishment and implementation of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion system, the Centre of which is expected to be hosted in Madagascar as well as the Regional Maritime Surveillance mechanism, the coordination of which is expected to be set up in Seychelles, currently being implemented under the MASE Programme.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our duty to thrive towards a secure western Indian Ocean maritime zone for the common interest of our countries including that of the international community now requires a closer regional-international partnership.

Thank you