



PRESS RELEASE

Date: 24th June 2019

2nd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security: COMESA raises the alarm on illicit financial flows and money laundering linked to piracy and other maritime crimes

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) participated to the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security and the 22nd Plenary Session of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia which were held in Mauritius from 18 to 20 June 2019. Organised by the Republic of Mauritius in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission with the support by the #MASE programme funded by the European Union, this International conference brought together over 200 participants from over 30 States and regional and International organisations.

The objective of this High Level 3-day meeting was to provide an update on Maritime Security issues and on-going initiatives to address them. There are currently thirty initiatives which aim at addressing maritime insecurities (piracy, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, armed attacks, illegal fishing, money laundering, terrorist risk, pollution ...) in the Western Indian Ocean. The delegates participating in the Ministerial Conference were called for an effective coordination of all these initiatives to avoid overlapping and ensure sustainable security in this actively geopolitical region which is crossed by important global maritime routes.

COMESA, as one of the implementing regional organizations in the Maritime Security Programme (MASE) funded by the EU raised the issue of illicit financial flows and money laundering linked to transnational maritime crimes. The COMESA representative stressed on the urgent need to strengthen regional capacity building efforts to ensure resilience with respect to money laundering. *"This support provided through the MASE Programme has been invaluable in strengthening the Anti-money laundering regimes of our Member states and it has resulted in*

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some very visible impact. Many of the countries that have been supported by the programme now report having stronger Financial Intelligence Units and law enforcement agencies”, stated the Assistant Secretary General of COMESA, Dr Dev Haman during the Ministerial Conference.

COMESA and INTERPOL collaboration to strengthen regional capabilities to combat illicit financial flows

In the margin of the Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security and part of a series of activities to enhance Maritime Security awareness, the CAPSTONE Workshop was held from 12th to 14th June 2019 at Intercontinental Hotel in Mauritius. Organised by COMESA and INTERPOL, this workshop brought together various Law Enforcement agencies (LEA's) and Financial Intelligence Units (FIU's) from twelve countries of Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and Zambia. The workshop aimed at sensitizing on financial crimes, illicit flows, international standards, financial investigation techniques, among other pertinent issues. Welcomed and appreciated by all participants, the CAPSTONE workshop enabled to establish a strong network bond between stakeholders and jurisdictions in view of developing in the future, a forum for communication to exchange and share information and further provide peer-support when required.

Since 2015, COMESA and INTERPOL have partnered in implementing COMESA Maritime Security (MASE) programme, a component of the EU-funded MASE programme covering the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) region. While the mandate of COMESA is to address the economic effects of piracy in the said region through building capacity to disrupt financial networks of pirates and their financiers. INTERPOL provides technical support to develop and establish robust competencies and strengthen expertise of various Law Enforcement Agencies.

Furthermore, COMESA employs a holistic approach to ensure that all, if not a wide range of illicit flows are curbed, through implementation of an anti-money laundering programme, in line with the international standards as provided by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

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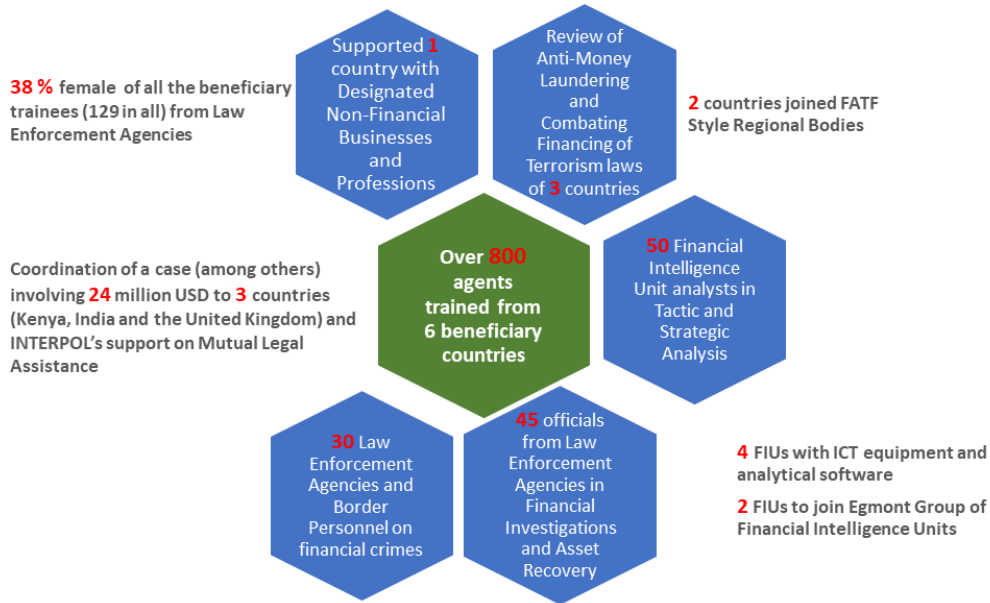
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KEY FIGURES



Result Area 3 of the #MASE Programme (implemented by COMESA with the technical support of INTERPOL)

About COMESA

COMESA is a regional economic community established by Treaty in 1994. It brings together 19 Member States with a population of over 400 million into a cooperative framework for sustainable economic growth and prosperity through regional integration.

About INTERPOL

INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization, with 194 member countries. Our role is to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place. We enable them to share and access data on crimes and criminals, and we offer a range of technical and operational support. The European Union and African regional organizations identified INTERPOL as a project partner as a result of the Organization's longstanding presence on the African continent, and its extensive experience in the delivery of capacity building and trainings programmes in Africa, particularly within the field of maritime security.

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About the European Union

First contributor to International development support, the European Union is actively involved in Maritime Security initiatives in the Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (ESA-IO). This political and operational commitment is depicted in the form of military and civilian missions (EUNAVFOR Atalanta, EUCAP Nestor – ended in 2015) and other cooperation programmes.

The MASE programme is fully in line with this partnership mobilization between the European Union and the ESA-IO countries for a more secured maritime and terrestrial area. Implemented by IGAD, EAC, COMESA and IOC, the MASE programme is funded by the EU to the tune of €42 million. The EU support enable partners at national and regional level to counter regional maritime security issues namely piracy.

About the MASE Programme

The regional Maritime Security programme (MASE Programme) is implemented by Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Regional Organisations namely Intergovernmental Authority on Development - IGAD (overall coordinator), EAC (East African Community), COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and IOC (Indian Ocean Commission). MASE is a € 42 million EU-funded Programme for the period 2013-2022. Other partners include European missions, UN Agencies (UNODC, FAO) and INTERPOL.

The Programme comprises five result areas:

- **Result 1 by IGAD:** Addressing livelihood concerns of coastal communities against piracy in Somalia;
- **Result 2 by EAC:** Enhancing legal, legislative and infrastructural capabilities to combat piracy and other maritime crimes;
- **Result 3 by COMESA:** Dismantling financial networks linked to maritime crimes and minimizing their economic impact;
- **Result 4 by IOC:** Building and improving capacities for surveillance and control at sea;
- **Result 5 by IOC:** Promoting and coordinating exchange of maritime information.

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