



## Press Release

### CGPCS Handing Over Ceremony between Mauritius and Kenya

***“Build on solid foundation to take the group to greater heights and cement the legacy as an effective mechanism in fighting piracy and its root causes”***

The Republic of Kenya formally takes over the Chairmanship of the **Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS)** from the Republic of Mauritius. The official Handing Over Ceremony was held on **Thursday 27 February 2020** at Sofitel Hotel in Mauritius in the presence of High Officials and representatives of regional and International Organizations.

As per custom, the handing-over ceremony was an opportunity for the outgoing Chair and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mauritius to provide an account of the achievements of the CGPCS and the Cabinet Secretary for Defence of Kenya to share the strategic orientation and way forward.

The Contact Group is taking stock aimed at reviewing its strategic orientation. The change is strongly supported under the Mauritius Leadership as evidenced during its mandate. Mauritius steered in-depth discussions on the future of the Contact Group. *“The last plenary session of the CGPCS resolved to set up a Strategic Planning Steering Group to develop a strategic plan to map out future engagements and CGPCS priorities”*, stated the outgoing chair Honorable Mr Nando Bodha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Mauritius during his handover remarks.

Although acts of piracy have been contained thanks to the efforts of the various militaries and international community as well as the prosecuting states, there still remains the risk of its resurgence. Regional States and the International Community were called upon to remain on guard not only to discourage piracy attacks but also ensure that key mechanisms created under the forum are not negatively affected

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mauritius also pointed out that *“the issue of premature release of convicted pirates compromises the agreed arrangements providing for the repatriation of these individuals to their home country to serve their sentence on a humanitarian basis and that the new Chair, will be faced with the challenge of ensuring that ten(10) years of collective efforts are not undermined”*

**The Republic of Kenya is an active regional actor in Maritime Security and through this assumption, becomes the 3<sup>rd</sup> regional State to chair the CGPCS for two years after Mauritius and Seychelles.**



Aware of the great challenges ahead, Kenya undertakes to “*build on this solid foundation to take the contact group to greater heights and cement the legacy as an effective mechanism in fighting piracy and its root causes*” expressed the new Chair, Ambassador Dr Monica Juma, Cabinet Secretary for Defence of the Republic of Kenya.

The work undertaken by the ex-Chair will be continued and Kenya is committed to finalise and implement together with CGPCS member states and friends, the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG). “*I have looked at the Terms of Reference of the SPSG and with consultations, recommend to establish a nucleus or core group within the SPSG to galvanize a new thought processes within the Contact Group. I will call upon volunteers to take up deeper commitments as nucleus members*” highlighted the new Chair.

Cooperation and Coordination to address the scourge of piracy and related crimes are essential. The Cabinet Secretary for Defense from Kenya called for stronger mobilization and will seek to “*engage the Shipping Industry and stakeholders on innovative ways to dissuade communities living along the Western Indian Ocean coast from piracy*” She also commended the different initiatives undertaken to combat maritime threats and enhance maritime safety and security by applying new ideas and deployment of programmes such as the EU-MASE and its affiliate *regional centres – RMIFC and RCOC – establish by the Indian ocean commission (IOC) as instrumental in securing the region.*”

The new Chair will convene a meeting in Vienna in April 2020 to deliberate on the Terms of Reference of the SPSG and conduct the 23<sup>rd</sup> CGPCS Plenary in 2020 together with Friends of the Chair.

**For further information, please contact us on:**

**CGPCS Secretariat:** [cgpcs@coi-ioc.org](mailto:cgpcs@coi-ioc.org)

**Office:** (+230) 402 61 00

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