



## **CONTACT GROUP ON PIRACY OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA COMMUNIQUE OF THE CHAIR**

**28 July 2020**

### **Update on CGPCS and forthcoming activities**

The outbreak of the Corona 19 virus that quickly turned into a pandemic, engulfing the whole world, has evolved into an unprecedented health crisis, with severe socio-economic impacts at all levels, in all countries and societies across the globe.

In these extraordinary circumstances, the Chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) conveys to all members, their families and colleagues, who are directly or indirectly affected, warmest regards and best wishes for good health and safety.

Since the onset of the pandemic, governments, public and private sectors are focused, rightfully, on actions to tackle the COVID-19 and mitigate its effects. This has understandably shifted the full attention from piracy and other maritime security issues and agenda.

Notably, the pandemic has not curbed piracy attacks and other related crimes. Criminals have seized the opportunity presented by the world's focused attention on COVID 19 to adapt their modus operandi. It is therefore critical that we do not let our guard down. Rather, we must adapt to this new "normal" and continuously step up efforts to deter piracy and its root causes.

In this spirit, the Chair wishes to convey to the Members Countries, the commitment to explore new modalities that ensure we sustain the momentum of the CGPCS activities in the current COVID 19 environment.

In this regard, the Chair wishes to inform:

- a) Of the intention to hold the 23<sup>rd</sup> CGPCS Plenary session by the end of 2020.
- b) Of the plan to organise the first Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) virtual meeting at the earliest convenience and if possible before the end of July 2020. This meeting will finalise its Terms of



Reference and determine the way forward, as guided by the last plenary session.

The Chair also wishes to express its deep appreciation and reiterate continued support for the work undertaken by the related groups especially during this period. The contribution of the Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE) platform, the Law Enforcement Task Force (LETf), the Virtual Legal Forum (VLF), the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) -Jeddah Amendment (JA) and other key stakeholders (private sector, seafarer's organisations, Hostage support programmes) all of which are vital in effectively combatting piracy and related crimes.

Furthermore, the Chair commends the collective efforts of the international community in their condemnation of the premature release of convicted Somali pirates. The Chair thanks the UNODC for the support for the continued monitoring of the situation of convicted pirates. She reiterates the need to ensure that the established mechanism for the arrest, prosecution, detention and transfer of Somali pirates is further reinforced and calls for individual and collective action of the International Community to prevent any attempt that may hinder its proper functioning.

Finally, the CGPCS remains supportive to Counter Piracy Trust Fund (UNTF) activities. A call for interest as members of the Counter Piracy Trust Fund board was recently transmitted to all CGPCS members in view of constituting a new board to be established in August 2020.

*Nairobi, Kenya*