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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Maritime Security: "The Maritime Security Architecture can only function fully if there is an interconnection between the national and regional levels".**

**Ebène, Mauritius, November 17, 2021** - "The Maritime Security Architecture can only function fully if there is an interconnection between the national and regional levels." This is what emerged from the 7th edition of the Steering Committee (SC) of the MASE regional agreements, held this Wednesday, November 17, 2021, by video conference.

Organised by the [Indian Ocean Commission](#) (IOC) through the [Regional Maritime Security Programme](#) (MASE) funded by the European Union, this session brought together more than thirty participants representing the seven signatory States (Comoros, Djibouti, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles), the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC), the Regional Operations Coordination Centre (RCOC) and the European Union (EU) Delegation in Mauritius.

This annual meeting is part of the operationalization of the Western Indian Ocean Maritime Security Architecture, implemented by the IOC and which relies on regional centres (RMIFC and RCOC) and national centres of signatory States.

The participants are all unanimous on the importance of carrying out sustainable actions to strengthen the mechanism that continues to evolve since the signing of the MASE agreements in 2018.

At the onset of the last implementation period of the MASE programme, the institutions and countries involved must double their efforts to not only sustain the achievements, but also improve the response mechanisms against transnational crimes by strengthening cooperation in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

The stronger commitment of the signatory States is required. In his speech, the Mauritian representative, current chair of the MASE Steering Committee, emphasized the concrete measures to be put in place at national level. According to him, "*the finalization of national maritime security strategies, the establishment of a national framework for inter-ministerial coordination to formulate a comprehensive response to the various challenges of maritime security and the integration of legal frameworks are more than necessary for an effective Maritime Security Architecture*" Mr. Om Kumar Dabidin, Secretary for Home Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office of Mauritius explained

The MASE programme has gone beyond its primary objectives - which is to combat piracy and its related criminal ramifications. It covers, through the Maritime Security Architecture put in place, all maritime crimes and threats. This expansion, but also the cross-border nature of these maritime crimes calls for cooperation beyond our zones. "*This is why we thought it would be useful to create valuable synergies with the other*

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*regional mechanisms of the Indian Ocean and even beyond. These interactions allow us to develop, on one hand, the pan-African Maritime Security Architecture and more particularly the African Union Integrated Maritime Strategy; and, on the other hand, it allows us to link our mechanism to those of the Indo-Pacific large strategic space. The connection of the regional centres with that of India, Singapore and beyond allows, in fact, to complete the maritime situation picture of the entire Indian Ocean,"* said the Secretary General of the IOC, Professor Vélayoudom Marimoutou.

As the unique funder of the MASE programme, the European Union is closely following the progress of the Maritime Security Architecture. *"The commitment of the States supported by the partner countries in information sharing must be continuous to build a sustainable Architecture. The EU welcomes the efforts made so far and encourages the improvement of maritime information sharing at the regional level for a better knowledge of the maritime domain and conclusive results"*, said Mr. Geza Strammer, Head of Cooperation of the DUE of Mauritius.

This 7th SC Meeting also allowed the various stakeholders to take note of the activities of the regional centers, their work plans for 2022 and other significant points.

In addition, several thematic regional meetings were held this year, including on the protection and resilience of submarine cables and the regional contingency plan for the fight against marine pollution. And, still in the perspective of adopting a collaborative approach to improve coordination of actions, the IOC will organise a first regional consultative meeting under the theme of "Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU)Fishing" on December 1 with key partners in the field.

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