

3rd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Safety and Security in the Western Indian Ocean : a common will to strengthen, deepen and broaden the Regional Maritime Security Architecture

Ebène, Mauritius, 20 November 2023 - " *Fostering partnerships to strengthen the Maritime Safety and Security Architecture led and coordinated by the region to effectively combat crimes and threats at sea* " was the main objective of the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Safety and Security in the Western Indian Ocean held on Thursday 16 November 2023 in Balaclava, Mauritius.

Organised by the Republic of Mauritius with the support of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), this International Conference brought together more than thirty States and organisations. The aim was to take stock of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the first two Ministerial Conferences and to assess achievements in this area.

In this respect, the participants unanimously recognised the added value of the Regional Maritime Security Architecture implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) through the Regional Maritime Security Programme (MASE) funded by the European Union. The Conference also set as a priority its full operationalisation, its reinforcement and its outreach to African organisations in the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Guinea as well as the Indian Ocean and the Pacific (India, Singapore, Japan, Australia...).

Relying on the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) in Seychelles, the Regional Maritime Security Architecture establishes a structural framework that enables the 7 signatory countries of the MASE Agreements (Comoros, Djibouti, France/Reunion, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles) to work together, exchange information and conduct coordinated operations, as well as enabling external partners to create synergies.

The achievements to date have been conclusive, as illustrated by the numerous joint operations carried out at sea by the RCOC and the RMIFC in close collaboration with

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various partners such as Operation EUNAVFOR - Atalanta and the British Naval Forces on various maritime safety and security issues.

The 21 signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA) have agreed to integrate the RMIFC and the RCOC into their regional cooperation mechanism, thereby expanding the regional maritime security Architecture by developing new synergies. The same applies to the renewed interest shown by the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (CGIMA, formerly CGPCS) for the Architecture. *"This is an important and much-needed convergence to ensure coherence between the maritime security mechanisms, and to reinforce and amplify the actions underway. It is also a clear recognition of the practical usefulness, relevance and reliability of our Regional Maritime Security Architecture."*, underlined the Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission, Dr Vêlayoudom Marimoutou.

The Ministerial Conference also announced the upcoming launch of the new *Safe Seas Africa* programme funded by the European Union, a component of which will be implemented by the IOC. This Safe Seas Africa programme, which encompasses a broader spectrum of Maritime Security, will ensure the interconnection of existing architectures and mechanisms in the area from the Gulf of Guinea, through the Western Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific. It will also be tasked to support the regional States in developing their national strategies, legal frameworks and internal mechanisms to enable them to achieve a minimum maritime capacity to undertake action at sea.

In response to the various maritime challenges, adaptation and innovation are key. States are increasingly mobilising and organised, and organisations and mechanisms are joining forces. New platforms such as the African Coastguard Forum, as outlined in the Moroni "Blue Future" Declaration in June 2023 under the aegis of the Comorian Chairmanship of the African Union, were well supported by participants at the Conference. The first edition of this forum and a new Maritime Pollution Simulation exercise, following the MASEPOLREX23 exercise last October, will be held in Kenya in 2024.

Find out more on the Ministerial Declaration:

English

Ministerial Declaration of the Conference : [231116_Eng_ADOPTED-Declaration-of-Ministerial-Conference-on-MARSEC.pdf \(commissionoceanindien.org\)](https://www.commissionoceanindien.org/231116_Eng_ADOPTED-Declaration-of-Ministerial-Conference-on-MARSEC.pdf)

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French

Déclaration ministérielle de la Conférence : [231116 Fr ADOPTEE declaration-ministerielle-securite-maritime.pdf \(commissionoceanindien.org\)](#)

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