

High-level Event on the launching of Stable Seas / UNODC report on the cost of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

7 December 2021, Trusteeship Council Chamber, 3-5pm

Statement by H.E. Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission

Excellencies,

Dear friends and colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this timely discussion.

Maritime insecurity remains a serious source of concern for peace and security in Africa and the world.

The Peacebuilding Commission met six months ago to take stock of efforts to strengthen maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. We had a fruitful exchange with representatives of ECCAS, ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), UNOCA, UNOWAS, and UNODC, as well as the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) and the Interregional Coordination Center (ICC) based in Yaoundé.

During that meeting, the Commission took note of the preliminary findings contained in the Stable Seas / UNODC study on pirate activity in the Gulf of Guinea and expressed grave concern about the serious threats of piracy and armed robbery to human lives and the disruption of navigation and sustainable development.

The Commission acknowledged the importance of cross-regional initiatives between West and Central Africa to curb piracy in their respective maritime domains. The Commission also recognized that capacity-building efforts must be owned by coastal countries and regional organizations and acknowledged that national authorities should be assisted in providing standardized and sustainable anti-piracy training to their own officials, and when possible, to those of neighboring countries.

The Commission has since stayed abreast of the evolution of the threats and efforts to address them. It is encouraging to see the enhanced ECOWAS-ECCAS cooperation as well as ongoing initiatives to improve coordination among relevant UN and non-UN partners with the objective of strengthening the capacity of concerned Member States to take effective measures against transnational organized crimes at sea.

In this context, United Nations entities launched on 21 September 2021, a consultative mechanism to support regional efforts in addressing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. The launch was the outcome of joint technical preparations by UNOWAS and ECOWAS that built on the conclusion of a high-level meeting with the Presidents of the ECCAS and ECOWAS Commissions, the Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Special Representatives for West Africa and the Sahel and for Central Africa on 18 March, which

discussed a joint framework to address maritime security, including by building domestic capacities.

The Stable Seas / UNODC report offers useful recommendations on how to focus even more on coherence and impact.

In line with these recommendations, the Commission encourages stronger coordination among all concerned actors, which can pave the way for further support from the international community, including the PBC, for the implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct concerning the repression of Piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime crime activities in West and Central Africa. I would also like to emphasize the need to address associated human security challenges and to provide livelihood opportunities for surging youth populations in the region.

The Peacebuilding Commission will continue to offer its platform to concerned Member States and sub-regional Organizations who wish to share their experiences and seek further support in addressing related gaps and vulnerabilities.