

Peacebuilding Commission, for related efforts of national and regional stakeholders, including 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.

He informed about continuous UNOCA and UNOWAS coordinated activities with ECOWAS

ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) in support of the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC) efforts to tackle maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.

3 Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), stated that the Gulf of Guinea remains a persistently challenging area to police and secure. Last year saw 81 attacks at sea, 130 people were kidnapped in these attacks, and the violence has not stopped in 2021. She explained that, while there are prosecutions underway, not a single suspect has ever been convicted of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea thus far. She presented the preliminary findings of a UNODC study on pirate activity in the Gulf of Guinea, which indicate that there are not more than six pirate groups with the capability of operating in deep waters in the Gulf of Guinea at present; and that each of these groups has approximately 30 to 50 members. Most of their attacks target international vessels to kidnap crew members for ransom. The overall combined income resulting from these attacks is approximately 4 million dollars per year, but the economic impact is estimated to be in the range of 800 million. She confirmed that UNODC supports the review of legislation in coastal countries in West and Central Africa, trains judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers, and supports regional cooperation initiatives. She announced plans to partner with Norway and the NGO Stable Sea to produce an analysis of the cost of piracy by the end of this year; and she called for swift and coordinated action to redress this situation, even as the threat itself evolves and grows.

4 Ms Giovane Blha, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel, delivered remarks on behalf of Mr. Amadou Kouadio Mahamat Saleh, Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). She expressed concern about the deteriorating situation in the Gulf of Guinea, which has serious implications for local communities as it is increasing the risk of environmental pollution from oil pillaging

their resolve to take appropriate measures both at a national and regional level to address maritime security. At the 51st ministerial session of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAQ) hosted by the Republic of Burundi on 28 May, Central African states reiterated their call that maritime security should remain high on the agenda of the region.

8 **Building on materials** shared prior to the meeting including Mr. Michael Hewlett, Director, International Maritime Bureau, explained that the IMB is the anti-crime unit of the International Chamber of Commerce, the only business organization mandated to fight against all types of maritime crime and malpractice. He added that trade is the single greatest enabler for peace and security, for economic growth, job creation, and opportunity. He recognized the steps taken by the UN along with the Heads of State and Governments of ECOWAS, ECAS and GCC to address this crime in the waters of the Gulf of Guinea, and called for greater transparency, information exchange, and operational interoperability, not only with littoral States, but also with independent bodies, such as the IMB piracy reporting center. He argued that this would enable a greater awareness of the problem and a more effective and robust response under law. He emphasized that the Yaoundé Code of Conduct provides the architecture for this, and he noted that Nigeria's deep blue project and the Gulf of Guinea maritime collaboration forum are both complementary initiatives to be supported, commended and sustained.

9 **Mr. Junior Narciso Fatudb**, Deputy Executive Director, Interregional Coordination Center, provided a historic overview of the establishment of the architecture for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, with the ICC at its center. He stressed that blue economy, in other words the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems, is essential for social development in the Gulf of Guinea. He explained that the ICC is a young institution which unfortunately is understaffed and faces severe budget limitations. He urged for stronger support from all partners of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct for the Center's full operationalization. Despite its challenges, the ICC is actively undertaking mandated activities, including through the establishment of contact points in the region. These will be announced during the forum of maritime collaboration, which will hold its first plenary session on 14 July.

toward stability of the West and Central and the Sahel regions, and tackling the root causes of terrorism

Recognized that a sustainable response to maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea requires the international community and partners' continued, coordinated political and financial support to the IC to strengthen the existing regional coordination mechanisms for maritime security, including the integration of efforts between West and Central Africa; cooperation with international and European partners; the harmonization of legal frameworks to better address piracy at sea; and the ratification of relevant maritime security-related treaties and protocols by the states in the two regions

Recognized that Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is growing in scope and sophistication and underscored the need to consolidate the frameworks and capacities to enforce the law in the region's waters before the threat escalates further. The Commission 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

Highlighted the importance of ensuring criminal convictions and encouraged countries in the region who have yet to introduce piracy as a self-standing offence under their criminal law in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, to do so

Recognized that the private sector can be a valuable partner in the fight against piracy and encouraged the UN to continue working in cooperation with international partners, the private sector, coastal communities, and all stakeholders, to combat piracy and maritime crime for a safe and prosperous Gulf of Guinea

Noted the recent meeting of the G7+ friends of Gulf of Guinea, co-chaired by the United Kingdom and Senegal in London, which highlighted the importance of broadening regional engagement and capability and underscored the need to ensure effective implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. The G7+ meeting also stressed the need to continue to bring industry, civil society and other relevant stakeholders into efforts that aim to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, including through the provision of regional solutions as well as the involvement of civil society, the private sector and the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum

Took note of the preliminary findings of a UNODC study on pirate activity in the Gulf of Guinea and looked forward to the final report and recommendations. The Commission asked for timely updates on efforts to strengthen the maritime architecture in the Gulf of Guinea, including the outcome of future visits by the two SRSGs and preparations for a cross-sectoral conference for maritime operationalization, called for by the briefings and some Member States. Noted that good practices and lessons learnt from other regions which had experienced piracy, such as off the Somali coast, could help inform the efforts in the Gulf of Guinea