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EXPERTS WORKSHOP ON MARITIME
SECURITY AND SAFETY

6 – 7 APRIL 2010
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

CONCEPT NOTE

*TOWARDS THE ELABORATION OF AN AFRICAN STRATEGY
FOR MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY*

JANUARY 2010

CONCEPT NOTE

I. INTRODUCTION

In the report of the Commission on its activities, covering the period January to June 2009, submitted to the 15th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Sirte, Libya, in June 2009 [EX. CL/520 (XV)], an update was provided on the issue of maritime security and safety in Africa, which has taken on a higher profile in 2008, mainly as a result of the resurgence of the phenomenon of piracy. The Commission indicated that:

- (i) individual countries and intergovernmental organizations had deployed important sea assets to tackle the trend of piracy off the coast of Somalia;
- (ii) in early 2009, a high-level meeting of 17 States from the Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea areas adopted the "Djibouti Code of Conduct", concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Gulf of Aden;
- (iii) in connection with UN Security Council resolution 1851 (2008), a Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was created, to act as Point of Contact between and among States, Regional and International Organizations, on aspects of combating piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.

In all the afore mentioned, the Commission emphasized the need to adopt a multifaceted comprehensive approach, including in-land capability and capacity building, to tackle the phenomenon of piracy off the coast of Somalia, which is just the symptom of a bigger problem. In this regard, the need to stop all illegal activities off the coast of Somalia, including illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste, was highlighted. The Commission emphasized that world attention on the issue of piracy off the coast of Somalia had diverted attention from the growing threat of attacks off the coast of West Africa.

The Commission stressed that, in order to tackle all these cross-cutting challenges, and in line with the AU Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), it was in the process of developing an appropriate strategy to address the situation.

On its part, the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Sirte, Libya, in July 2009, adopted Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.252(XIII) on the report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa. In this decision, the Assembly expressed its serious concern at the mounting insecurity in the maritime spaces around Africa, and Somalia in particular, and strongly condemned all illegal activities in these regions, including piracy, illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste. The Assembly welcomed the initiatives taken by the Commission to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy to combat these scourges and requested it to submit reports thereon to the relevant organs of the African Union, on a regular basis.

II. WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The Workshop will be based on plenary sessions and working groups.

III. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The Workshop is expected to result in the adoption of a Declaration on an African strategy in the area of Maritime security and safety, as well as a Plan of Action outlining the measures to be taken and the timelines for their implementation.

IV. PARTICIPANTS

The Workshop intends to bring together officials and experts from:

1. AU Member States;
2. AU Commission and other relevant AU structures;
3. Regional Economic Communities and other relevant African Organizations;
4. Relevant African Think Tanks and NGOs; and
5. Relevant International Institutions and other stakeholders.

V. DATE AND VENUE

The workshop will take place from 6 to 7 April 2010, at AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

VI. POINTS OF CONTACT

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