AFRICAN UNION EXPERTS WORKSHOP ON

MARITIME

SECURITY AND SAFETY

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

OPENING STATEMENT BY

THE COUNTRY CHAIRING THE AFRICAN UNION
(MALAWI)

H.E. Mr. Ernest M. MAKAWA

Your Excellency Dr. Elham Mahmoud Ahmed Ibrahim, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy,

Honorable Ministers,

Your Excellencies Honourable Ambassadors and Members of Diplomatic Missions in Ethiopia;

Distinguished Experts and Senior Government Officials,

Cooperating Partners,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to congratulate the Commission for organizing this very important gathering. The holding of this workshop testifies, once again, the importance of the stability and security of oceans and seas implies in sustainable development.

Due to the trade of slaves and colonialism, these oceans have always been considered as threats, instead of opportunities. Today, because of poor-empowerment, hundreds of young African died while travelling on a crowded rubber dinghy to go away from Africa.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this time, as I mentioned these tragic moments of Africa's history, in memory of those who passed away in the course of the slave trade, the colonialism, and the fight for Africa's sovereignty, I would like to ask you all to rise and join me observing one minute of silence.

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Thank you very much, you may be seated.

Over the past four decades, total sea borne trade has more than quadrupled. Ninety percent of world trade and two-thirds of its energy supplies are conducted by sea. The world's oceans and seas are interlinked, and action in one sea or one policy area with a direct or indirect impact on the sea may have positive or negative effects on other seas and policy areas. Whilst over 46% of Africans live in absolute poverty—a figure that is steadily rising, fish makes a vital contribution to the food and nutritional security of 200 million Africans and provides income for over 10 million. The increasing use of the oceans and seas by various sectors, combined with climate change, has added to the pressure on the marine environment. Africa's maritime domain offers all African nations, even non-coastal States, vast growth opportunities and a network of sea-lanes of enormous importance for their security and prosperity.

The development agenda of the African Union (AU) promotes among others, the development of human beings and affords them an opportunity to use their potentials; ensures noticeable improvements in their lives. It is inclusive and based on a human-centered approach to development where all social groups are engaged. The security and development of the African continent was collectively addressed during the founding of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

An Africa using its own resources to play the major role that it can legitimately claim in a polycentric, inter-related and more equitable world in which there will be no place for the skeletons of the economic, political and ideological hegemonies which characterized the previous Century: these are the goals which the AU is seeking to accomplish within the space of a generation.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

You may have noticed that many of the so called "Landlocked countries" including my own country have shown great interest in participating in this workshop.

Please join me in a big round of applause for these countries. Well done.

The Anthem of the AU reads in part, as follows "O sons and daughters of Africa, flesh of the sun and flesh of the sky, let us make Africa the Tree of Life". To bring this about, the AU set itself the goal to build, by the year 2025:

> *"A united[1] and integrated Africa; an Africa imbued with the ideals of justice and peace; an inter-dependent and robust Africa determined to map for itself an ambitious strategy; an Africa underpinned by political, economic, social and cultural integration which would restore to Pan-Africanism its full meaning; an Africa able to make the best of its human and material resources, and keen to ensure the progress and prosperity of its citizens by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by a globalized world; an Africa capable of promoting its values in a world rich in its disparities[2]."*

There are seven missions that have been defined for the AU Commission (AUC) to bring this vision into reality. They are related and embrace the ideals of peace, stability and all aspects of security, in particular human security. The seven missions are:

    i.   establish an effective and responsible AU;
    ii.   build consensus around a shared Vision and Agenda in the Continent;
    iii.   promote the emergence of societies based on the principles of the rule of law, good governance and human security;
    iv.   promote regional economic cooperation as a foundation for irreversible integration in the Continent;

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[1] The Africa one is referring to is indeed the whole of Africa, including its inland waters as well as its adjoining oceans and seas, from North to South, from East to West without distinction as to race, color and religion.

[2] African Union Commission, Strategic Plan of Action for the period 2004 – 2007.

      v.   develop integration infrastructure;
     vi.   address the structural causes of poverty and underdevelopment;
    vii.   enhance the dynamism of African culture and creativity.

The maritime dimension embraces virtually every major issue that Africa is confronted with: diverse illegal activities; energy; climate change; environmental protection and conservation; research, innovation and development, competitiveness and job creation; international trade; transport, communication and logistics.

"Maritime Viability" being the composite value of four interconnected maritime conditions (Security, Safety, Prosperity and Sustainability), it should be used by all stakeholders to complete assessments, conduct SWOT[3] and gaps analysis, and perform capacity-building proceedings to tackle all Africa's maritime domain's threats and losses to achieve improved benefits and dignity of Africans, for an integrated and prosperous Africa.

Focusing on enhancing sustainable socio-economic development, "Maritime Security" would be the condition that reflects the ability of public and private entities to conduct legitimate activities such as territorial protection, resource extraction, trade, transport and tourism, free of threats or losses from illegal acts or aggression, for an integrated and prosperous Africa.

The maritime domain draws attention to a broad array of potential targets that could result in mass casualties and inflict catastrophic economic harm to African coastal States, and, by the same token, indirect consequences on landlocked States. In addition to loss of revenue, they could also fuel violence and insecurity. Some of them, such as drug trafficking, could feed corruption, finance the purchase of weapons, corrupt youth, pervert democracy/rule of law, distort economy and destabilize communal life. While the variety of actors threatening Africa's maritime domain continues to grow in number and capability, there must be a corresponding African endeavor to address these at the national, regional and continental levels.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this workshop, Experts will cover all the threats and vulnerabilities we face in Africa's maritime domain.

Permit me to recapture some of them.

Natural Disasters and Environmental Degradation.

Natural disasters have ravaged many regions of Africa causing considerable loss of human and marine lives, and consequently livelihoods. Examples of this can be found in diminishing fish stocks. The potential for oil-spills is a threat that should be guarded against. Africa's disaster profile from 1980 – 2006 suggests that disasters caused damage worth USD 22 billion[4], killed more than 700,000 and affected more than 300 million people.

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[3] Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
[4] International Disaster Database, www.em-dat.net.

Environmental Crimes.

Marine pollution from land-based sources significantly contributes to the destruction of marine ecosystem. Land-based pollution impacts upon the marine environment, specifically those resulting from sewage, persistent organic pollutants, radioactive substances, heavy metals, nutrients, sediment mobilization, litter, oils spills and physical alteration and destruction of habitat. This is a threat to the quality of the marine ecosystem as determined on the basis of scientific, institutional, social and economic factors.

The potential for adverse human health and environmental effects of transboundary dumping of hazardous waste in Africa cannot be overemphasized. Transboundary dumping of hazardous waste refers to the illegal export of hazardous waste by developed and industrialized countries to developing nations, usually African countries. Hazardous waste, though undesirable, is the inevitable by-product of industrial development and several manufacturing processes. If improperly managed, these wastes may result in substantial adverse human health and environmental effects.

There is an additional environmental crime, the dumping of electronic waste, or e-waste: unwanted mobile phones, computers and printers, which contain cadmium, and other poisonous elements. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has estimated that 20-50 million tons of e-wastes are discarded each year throughout the world, whilst 70% of these products end up in poor countries, despite the Basel Ban Amendment, under the Basel Convention, which prohibits the exports of e-wastes from developed countries to developing countries. E-waste contains a lot of lead and also mercury and cadmium that cause multiple toxic problems.

According to health experts, exposure of children to lead can have a wide range of effects on children's development and behavior. When exposed to small amounts of lead children may become inattentive, hyperactive and irritable. In addition to this, children with greater lead levels may also have problems with reading, learning, delayed growth and loss of hearing which can lead to permanent brain damage and even death. It has also been observed that both children and adults living around dumping sites tend to overact at the slightest provocation, a behavior some health specialists attribute to the effects of e-waste.

Illegal Fishing.

It is duly noted above that more than 200 million people in Africa regularly feed on fish, which is an important part of their nutrition. On average it accounts for 22% of their protein intake, with some countries at 70%. Fish is the most affordable source of protein for the poor in Africa and it also provides them with vital nutrients crucial to a healthy diet.

The fish supply crisis is of particular concern because of the impact on food security of the poor in the region. In scarcity, prices increase and that will make such a vital protein commodity too expensive for the poor. The supply crisis is a combination of many factors, that include rapid population growth, many fish stocks being overfished both in coastal and inland waters, rapidly increasing fishing effort in small-scale fisheries, increasing fishing pressure from industrial

fleets, often from distant water fishing nations, and widespread Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing)[5], mainly by non-African fishing enterprises. If population growth continues as projected, sub-Saharan Africa will need about 61% more fish per year by 2020 just to maintain the current consumption level. Without a concerted effort by the global community, the health of Africa's oceans and most significant inland waterways will be irreversibly damaged.

Oil Bunkering/Theft.

Bunkering involves siphoning oil from the network of pipelines that criss-cross oil fields and creeks into private barges. This is then ferried out to rusting tankers and sold on the black market. The three types of illegal oil bunkering include small-scale pilfering for the local markets, large-scale tapping of pipelines to fill large tankers for export, and excess lifting of crude oil beyond the licensed amount.

According to a special report[6] from the United States Institute of Peace, the loss to the Nigerian economy from illegal oil bunkering between 2003 and 2008 totals approximately US$ 100 billion.

The trade in stolen oil, or "blood oil," poses an immense challenge, harming regional economy and fueling a long-running insurgency that undermines security in the Gulf of Guinea and adds to instability on world energy markets.

Money Laundering, Illegal Arms and Drug Traffic.

Arms and drug smuggling often combines with other forms of international crime such as human smuggling, corruption, and money laundering. All these illicit activities help to diminish human security and prospects for development in Africa.

Important adjunct to maritime terrorism is drug trafficking. The nexus of these two phenomena is admittedly so deep that they are often analyzed under the same parameters. With profit margins running into hundreds of percent, drug trafficking is by far the most lucrative means of generating funds to fuel ever-growing terrorist activities and insurgencies.

Small Arms Survey puts the dollar value of the illicit small arms trade at US$1 billion/Yr, representing 10-20% of the global trade.

Just four years ago the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that Africa was effectively insulated from the global drugs traffic. Today, Africa has become a major hub for global narcotics smuggling, with 50 to 60 tons trafficked in West Africa and 30 to 35 tons of Afghan heroin trafficked into East Africa every year. 46% of all cocaine caught in Europe airports transits in Africa, while 33% is directly from Latin America[7]).

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[5] Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a global issue with many harmful environmental, economic and social impacts. Global trade in IUU-caught fish and fish products is estimated to be worth between US$ 4-14 billion per year. Possibly US$ 1.0 billion of this trade is from sub-Saharan Africa alone.

[6] Blood Oil in the Niger Delta, Special Report 229, August 2009.

[7] Jeune Afrique N° 2486, Sep. 6 2008, Panafrican Magazine, www.jeuneafrique.com.

Human Trafficking.

Human trafficking relies significantly on seaborne transportation; same maritime routes used by drug runners and terrorists on the high seas and thus constitute significant dimensions of the maritime security policy realm. 60% of the world's human trafficking occurs in Sub-Saharan Africa[8], and this business earns criminals $10 billion in profits annually[9].

Maritime Terrorism.

Maritime terrorism in Africa's maritime domain is the use or threat of violence against a ship (civilian as well as military), its passengers or sailors, cargo, a port facility, or if the purpose is solely a platform for political ends. The definition can be expanded to include the use of the maritime transportation system to smuggle terrorists or terrorist materials into the targeted country. The importance of container security to maritime terrorism is only now being realized after a U.S. Navy search of a freighter in January 2002 led to the discovery of a group of Al Qaeda terrorists hiding inside a well equipped shipping container.

Maritime terrorism also represents a new category of threat; one that partially overlaps with conventional weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but for which – due to the scope and nature of the maritime industry – traditional counter-proliferation policies may be inadequate and even inappropriate.

Piracy and Armed Robbery.

In 2007, 31 acts of piracy and armed robbery occurred off Somalia, up from 10 in 2006. In 2008, 111 attacks were recorded, with 44 hijackings, while in 2009, 217 attacks were recorded, with 47 vessels hijacked and 867 crewmembers taken hostage. On 23 March 2010, pirates hijacked MV Frigia, a Turkish-owned cargo ship, 1,800km from the pirate stronghold of Haradhere. The hijacking, closer to India than Somalia, represents a substantial increase in the pirates' range[10].

World attention on piracy off the coast of Somalia has diverted attention from the growing threat of attacks off West Africa. The International Maritime Bureau (IBM) says it knows of more than 100 pirate attacks off West Africa in 2008; yet only 40 were reported. In 2009, 28 incidents were reported for Nigeria. Of these 28 incidents, 21 vessels were boarded, 3 vessels were fired upon, and one vessel was hijacked. Off West Africa, the majority of incidents related to the oil industry and fishing vessels go unreported. External sources suggest at least another 30 unreported and unconfirmed attacks have occurred in Nigeria in 2009.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

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[8] United Nations, www.un.org.
[9] Maclean's Magazine, Canada, www.macleans.ca.

[10] EU naval force.

It is in view of the above cross-cutting challenges that the African Heads of State and Government in July 2009 manifested leadership by calling upon the AUC "to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy"[11], and calling upon the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of Africa to develop, coordinate and harmonize, policies and strategies; improve African maritime security and safety standards, for more wealth creation from its oceans and seas, so as to ensure the well-being of African people.

Four months later, in October 2009, encouraged by the decision of African Heads of State and Government, during the second Conference of African Ministers responsible for maritime transport held in Durban, Republic of South Africa, a resolution on maritime safety, maritime security and protection of the marine environment in Africa was adopted, together with the African Maritime Transport Charter.

The AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention, adopted by the AU Assembly in January 2008, provides for coordination of activities to fight human trafficking, to protect victims and prosecute offenders.

On 24 March 2010, in Abuja, Nigeria, under the auspices of the AUC Department of Social Affairs, a new two-pronged campaign to operationalize African Union's four-year old continental instrument to address the challenges of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children was launched through regional workshops.

Other challenges like Water, Resources and Environment are addressed by other departments like the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture for instance.

It is worth recognizing other significant initiatives to include (i) NATO counter piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, (ii) the African Partnership Station (APS), designed by U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa to foster enhanced maritime safety and security in Africa, (iii) the European Union Naval Force Somalia – Operation ATALANTA and (iv) the International Maritime Organization (IMO) initiated Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCC) concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. Open for signature by the 21 countries in the region, the DCC is a milestone, as it will foster the following mechanisms and activities: 1) Establishment of Piracy Information Exchange Centers in the following locations: a) Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Mombasa/ Kenya); b) Sub-regional Coordination Centre (Dar es Salaam/Tanzania) and c) Regional Maritime Information Centre to be established (Sana'a/Yemen); and 2) Regional Training Centre to be established in Djibouti.

In connection with the above mentioned challenges, I would suggest that in due course, African Experts establish:

a) a representative continental working group of Chiefs of the African Navies/Coast Guards to scrutinize issues of situational awareness in the whole African maritime domain and to uphold cooperative efforts between Navies/Coast Guards of the AU Member States.

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[11] Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.252(XIII)] adopted by the 13th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Sirte, Libya, on July 2009.

b)   a continental working group of Experts to technically define the outer delimitation of the Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA) which will serve as the space-framework of all African maritime strategic actions. The African Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) will be extended to the CEMZA. This will be an additional African move to help improve the global security standards.

c)   a continental working group of Experts to produce recommendations for the development and implementation of a continental Disaster Management Strategy.

d)   a continental working group of Experts to produce recommendations for the development and implementation of the AU Maritime Safety Agency (AUMSA), which will be charged of reducing the risks of maritime accidents, ships pollution and the loss of human lives in African oceans and seas.

e)   a continental cross-sector Foresight Marine Panel to strategize and make proposals for wealth creation from the African oceans and seas.

In order to further emphasize our individual and collective responsibility to protect the marine environment and carefully manage its resources, it would be appropriate to strategize and launch a pan-African "No more sea-blindness" campaign that will also enhance political will at various decision-making levels.

The need for Africa to address these cross-cutting challenges by developing an Integrated Maritime Security Strategy is inherent in the objectives and principles of the Constitutive Act (Article 3 and 4).

In connection with all the above, it might be suitable to encapsulate all relevant cross-cutting initiatives and develop an overarching Africa's Integrated Maritime Security Strategy (AIM-Strategy) that would aim at addressing seaborne challenges to Africa's maritime domain and sustain more wealth creation from the oceans and seas.

The challenge in developing the AIM-Strategy is that it must pass three tests:
  i. Suitability (will it achieve the desired Ends, i.e. to protect and allow efficient exploitation of Africa's maritime domain for the benefit of the people of Africa?),
  ii. Acceptability (does it have Member States and regional support? Is it worth the cost?),
  iii. Feasibility (do we have the means to execute the ways?).

This will require a cross-sectorial collaborative, concerted, cooperative, coordinated, coherent and trust-building multilayered approach, with subject-matter action plans.

This AIM-Strategy will help streamlining accessible resources, foster economies of scale and increase efficiency.

After you have all assess the breath of the challenge during this workshop, I further recommend that Experts meet again in a further stage to brainstorm on a multi-decade AIM-Strategy and develop an "Urgent Vs Important" matrix that will lead to the set up of a sound prioritization

scheme of implementation for the first 5-year period. This subsequent workshop will also address the necessary means, foreseeable constraints and explore ways to tackle them.

As we proceed, let's keep in mind that words alone have not made America a Superpower, neither has talk built Europe nor made China an economic powerhouse.

In all cases, actions did.

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me stop talking then, and wish you all the best in your deliberations. I believe you will fruitful debates and reach conclusions and recommendations which will enable us to effectively take actions to addressing the way forward towards a stable, secured and clean African maritime domain for a prosperous Africa.

May GOD bless Africa.

Thank you for your kind attention.