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P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 519321  
Email: [situationroom@africa-union.org](mailto:situationroom@africa-union.org)

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
1091<sup>ST</sup> MEETING  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
28 JUNE 2022

**STATEMENT BY DR. ALHAJI SARJOH BAH, DIRECTOR OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT  
DIRECTORATE, ON MARITIME PIRACY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA**

**Your Excellency Ambassador Daniel Owassa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of June 2022;**

**Excellencies, Esteemed Members of the Council;**

**Ambassador Adenike Ukonga, Executive Secretary of the Gulf of Guinea Commission,**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

On behalf of Ambassador Adeoye Bankole, Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, I welcome this opportunity to brief Council on the subject of Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and I wish to thank you Mr. Chair, for including this important item in the Programme of Work of the Council for June 2022.

The security, economic and political challenges related to maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea is a major concern not only for the African Union but for the international community as a whole.

**Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,**

The large-scale piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a recent phenomenon, which emerged in the past ten years or so, gaining momentum just as the piracy in the Gulf of Aden was decreasing. Piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea is predominantly related to the theft of oil and linked with the regional black market and organized crime. While hostages have been taken, ransoms do not appear to be the driving goal, like we witnessed in the Gulf of Aden. There are also other related transnational organized crimes linked to maritime insecurity in the region such as money laundering and its potential linkages with financing terrorist activities inland, along with illegal trade in arms and drug trafficking, which equally pose a serious threat to maritime security in the region.

It is worthy to note that, several initiatives have been established to counter piracy and other illicit maritime activities. Among the key initiatives is the 2013 Yaoundé Code of Conduct, which committed 25 signatories from ECCAS and ECOWAS to repress piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa. This Code of Conduct has been the main framework for regional cooperation and information-sharing to address the maritime insecurity in the region.

I therefore wish to commend the States in the Gulf of Guinea, the ECCAS, ECOWAS and the international partners for their efforts, as well as for working together to tackle maritime security threats in the region. I am also encouraged by the initiatives taken by regional entities such as the Gulf of Guinea Commission in coordinating regional responses. It is also worth mentioning that last year, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Gulf of Guinea Commission aimed at reinforcing joint efforts in addressing maritime security and safety in the

region. We are hopeful that the MoU will help in the operationalization of the 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy in the region, the African Union Blue Economy strategy, as well as the “African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter). These are the Continental policy frameworks for ensuring peace, security, safety and stability of the maritime sector, and contributing to socio-economic development.

I am pleased to inform you that we are now working with the Gulf of Guinea Commission to develop concrete joint activities in support of the efforts of the Member States of the region to fight the various crimes, while taking advantage of the potential for socio-economic development presented by the marine resources of the region. These efforts will be complementary to existing efforts within the framework of the *Yaoundé Code of Conduct*, and the *Interregional Coordination Centre* established by ECCAS and ECOWAS.

Within the framework of the African Standby Force, the Commission plans to organize the first maritime exercise. The main aim of the exercise is to enhance preparedness and capability of the ASF in addressing maritime security threats in the Continental waters. This will be a regional exercise, that will target the Member States of the Gulf of Guinea and Indian Ocean. It is expected that the exercise will specifically lead to enhanced collaboration among the countries, and strengthen sharing of maritime information and intelligence amongst the Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Excellencies, Maritime terrorism is a major concern to us. Because of the volume of Continental trade that uses the seas, vessels become lucrative targets as they offer opportunities for economic gain for the terrorists, and destabilization of the Member States. This is one area that we shall have renewed focus on, especially with the experience of Foreign Terrorist Fighters crossing into the Continent by sea after they were pushed out from Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

We are now working with the United Nations (UN) Office for Counter-Terrorism on the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme in building the capacity of member states to prevent, detect and investigate terrorist travel by sea.

**Excellencies**, the Blue Economy is at the heart of Africa’s aspirations in Agenda 2063, which envisions attainment of inclusive growth and sustainable development, through prioritizing maritime resources for increased wealth creation. Here, I am delighted to note that the Africa Blue Economy Strategy that has been developed, incorporates not only the best international standards and practices in blue growth development but also provides guidance for AU Member States, RECs/RMs and other regional entities for the coherent formulation of national and regional strategies for maritime domain, including for shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement.

We recommit to work with the RECs to support Member States to develop national legal and policy frameworks, which will enable cooperation and coordinated intervention in the maritime sector.

Combating piracy in the Gulf of Guinea requires a multi-dimensional approach. As such, Council may wish to:

- Urge States in the region to strengthen investment in counter-piracy as well as reinforce maritime domain awareness considering its impact on security, safety, economy, or environment,
- Call on the international community to strengthen support in countering piracy and fighting other maritime illicit activities,
- Encourage States of the region to enhance the implementation of the Code of Conduct and other relevant continental and international initiatives set out to counter piracy and tackle maritime insecurity, and
- Call on Member States that have not yet done so, to sign, ratify and domesticate the continental instruments on maritime domain and maritime security in particular.

Thank you for your kind attention.