

CONCEPT NOTE

Creating a roadmap towards an Integrated South African Maritime Security Strategy

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STIAS, Stellenbosch



Given the growing importance of the oceans as global, regional, and national geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes, it is now imperative that coastal and island state governments design and align policy, strategy, and programmes to address national security underpinnings of their maritime interests. Setting in place maritime security strategies are growing amongst governments and Africa is not out of step with this practice. Gulf of Guinea countries and some bordering the Western India Ocean are attending ever more closely to getting strategies and programmes in place.

The maritime security debate is continuously influenced by academic research that keep the importance of oceans on the broader security agenda. Ongoing academic research infuses fresh ideas on maritime agendas or emphasizes older work and its value for present-day interests to use the oceans responsibly and ally with national growth, development, and wealth creation goals. In effect, cooperation between academia, think tanks and international organisations have become engine rooms to build safer and more secure oceans.

For South Africa the verdict is out. The oceans offer a significant catalyst to boost the country's mediocre economic outlooks. While the motivations for Operation Phakisa recognize the development-oceans nexus and the Maritime Road Map 2030 offers practical way points, South Africa now finds itself at a maritime juncture: Aim for the maritime high road by defining its maritime interests, demarcate related security aspects and embark upon a high-level programme culminating in an Integrated National Maritime Security Strategy (INMSS). Alternatively, forfeit the lucrative maritime opportunities on offer and follow the low road of dangerous unproductive maritime landscapes and underperforming maritime sectors in its lethargic economy.

In step with academic contributions, SIGLA at Stellenbosch University in partnership with ISS (Pretoria) and the UN Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are cooperating to contribute to an INMSS process by setting up a seminar with a dual aim. First, to bring a selected group of academics and influencers to Stellenbosch to share their ideas, experiences and work on the process, content, and outputs of an INMSS. Second, conduct a morning workshop to set out practical steps towards An eventual roadmap for pursuing a draft INMSS for South Africa. To these ends the organizers plan for contributions from the Gulf of Guinea, South Africa, East Africa, and India to inform the discussion and help with practical suggestions for setting such a strategy in place. **This seminar is academic in kind and in support of South Africa's maritime security agenda but does not represent or suppose any commitment from the South African government and the relevant government departments and agencies.**

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