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FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ
ISSUED AT THE 2022 MARITIME SECURITY CONFERENCE ON THE THEME:
'MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA: RETHINKING THE PAST AND
CONTEMPLATING THE FUTURE',

HELD IN ACCRA, GHANA
ON 16TH AND 17TH NOVEMBER 2022

1. Preamble

The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC), and the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa (SIGLA) of Stellenbosch University, held the 2022 Maritime Security Conference on the theme: 'Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Rethinking the Past and Contemplating the Future', on 16th and 17th November 2022, funded by the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund.

The 2022 Maritime Security Conference convened distinguished participants from the realms of academia, practitioners and maritime agencies concerned with security of the oceans.

2. Development of the Communiqué

The final communiqué is based on presentations, discussions, conclusions and recommendations at the 2022 Maritime Security Conference, on the territorial integrity, the economic security, and regional collaboration within the West and Central African maritime spaces. These topics were discussed during plenary sessions under the following broad sub-themes:

- Maritime Security in a more Troublesome World: Looking Back, Looking Forward:
 - Growing and Competing Centers of Power and Maritime Security; Africa between Competing Power Centers: Using the Oceans for National or Global Security; and Old Debates and Concepts: New Threats and Vulnerabilities;
- Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Surveying the Landscape of Theory and Practice:
 - Capacity Building in the Gulf of Guinea; Maritime Security Frameworks; and Gender Mainstreaming in the Maritime Industry;
- Maritime Security Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea: Progress and Things to Come:
 - Coordination and Collaboration within the Yaoundé Architecture; Experiences from Nigeria's Approach to Reducing Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea; Leveraging the Role of Non-State Actors in Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea;
- Food Security and Fish Depletion in the Gulf of Guinea:
 - Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing; and



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- Rising Developments in Maritime Security: Looking Forward
 - The African Union and the Maritime Security off Africa: Shifts and New Perspectives; Underwater Infrastructure: Security of Communications and Cable Networks in the Gulf of Guinea; and Harnessing Maritime Diplomacy in the Gulf of Guinea.

3. The Communiqué

Participants made the following observations and recommendations during the Conference:

3.1. The Context

1. Since 2010, there has been a rise in threats to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea that were once more characteristic of the Gulf of Aden off the Horn of Africa. These threats include piracy and armed robbery at sea; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; drug trafficking, environmental degradation; terrorism; vulnerability of maritime infrastructure; and other forms of criminality at sea.
2. There have been continental, inter-state and regional frameworks concluded to address maritime insecurity in West and Central Africa, such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and its related Architecture, which seek to improve harmonisation and regional cooperation in addressing threats in the Gulf of Guinea. Yet, the operationalisation and implementation of these frameworks have been hampered by a number of aspects: lack of political will perpetuated in part by sea blindness of leaders on the impact of the sea on national prosperity and instability, as well as competing national and individual interests; governance deficits on sea and on land. Also incapacity of state actors and institutions including but not limited to financial and logistical constraints; dependence on militaristic approaches to dealing with maritime insecurity; inter-agency and inter-state mistrust; and limited consideration on the effects on and contributions of local coastal communities with respect criminality at sea.
3. In 2015, research culminating into the edited volume, 'Towards Good Order at Sea - African Experiences' with a focus on East Africa noted among other issues, that rates of piracy was falling in Africa and sought to build on that positive momentum. Additionally, there has also been a falling rate of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea since the second quarter of 2021, with no cases of piracy in the form of kidnapping for ransom in 2022. This downward trend could be viewed as an end to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea or part of a historical process of changing trends or diversification and transformation in the activities of criminal networks.
4. Local, national, regional, and international threats to security in the sea and on land are interrelated. For instance, regional and international conflicts can perpetuate insecurities



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on land and at sea further afield in Africa, while both local and international actors can conduct illegal activities in regional or national African maritime spaces; disrupting local economic, environmental, and physical securities in their wake.

5. Gender inequality and even discrimination remain high in different sectors of the maritime industry in spite of several international interventions to empower and promote access for women in maritime related matters and maritime security in particular. This is especially challenging when considering the disproportionate impact on women in the value chain of fisheries.

3.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward by participants of the 2022 Maritime Security Conference regarding the future of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea:

1. African ownership and leadership should be at the forefront of addressing maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and other African maritime spaces. African leaders would need to define local challenges, outline capacity needs, and other military and non-military international assistance, and put forward strategies to address threats and strengthen maritime security in partnership, dialogue and with the support of external actors. Failure to take the helm of these interventions would result in external interests dictating actions and responses on the continent with little or no regard to local peculiarities, contexts and knowledge. Such failure could also lead to misaligned and unsustainable interventions in African states.
2. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of maritime insecurity in Africa, should not be limited to external narratives and priorities and those of the African political and economic elite, but should extend to the definitions and conditions of various local coastal communities. This could be achieved through collaborative research by African institutions, but local communities must be beneficiaries of programmes and interventions. Nonetheless, international actors have an important role to play and should, thus, contribute and collaborate on curbing threats to the African maritime space that also originate from actors within their countries and regions.
3. Africa should take advantage of opportunities presented in the New World Order/the power shifts that have arisen, and the need for diverse mineral and material resources by the global North to re-position its economic and political standing on the world stage. Also rethink or reshape its relations with individual states, its regional peace and security architectures, and its food security mechanisms. In pursuit of these, regional international relations would require African leaders to afford centre stage to the interests of their people, take ownership



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of their growth, development, good governance, and peace and security, and speak with a unified voice. This notion goes for ocean governance and security as well.

4. Maritime security actors should take the opportunity vested in the drop in piracy cases to undertake further study into its historical trends, and its convergence with [global] priorities and geopolitics and other threats to maritime security. Researchers must document the reasons behind the drop in piracy in related areas to explore the way forward in this regard or harness the knowledge gained to mitigate piracy over the longer-term.
5. Maritime security rests upon collaboration and formal cooperation. National African state security actors in the maritime space should also consider support from non-state actors such as logistical support or indirect financial support through charges, as well as, assessing the benefits, detriments, and legal implications of the use of private security companies to supplement state security programmes in the maritime space.
6. The outstanding assessment of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and related Architecture should be undertaken soon, as it is approaching its 10th anniversary in 2023 in order to foster greater synergy between Gulf of Guinea states, agencies, their militaries, their laws, strategies, mechanisms, and interventions. The Yaoundé Code of Conduct should also be made binding to encourage implementation and compliance.
7. Awareness should be raised on the drivers of and extended detrimental impacts of maritime insecurity to other facets of national and regional security. Successful interventions by African states must be harnessed including the creation of more platforms for exchange and knowledge-sharing between the intellectual community and the political decision-makers.
8. African institutions, including KAIPTC and Stellenbosch University, should organise workshops towards the harmonisation of competing maritime interests, responses and programmes, as well as the review of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as a matter of urgency.
9. The United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda should expand its scope to the integration, protection, and improved participation of women in the maritime sector.
10. African leaders should take into consideration expert scientific and the local fishing industry's advice, and the need to raise local financial resources from fishing licences, when signing international fisheries agreements. Furthermore, in enacting local regulations and policies for the protection of the sea and the sustainance of fish stocks, African leaders should consider the following: the effects of these interventions on the local fishing value



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chain, scientific expert advice, indigenous practices, and alternative livelihoods structures for closed seasons. Further, in the implementation of frameworks for sustainable fisheries and curbing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, the relevant authorities would need to take pre-emptive vigilant approaches such as risk assessments, monitoring, investigations, control, and undertake strict, transparent and consistent enforcement of laws in place.

12. African leaders should engage in mutual beneficial maritime diplomacy and cooperation at bi-lateral, regional, continental, and international levels. The African Union should lead in the harmonisation of international, continental, sub-regional, and national frameworks and strategies that affect maritime security and its related matters, within the broader ambit of the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS Strategy).

WHEREUPON, We the under listed, Commandant of KAIPTC, Director of RDDC, and Dean of the Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University, append our signatures to this Communiqué on the date below:

Issued in Accra on 17th November 2022.

SIGNED:

.....
MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD ADDO GYANE

Commandant, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)

.....
PROFESSOR THOMAS MANDRUP

Professor, Centre for Stabilisation, Institute for Strategy and War Studies, Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC)

.....
PROFESSOR M.S. TSHEHLA

Dean, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University