



United Arab Emirates

POSTIVE OUTCOME OF FIRST EVER HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC-PRIVATE COUNTER PIRACY CONFERENCE, HELD IN UAE

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 21 April 2011: - The UAE counter-piracy conference held in Dubai this week has seen an unprecedented commitment from both government and industry leaders from around the world to taking concrete steps to battle piracy in the short and long term, and both on and off shore.

A declaration adopted by senior officials from more than 65 governments, international organisations including the United Nations, the International Maritime Organisation, and more than 120 maritime and maritime industry related companies underlined the seriousness of the threat of piracy on national security as well as on trade and the maritime industry, and called for immediate and collaborative action to tackle the human and financial repercussions of piracy as well as introduce a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to address the root causes of piracy.

Industry also issued a statement to accompany the declaration that proposed active steps to address the danger that vessels and their crew face daily travelling through waters in which pirates are operating.

Co-convened under the theme “Global Challenge, Regional Responses: Forging A Common Approach to Maritime Piracy” by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and global marine terminal operator DP World, the conference was inaugurated by His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, and His Excellency Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Chairman, DP World.

The conference was also visited by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. He met with 16 foreign ministers and three senior industry leaders, in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Foreign Minister, and His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai.

The conference provided a forum for high level deliberations by more than 700 delegates who included foreign and other state ministers from among the GCC, Somalia, Djibouti, Tanzania, the Comoros, the Seychelles, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. The United Nations Legal Counsel and Under-Secretary General for Legal Affairs also participated.

Those from the maritime industry attending included Gianluigi Aponte, President, MSC, Morten Engelstoft, COO, Maersk, Peter Swift, President, International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, Ron Widdows, President, and CEO of Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) and Chairman, World Shipping Council, Dr Stefano Messina, CEO, Messina Line and Giles Noakes, Chief Maritime Security Officer, BIMCO. Experts participating included Dr Martin Murphy, Kings College, London, and Pottengal Mukundan, Director, International Maritime Bureau, amongst others.

In the 11-clause communiqué, available on the conference website, www.counterpiracy.ae, delegates agreed that “maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea continue to represent a grave threat to Somalia and other states in the region, as well as to worldwide international navigation, the safety of global commercial maritime routes, and the safety of seafarers and other persons. The escalation of pirate attacks in 2011 has hurt global trade and commerce, and has a damaging impact on peace, security and stability throughout the world.”

Parallel to the main conference, the UAE and the United Nations fundraising event in support of the Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia was also highly successful. More than US\$5.1 million was raised on the day, with more pledges expected in coming weeks. Amongst those, the UAE government pledged a donation of one million dollars to the Trust Fund, while UAE-based companies donated US\$400,000. It is the first time that industry has contributed to the fund – a fact noted in the Final Declaration which recognises it as a transformative moment in ensuring a fully resourced, comprehensive public-private counter-piracy approach.

The Trust Fund was established in January 2010 by the UN Secretary-General at the request of the international Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.

The Final Declaration also expresses serious concern at the inhumane conditions facing captive seafarers and calls for humanitarian initiatives to relieve the suffering of the victims of piracy attacks, including their families.

Meanwhile, industry leaders present issued a statement welcoming the efforts of the UAE, the UN and all the governments represented at the conference and said they fully supported the efforts of the UN and relevant government and non-government organisations to tackle the root causes of piracy through long term on-shore projects.

The statement added, “The issue of the dangers daily facing seafarers and shipowners and operators traversing waters in which pirates are active remains and is equally pressing and needs to be urgently addressed. “

Industry proposed several measures to combat the increasing attacks on commercial and non-commercial vessels. These included increased military presence in the waters off the shores of Somalia, in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, the shadowing of motherships controlled by pirates to monitor activities and engage if there are moves to attack shipping, the co-ordination by the current military control centre between navy vessels to closely monitor pirate controlled vessels and inform industry in real time of potential pirate controlled vessels in the area their ships are travelling.

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