

UAE COUNTER-PIRACY CONFERENCE
"Securing State Recovery: Sustaining Momentum at Sea, Confronting Instability on Land"

*Oct 29 1pm
Marriott Marquis*

**Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem
Opening Remarks**

10 minutes

- Your Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Your Excellency Dr. Abdirahman Duale Beyle Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Somalia
- Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, industry friends and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome you again to the UAE and Dubai for the fourth annual UAE Counter Piracy conference.
- This year, the conference is part of the UAE Counter Piracy Week, with the important Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, or CGPCS, holding their two days of sessions and workshops here in Dubai earlier this week.
- As you will be aware, the CGPCS was established in 2009 following a UN Security Council Resolution, and its membership includes more than 80 countries, international organisations and shipping industry associations.
- We are delighted to welcome their members to this conference and look forward to their valuable contribution to the discussions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

- This year, we face a dual challenge – firstly, how we build on the gains we have achieved in battling piracy in the Gulf of Aden and bake in those gains by supporting Somalia's development as a stable and robust economy, thereby creating opportunities and a future for its young people other than piracy or other criminal or terrorist activity
- And, secondly, how we can translate the lessons we have learned in fighting piracy at sea and on land in the Horn of Africa to the even more geopolitically complicated region of West Africa, where attacks are more violent, where they take place mainly in territorial not international waters, and where the pirates can originate from as many as half a dozen countries – all of which are viable states with rule of law, and in some cases naval or coastguard capacity, unlike the circumstances that gave birth to piracy in Somalia.
- This is a significant challenge to analyse, understand and address.

- But let me begin this afternoon by acknowledging and applauding the Government and people of Somalia on their hard work and determination to rebuild Somalia.
- We have seen that determination first hand. As part of our efforts to help address the root causes of piracy on land, we at DP World this year initiated a series of expert panels to identify the opportunities for investment in Somalia, what the barriers are to investment and how they might be overcome. The vast majority of the 40 to 50 people who volunteered their time to join the discussions were Somalis, of all ages and from all walks of life, from politicians to business people to students, based in Somalia or part of the huge Somali diaspora. But all absolutely passionate about rebuilding their country.
- Their message was clear – Somalia has moved from emergency to recovery and they want to be part of that recovery. And while they look to the international community to invest in Somalia, they will not look to the international community to “fix” their country – they will do that themselves.
- They want to engage and empower their young people to participate in the economy through education and the creation of job opportunities; they support and encourage the moves to establish robust legal frameworks to underpin investment; and they agree that there needs to be a “one Somalia” approach to engage the entire community in rebuilding efforts.
- One of the panelists commented that Somalis were hungry in a rich land. And he’s right. Somalia was once a thriving agricultural and fishing based economy, and it can be that again – and more. Already it has a healthy telecom sector and with effective partnerships and investment in physical infrastructure – energy, roads, airports, ports – it can build an economy that offers Somali youth real options and opportunities. And thereby counter piracy.
- Somalia has an exciting future ahead and we in the international community need to support and be part of it.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

- Unfortunately, while piracy is (we hope) a fast disappearing problem in the Gulf of Aden, the opposite is true in West Africa’s Gulf of Guinea.
- I mentioned earlier how different the piracy incidents are in that region compared with the Horn of Africa.
- Solutions at sea and on land are complex and difficult to implement.
- Our friends at Oceans Beyond Piracy estimate that the total economic cost of maritime piracy in West Africa was as much as \$680 million in 2013. That compares with more than \$3 billion in East Africa, itself around a 50% decline on 2012.
- But while the economic cost may be smaller in West Africa, the human cost is just as appalling.

- More than 1800 seafarers were attacked in West African waters last year and two were killed. Since 2002, an estimated 45 seafarers have been killed during robberies at sea in the Gulf of Guinea.
- This is an urgent economic and humanitarian issue that will require the involvement and action of those of us in the shipping industry as well as those in the government sector.
- The international community has established unique partnerships and co-operation across the public and private sectors to address piracy in the Gulf of Aden, both at sea and on land – largely successfully.
- We must build on those relationships and, while not losing focus on Somalia and the Horn of Africa, turn our attention now to the Gulf of Guinea and see how – or indeed if – the lessons we have learned in East Africa can be applied to West Africa.
- This will be an important part of the discussions of this conference and I know that every effort will be made to come up with practical steps to address this rising problem.
- We have learned in our battle against piracy that there is no one solution; it requires a multifaceted approach that takes into account the political and socio-economic circumstances that nurture and encourage piracy as well as addressing the attacks at sea directly.
- We believe that public-private partnership – at sea and on land – is the only sustainable solution to addressing piracy in the short, medium and long term, wherever it may occur.
- Meanwhile, piracy's largely unheard victims remain the thousands of seafarers attacked by often extremely violent criminals while they go peaceably about their work on the vessels that support world trade, and on which we all depend.
- Despite the fall in piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and the recovery underway in Somalia, let us not forget that an estimated 37 seafarers are still being held captive – they have been held now for nearly three years.
- Their suffering and that of their families is unimaginable. Our thoughts and prayers are with them always.
- Thank you