

## **COUNTER-PIRACY CONFERENCE**

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**OPENING ADDRESS**

Madinat Jumeirah

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Your Highness Sheikh Maktoum Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai

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

Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers ...

Friends and Colleagues from the Industry ...

Ladies and Gentlemen ...

- Thank you for joining us here today. We are honoured and encouraged by your participation in this important debate.
- I would like to take the opportunity to thank His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, for his on-going personal commitment and guidance in facilitating and encouraging debate on this issue.
- Piracy is a matter of grave international concern, but, importantly, it is happening in our region and is therefore a matter of significant concern for everyone in this region.
- It is shocking that, even as we are gathered here, pirates are holding more than 200 seafarers captive, in often appalling conditions.
- The trauma, fear and unspeakable suffering these innocent people and their families are going through is difficult to imagine. You will have the opportunity to hear something of the impact on those lives in the documentary to be screened shortly.
- This unacceptable and on-going human tragedy, as well as the impact on economies and the flow on impact of that on communities, is what constantly drives the UAE Government and DP World to bring global focus to the problem.
- For the fifth year running the busiest sea-borne trade route in the world, the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean region, continues to be held to ransom by a relatively small but aggressive group of pirates.
- The Public-Private Partnership that the 1<sup>st</sup> UAE Counter Piracy Conference advocated has gained traction, but our goal of comprehensive, sustainable solutions to maritime piracy remains to be achieved.

- The good news is, for the first time in five years attacks on merchant shipping in the waters off Somalia are down.
- Compared with 176 incidents in 2011, there have been around 30 in the six months of this year, and the pirates' success rate has been halved from 28% in 2009 to 14% last year.
- However the violence is escalating: the number of seafarers dying as a result of piracy has tripled from 8 to 24 during the same two year period. So far, since 2007, 62 seafarers have died as a direct result of piracy in this part of the world.
- Ladies and Gentlemen ...
- Many of the measures proposed by the industry at this Conference a year ago such as increased military presence, monitoring of suspected pirate motherships and information sharing have been implemented.
- Today we are gathered here in the hope that by carrying forward this important dialogue, we will be able to take the Public Private Partnership we began last year to a higher level of collaboration.
- For its part, over the past four years the UAE has rolled out more than US\$ 25 million of humanitarian and financial assistance in Somalia, with a focus on healthcare
- We at DP World have made good headway with our ROADS project in partnership with local governments, USAID and FHI, to build a network of clinics/vocational training centres and rest stops along major arteries linking ports with inland population centres in East Africa.
- We are in the final stretch towards construction of the first of these facilities.
- The fact is that attacks by pirates not just endanger the lives of hundreds of seafarers and disrupt vital economic activities, they also undermine efforts to restore prosperity and stability to Somalia.
- That is why the UAE Government and DP World strongly advocate a comprehensive, inclusive approach that can deliver a long term, sustainable solution to the problem.
- Piracy's destabilizing impact can only be mitigated through collaboration across political, military, financial and legal arenas.
- The need of the hour is to explore new ways to secure the freedom of those held captive, curb the reach of the pirates, provide comprehensive support to Somalia, and crystalise the unified stance created by our Public-Private Partnership.
- Ladies and Gentlemen ...
- The economic consequences for trade cannot be over-stated, especially in view of the prevailing global uncertainties.

- One recent study suggests that Somali piracy cost the international community up to US\$ 6.9 billion in 2011 – that is a billion dollars more than Somalia's GDP.
- The macroeconomic impact on countries of the region and beyond will have long term negative consequences if this menace is left unchecked.
- As the region's largest marine terminal operator, and the third largest in the world, DP World is deeply concerned about the impact of piracy on sea-borne trade, the disruption to trade patterns and the humanitarian cost to seafarers and their families .
- It is incumbent upon us as participants in this summit to build on the work and achievements of the London Conference on Somalia, and its subsequent re-convening in Istanbul earlier this month, and the Contact Group on Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia in galvanizing international attention on the issue.
- Friends ...
- Maritime piracy is as old as maritime trade itself, and yet we have not been able to eradicate it. Indeed, with the ransom taking that has come to dominate modern piracy over the past five years, piracy has a new and even more sinister face.
- This conference has brought together the best brains in the public and private sectors to explore new opportunities and strategies to deal with this criminal activity.
- We hope the informed discussions and sharing of ideas over the next two days will throw up innovative ways of combating maritime piracy in the short, medium and long term.
- We are in a strong position to collectively inject a new momentum in our common search for an effective, enduring solution to piracy.
- As we begin, our thoughts and prayers are with those seafarers who are struggling to find hope in the darkness of captivity, and meaning in their chosen profession as merchant sailors and economy builders.
- Let us sincerely hope all of them are soon freed and reunited with their families and loved ones.
- Thank you.