

INDUSTRY STATEMENT

28 June 2012

The maritime industry represented at the second International Counter-Piracy Conference welcomes the continued commitment by the UAE to seeking short, medium and long term solutions to the persistent problem of maritime piracy through partnerships between governments and industry.

The industry is pleased to note the progress made in the areas it raised following the inaugural conference in 2011, particularly

1. An increased military presence in the waters off the shores of Somalia, in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.
2. The improved sharing of information between military and merchant vessels

However, the industry notes with deep concern that while the incidence of successful maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia and in nearby waters has dropped since the inaugural conference in 2011, the violence inflicted on seafarers has escalated considerably.

In addition, the inhumane conditions in which hostages are held, often for increasingly long periods of time, continues to be of serious concern.

Industry calls on the international community and Somali Federal and Regional authorities to work together to relieve the suffering of captive seafarers, and to take action to stop the violence against these innocent people.

Industry notes that to date there have been no successful attacks on merchant vessels employing sea marshalls or armed security guards, which has been many in the industry's pragmatic, but reluctant, response to piracy. However there is a lack of clarity about where the responsibilities of governments lie compared with those of commercial organisations in protecting crew and assets, and in engagement with pirates. There is also no standard or code of conduct for private security firms and their employees operating on vessels.

The industry therefore calls on the international community, with governments and industry working together, to regulate the maritime security industry, including the development of clear and consistent standards for private security guards on vessels, making clear the boundaries between public and private sector responsibility, and setting standards for maritime security companies and guards. Industry is pleased to note that a step towards this was made recently with the development and issuance of IMO guidance on armed guards.

Finally, the industry expresses concern about the economic cost to both governments and industry of dealing with the immediate impacts of piracy, eg increasing military presence and hiring of private security guards, and highlights the importance of pursuing long term solutions to piracy. The industry therefore calls for greater co-operation between government, non-government and private sector organisations to identify and implement suitable long term, on-shore projects, particularly those associated with community and economic development in Somalia to address the root causes of piracy.

The industry represented here will work actively with relevant government organisations and industry colleagues in support of these goals. Without a long term solution, the violence will inevitably continue.