

UAE COUNTER PIRACY CONFERENCE

WELCOME SPEECH BY H.H. SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

UAE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DUBAI, 11 SEPTEMBER 2013

Your Highness(es),

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to Dubai and the UAE for our third counter piracy conference. I would like to take this opportunity to convey to you the heartfelt wishes of the UAE's leadership, and I have a special honor to convey my greetings to the Somali leaders present here today. It is a pleasure to welcome you again to the UAE.

Together with our conference partners, ports operators DP World and Abu Dhabi Ports Company, the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has again convened this high-level, public-private initiative. Building on the success of our two previous conferences, today and tomorrow we will discuss how best to strengthen the response of the international community to counter the challenges of maritime piracy.

While the international community has made great strides in combating piracy off the coast of Somalia, the UAE believes that maritime piracy, notably in the Gulf of

Aden and the western Indian Ocean, remains of serious global concern. We are convinced that successfully countering piracy can only be achieved if the international community enhances its efforts to build capacity in the region, in Somalia, and beyond. With that in mind, we have chosen ***“Countering Maritime Piracy: Continued Efforts for Regional Capacity Building”*** as the theme for this year’s conference.

This third conference also comes at a crucial time for Somalia. The UAE shares the Somali government’s vision of a Somalia that is 1) able to ensure peace, security and prosperity for all its citizens; 2) able to ensure the rule of law on land and at sea, through the effective governance of territorial waters and maintenance of maritime safety and security; and 3) that is fully reconnected to the region’s maritime trade.

The UAE is committed to providing Somalia with continued support to help it realize this vision. Therefore, in May of this year, at the Second London Conference on Somalia the UAE pledged fifty million dollars towards Somalia’s development. This assistance involves three pillars of support: security assistance, political cooperation, and humanitarian and development assistance. To facilitate the implementation of our support, I am pleased to announce that the UAE will be opening an embassy in Mogadishu.

The UAE also strongly supports the agreement that was reached in Addis Ababa two weeks ago to establish an Interim Jubba Administration. Under the wise leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, constructive cooperation like

this will lead to a more harmonious society in Somalia. The UAE is ready to assist the people of Somalia in their quest to bring peace and harmony to their country.

The UAE also stands ready to help Somalia in its economic and social development. Last year, our country's development and humanitarian aid to Somalia totaled almost twenty-two million dollars. A significant portion of that amount goes to providing food aid and basic drinking water supply, so we can contribute to alleviating the enormous suffering of the Somali people. We are also keen to explore opportunities for bilateral collaboration on economic projects, including in the field of renewable energy as a way to stimulate Somalia's sustainable energy development. We hope that the UAE's assistance will help the Somalis build a better future.

Improving the stability and wellbeing of Somalia is also vital to our counter piracy efforts, as we believe that Somalia's progress towards stability is one of the main ways to ensure that the scourge of piracy is eradicated from that part of the world. Improving the capacity of Somalia to fight piracy in its territorial waters will help to enhance regional ownership and also contribute to facing down other challenges, such as illegal fishing, human trafficking, and drug smuggling, all of which lead to the weakening of Somalia's economy and society.

We hope our conference will help in further aligning international efforts for regional capacity building, with the ultimate aim of eradicating maritime piracy. Today in Dubai, the international community sends a clear message that it will not tolerate maritime piracy and will continue to provide strong support to its partners as they build the capacity to control their shores and patrol their waters.

I look forward to continue working with you on this important initiative and I wish you a productive conference.

Thank you.