

**H.E. Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem**  
**Chairman, DP World**

OPENING SPEECH: 3<sup>RD</sup> COUNTER-PIRACY CONFERENCE

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10 min

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

Your Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of 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 third consecutive year we are assembled here in our beautiful city to work together for the common cause of countering maritime piracy.
- Piracy impacts thousands of people across our wider region and beyond, both directly by robbing seafarers of their freedom, decimating their lives and those of their families, and indirectly by destabilizing international trade and thereby economies.
- This UAE-led conference, bringing together the maritime industry and senior government officials to work together to seek short, medium and long term sustainable solutions to the violence that is maritime piracy, is unique amongst the international initiatives to work on ways to make the world's busiest sea trade lane safe and secure for all.
- At the time of the inaugural UAE Counter-Piracy Conference in April 2011, piracy was at its ugliest in the waters off Somalia's coast, with 19 ship hijackings in the first two months of that year alone, 80 attacks, and 800 mariners in captivity. The financial cost to global trade was estimated at that time at \$12 billion.
- The conference opened the way for dialogue and co-ordination between the merchant and navy fleets to find solutions at sea, while bringing attention to the potential for public private partnerships to solutions on shore.
- In addition, in the intervening years, political changes and state building in Somalia have provided much-needed action to push back and isolate the pirates.
- The results are evident today:
- 2012 saw an 80% drop in attacks on ships off East Africa's coast, resulting in fewer hostages while the overall economic cost of Somali piracy fell to close to \$6 billion.
- The downward trend has continued this year, with the International Maritime Bureau reporting just ten Somali-based attacks, including two hijackings.
- However, the direct cost of combatting piracy on the high seas is still high.
- Of the estimated \$6 billion cost in 2012, the largest element was increased use of armed guards on merchant vessels - up nearly 80% to between \$1.15 billion and \$1.53 billion
- And despite the gains made in recent years, the fight against piracy is far from over.

- While attacks may have fallen, the IMB reports that 57 seafarers continue to be held captive by Somali pirates, and the average period for those still held now exceeds 2 years. The consequences for these men and their families are devastating.
- In a foreboding development, pirate attacks on commercial vessels have increased substantially in the waters off West Africa with reports of seafarers being subjected to torture and other atrocities.
- The battle against piracy must continue until there are no seafarers held or hurt and no attacks on vessels made.
- Ladies and Gentlemen ...
- Piracy has not gone away and it will only be a matter of time before the pirates in Somalia are back in business if we fail to address the root causes of the problem.
- Building capacity in the region in a sustainable manner must go beyond armed guards on ships and naval patrols on the high seas.
- The UAE has reached out to support on the ground initiatives in Somalia directly, most recently in May with \$50 million pledged in support for Somalia announced at the Somalia Conference in London by HE Sheikha Lubna al Qasimi, Minister of Development and International Co-operation.
- International support by both governments and the private sector is essential as Somalia beds in the foundations of statehood – strong governance, formal and effective institutions, a clear legal framework, and robust security.
- These foundations are a prerequisite for foreign investment by the private sector, and we are already seeing that companies are confident enough in Somalia's future to begin to invest there.
- Some begin as corporate responsibility projects which lay the groundwork for later long term, sustainable investment. And it is the partnership model that is leading the way – not just between the public-private sectors, but across sectors as well.
- An excellent example is the consortium for job creation in Somalia involving Shell and BP, who are working in partnership with shipping companies Maersk, Stena, NYK, MOL and K Line.
- The United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, is their on-ground partner currently studying local needs.
- It is a great public-private initiative targeting self-sufficiency in Somali communities and encouraging growth inside-out. We will learn more about this initiative during the conference.
- What Somalia needs to root out piracy is more such engagement from the industry, governments and NGOs, and investments to create physical and social infrastructure.
- The UAE took an early lead in supporting Somalia to overcome some of the long standing barriers to statehood, including support to establish an effective coastguard,

essential to protect and nurture the fishing industry and related maritime trade, and deter piracy.

- As the attention of the international community continues to focus on Somalia we hope to see other countries and cross-government organisations follow the UAE's lead and directly support Somalia to grow its economy.
- Sustainability comes with solid infrastructure and economic conditions that offer opportunities for growth.
- Developing port capacity in Somalia should be a priority. Our industry has much to offer in its experience in developing and operating supply chains, and already interest is being shown in getting involved
- Our experience shows that modern, efficient supply chain infrastructure stimulates trade and the economy and quickly creates new livelihood options and choices for individuals and communities, which helps address the root causes of piracy and other criminal activities.
- Friends ...
- Maritime piracy is a many-headed monster that can be eliminated only through sustainable, multi-faceted solutions that take on the challenges both on the seas and on shore.
- As a global marine terminal operator DP World sees first-hand the impact maritime piracy has on shipping lines, shippers, seafarers and trade itself.
- Uppermost in our thoughts is the liberty of those dozens of our seafaring colleagues still held hostage in inhuman conditions.
- We must redouble our efforts to keep countering piracy on the radar of governments, the private sector and the media so that the daily threat of maritime piracy is removed and long term sustainable solutions can be implemented both now and for future generations.
- Thank you.