

Global shipping safety and security under spotlight in Durban

Clamping down on piracy and other forms of criminal activity in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden will be the focus of a gathering in Durban this week led by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).



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A three-day workshop, led by IMO, will discuss the establishment of National Maritime Information Sharing Centres in each of the states that have signed up to the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC), a regional counter-piracy programme whose main objective is repressing piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf of Aden and West Indian Ocean.

Discussions will also centre around creating synergy with the newly-established Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Maritime Operational Coordination Centre (RMOCC) in Seychelles.

“The workshop will also discuss the development of common Standard Operating Procedures and incident reporting formats to promote interoperability and a regional strategy for information sharing to achieve Maritime Domain Awareness,” says the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) which is hosting of the workshop along with the Department of Transport (DoT).

The workshop is expected to be attended by about 60 delegates from the Gulf of Aden and West Indian Ocean region some of whom are member States, including South Africa.

SAMSA's chief operations officer, Sobantu Tilayi says it is an “honour and privilege” to host such an important workshop.

Tackling criminality in the maritime sector

The DCoC – and its revised version, known as the ‘Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct 2017’ – is aimed at tackling all acts of criminality in the maritime environment, including illicit maritime activities such as human trafficking and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

According to the IMO in a statement on its website, the Jeddah Amendment “recognizes the important role of the ‘blue economy’ including shipping, seafaring, fisheries and tourism in supporting sustainable economic growth, food security, employment, prosperity and stability.

But the Agreement expresses “deep concern about crimes of piracy, armed robbery against ships and other illicit maritime activity, including fisheries crime, in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. Such acts present grave dangers to the safety and security of persons and ships at sea and to the protection of the marine environment”.

Of 17 eligible countries to sign the DCoC and its revised version, the Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen, Kenya and Somalia are now signatories.

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