

CONTACT GROUP

ON PIRACY OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA

The Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was created on January 14, 2009 pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1851. This voluntary ad hoc international forum brings together those stakeholders affected by Somali piracy: countries from the region, Western Europe, Middle East, Asia and the Americas, industry, seafarer's organisations and NGOs. The Contact Group coordinates political, military, and non-governmental efforts to tackle piracy off the coast of Somalia, ensure that pirates are brought to justice, and support regional states to develop sustainable maritime security capabilities.

Message From The Chairman

Dear Friends and Colleagues of the CGPCS,

It will be my great pleasure to shortly welcome you to the 20th Plenary of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, CGPCS, which is not only being held in the charming nation of Mauritius, but as well co-hosted by our friends at the Indian Ocean Commission.

Noting important developments since our last meeting, this at the 19th Plenary which was proudly held in Seychelles, and hosted by the Government of Seychelles, this coming plenary will provide us an important opportunity to address a few outstanding issues which will correctly propel the CGPCS so that it can truly leave a lasting legacy for the region.

Our community has worked together with diligence, commitment, fraternity, passion, all the right elements which has delivered success.

Challenges remain but it is certain that we are ever more engaged to stand with our friends and the people of Somalia as they work towards, peace, progress and stability.

Once again I look forward to meeting with you in Mauritius.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Barry Faure
Secretary of State
Department of Foreign Affairs, Seychelles
Chairman CGPCS 2017



Interview with Mr. Raymond St. Ange with The People Newspaper



Let us not forget the very important conference hosted by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, London/ Somalia Conference 2017. This meeting brought regional leaders from East Africa and the newly elected president of the Federal Republic of Somalia together, and came at an important moment for the international community and for Somalia. With famine now striking at Somalia bringing further grief and pain to the good people of Somalia, a coordinated response to assist Somalia was needed.

At each venue and at every opportunity the Chairman reminded those present that Seychelles is organising the 20th Plenary of the CGPCS which is being held in Mauritius as from the 5th of July 2017 until the 7th of July, to be co hosted by the Indian Ocean Commission

From the Chairman's briefing to us at the Secretariat we understood that Seychelles's chairmanship of the CGPCS and its leadership within the region has been greatly appreciated.

The People: - The meetings on piracy held in London recently, attended by Mr Barry Faure- the Secretary of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and current Chairman of the CGPCS, have been described as successful. Mr St Ange, kindly brief this newspaper about these meetings?

Answer – Firstly the meetings in the United Kingdom provided an opportunity for Ambassador Faure in his capacity as Chairman of the CGPCS, to meet for himself, key organizations, leaders in foreign government agencies, other stakeholders, who are members of the contact group. Considering that it was just a few short months ago, in December 2016, that the chairmanship changed hands from Minister Morgan to Ambassador Faure, however with Seychelles still in the 'driver's' seat with an extended mandate,, and with all the work that continues to date, this opportunity to attend was most opportune and timely.



As to the meetings – of course Chairman Faure delivered a keynote speech before those assembled at the Oceans Beyond Piracy meeting, reviewing the state of maritime security for the year 2016. The OBP is a strong supported and major contributor in terms of advocacy and leadership within the CGPCS.

The People:- In your press release you mentioned about EUNAVFOR, is Seychelles expecting more collaboration from them- we have heard recently that Somali pirates are active again following the departure of NATO?

As well Ambassador Faure accepted an invitation by the Foreign Commonwealth Office to visit the UK's National Maritime Information and Coordination Centre, the EUNAVFOR's headquarters at Northwood, and a roundtable meeting held at the Chatham House in London, where matters of maritime security, and piracy were robustly discussed.

Answer – EUNAVFOR's mission within the Indian Ocean and with the Seychelles remains as per its operational plans, and its engagements to date continue unabated. We anticipate further discussions within the 20th Plenary with representatives of the EUNAVFOR as to what happens after December 2018 considering recent acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

The People:- The fact that Seychelles has been chairman of the CGPCS for two years probably shows that we are doing a fine job. Other than the fact that we are outspoken about piracy in the region. What are our success stories under this chairmanship? Are we hoping to continue with the chairmanship of CGPCS?

Answer – In answering as to our ability to continue on as chair of the group the answer in short is that it is time to hand over despite some within the community suggesting that Seychelles stay on. The work of the chair and of the secretariat requires commitment and ability to deliver. Seychelles for its two years at the helm has demonstrated clearly that it could deliver and it has.

As to success stories the major milestone arrived late last year in October 2016, when the last remaining hostages being held by Somali pirates were finally released. This was a goal of the group which was achieved. Other successes have been arrived at by merely being able to keep the group focused, following the 19th Plenary which was held successfully in Seychelles last year, coordinating meetings, liaising with working groups, and probably most important keeping in touch, taking into account other members points of view. While in UK the chair was told that Seychelles had excelled in its communication to members by simply making sure that the group's quarterly Newsletter was completed and delivered on time.

Locally the Secretariat has engaged with the University of Seychelles to support their 'Sir James Mancham Peace and Diplomacy Centre' initiative which we find as being very complimentary to over-all efforts in the region as far as peace and prosperity is concerned as we work to put an end to piracy.. To that end we have been able to put into contact a major university and well known private enterprise with the UNISEY.

The People:-What new measures is the CGPCS proposing in order to mitigate further acts of piracy?

Answer - The chairman will be convening a meeting of Working Group 3 – which following the 19th Plenary went dormant because its goals had been achieved at that time. Following recent acts of piracy, the need for this Working Group which focuses on maritime coordination, to activate itself is required. Currently the UAE sits as chair of this Working Group. Other measures have been decided upon but will need to be discussed first with members of the contact group as per planned agenda at the 20th Plenary in Mauritius.

The People:- Is there a renewed need for our mariners to be protected locally?.

Answer – Safety at sea for mariners is always a must. As regards mariners from Seychelles again the short answer is a firm yes IF they are intending to traverse waters which are well within the designated High Risk Area, or HRA. If so then mariners must abide to what is called Best Management Practices (4) or BMP4, which has been put into place by the industry. The closer one sails to Somalia the more there is a need to ensure adherence to BMP4. Mariners locally would be well advised to seek information with the Seychelles Maritime Safety Administration, the SMSA as to current security requirements which are in place.

Let me now as well take this opportunity to extend a thank you to the British High Commissioner to Seychelles, Her Excellency Mrs. Caron Röslher. Her office coordinated and supported both invitations and travel to the UK for the Chairman. The UK's role in the CGPCS remains without a doubt key and very important. So our thanks once again to the British High Commission.



In Kenya, UNODC GMCP assistance to the Maritime Police Unit continues. With an area of responsibility stretching 136Km of coastline, the MPU cannot rely only on sea patrols. UNODC has therefore procured radio equipment for the unit including three interlinked VHF repeaters which will provide coverage over the entire stretch from Lamu to Kiunga on the Kenya-Somalia border. Installations will commence around mid-June as will training.

In Sri Lanka, the Southern Route Partnership (SRP) convened a meeting of Heads of Drug Enforcement Agencies of the Indian Ocean region on 1 and 2 June to coordinate counter narcotics operations in the post-monsoon period when dhow traffic spikes in the Indian Ocean. The drug enforcement agencies in the Indian Ocean region will work closely with the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) to identify and disrupt drug trafficking activity at sea. GMCP provides the secretariat and coordination role for the Southern Route Partnership (SRP).

Also in Sri Lanka, GMCP conducted a needs assessment through discussions with the Chief Justice, Judicial Service Commission and Judge's Institute to identify potential areas in which the GMCP could usefully support Sri Lanka.

In Seychelles, implementation of the project to support improvements to judicial processes commenced with the visit of three judicial experts. They will advise and support the Seychelles judiciary in the implementation of new trial management procedures, the introduction of a central listing system, automated transcription recording, and automated summons issuing system, all of which will greatly improve the delivery of justice in Seychelles.

Also in Seychelles, EU NAVFOR in Partnership with UNODC GMCP conducted a Piracy Prosecution Pathway Exercise (system check exercise) to ensure the currency of the piracy prosecutions process developed in Seychelles. The exercise conducted several table-top exercises relating to elements of the piracy prosecution model and validated the capacity of Seychelles to conduct piracy trials in the future.

Finally, in The Hague, the Law Enforcement Task Force (LETF) of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was convened with the support of UNODC as the Secretariat. Law enforcement agencies from 7 countries and 2 international organisations attended the meeting. The LETF discussed collaborative action against several high value targets involved in organizing maritime piracy in Somalia. The task force will continue to meet regularly to coordinate its efforts against pirate leaders and financiers.



In Bosasso, Puntland, a large consignment of life vests was delivered to the Port Police to increase security during patrols. Radio equipment, purchased by EU CAP Somalia, was also delivered. The latter is part of a joint project to increase radio connectivity along the Somali coast and will be set up in the Radio Operations Room of the UNODC constructed Headquarters of the Bosasso Port Police adjacent to the harbour.

In Mogadishu, a new patrol boat was delivered to the Mogadishu Maritime Police Unit. Coxswains Officers will conduct sea trials on the boat next week.

MARITIME CRIME PROGRAMME - DETENTION AND TRANSFER

Last week in Puntland, UNODC GMCP's four Swedish Prison Mentors, seconded by the SPPS, met in Garowe to coordinate and plan training of prison staff in Hargeisa and Garowe. The event also included a football match at Garowe prison - UNODC vs. Garowe prison.



In Somaliland, UNODC delivered Dynamic Security training to prison staff at Hargeisa Prison. 15 staff, who all hold different positions and responsibilities within the prison, participated in the training along with members of the security team. The aim of the training was to improve security and safety at the prison.



MARITIME CRIME PROGRAMME - ATLANTIC

From the 29 May - 1 June in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 12 prosecutors and judges from Cameroon, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Ivory Coast, and Ghana met to discuss differences between national extradition and mutual legal assistance procedures on maritime crime cases. The procedures were analyzed with an aim to finalize a model of agreement for the hand-over of pirates in the Gulf of Guinea which has been drafted by the GMCP. At the end of the meeting, a mock trial tested the agreement, extradition procedures, and the Cameroonian national legislation on a piracy case. After cross-examination of witnesses, the arguments of the defence prevailed.



IN COMMEMORATION OF GILES NOAKES



It is with great shock and sadness that the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) Secretariat in Seychelles has learned of the sudden passing away of Giles Noakes.

The Secretariat worked closely with Giles for the Strategic Meeting and 19th Plenary Session held in Mumbai and Seychelles respectively last year.

A very hard working gentleman who headed the Maritime Security at Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) and a defender of the seafarers, Giles was always ready and prepared to move forward in the shipping industry.

Present at the Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) meetings held two weeks ago in the UK, I had the opportunity to meet with him and was looking forward to his participation at the 20th Plenary Session to be held in Mauritius in July. I was impressed by his sharp intellect, breadth of experience and deep knowledge on maritime security issues and the fight against piracy.

We at the Secretariat will miss him and extend our sincere condolences to his family.

May his soul rest in peace.

Ambassador Barry Faure
Secretary of State in the Department of Foreign Affairs
Chairman 2017 CGPCS

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