



ICC YAOUNDÉ AND NIGERIA ANNOUNCE NEW FRAMEWORK TO TACKLE MARITIME INSECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA - GOG-MCF/SHADE GOG

The number of attacks/kidnapping in the Gulf of Guinea region against merchant vessels is alarming and needs urgent attention. Building on announcements made at the G7++FOGG in December 2020 and as complementary to its activities, the Executive Director of the Inter Regional Coordination Centre (ICC) Yaoundé, **Admiral Narciso Fastudo, Jr** and the Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), **Dr Bashir Jamoh**, representing Nigeria, have held meetings to explore how to adopt a truly integrated approach to the operational challenge of tackling the problem of piracy and armed robbery.

It is recognised that the synergy of the Yaoundé structure and extensive effort by Nigerian officials to reduce the number of attacks through the delivery of its **Deep Blue** Project is a forceful combination. Both parties are also cognisant of the effort made by international partners and wish to establish meaningful engagement that leads towards more cooperative action at sea.

It is proven practice that maritime stakeholders working together in delivering collaborative action works. Some stakeholders hold real-time information on the situation at sea while others have operational capability and means. It is therefore ***with urgency*** that stakeholders with an interest in the GOG maritime security jointly agree and implement appropriate solutions to reduce the harm to seafarers. It is also recognised that countries beyond the immediate region are looking for ways and means to contribute to this effort and a sustainable mechanism to do this is needed.

In the spirit of mutual cooperation and building on international best practice, the **ICC Yaoundé and Nigeria** intend to form a **framework** to provide shared awareness and deconfliction of activities in the Gulf of Guinea – ***GULF OF GUINEA MARITIME COLLABORATION FORUM (GOG-MCF/SHADE)***. This initiative will be open to all GOG countries with similar capacities to join on a voluntary basis.

GOG-MCF/SHADE will focus on counter-piracy and armed robbery by bringing together regional, international, industry and NGO partners to advance and coordinate near term maritime activities with a view to working toward a set of common operational objectives in order to protect seafarers and ships operating off the coast of West and Central Africa.

In this regard, the Executive Director of the ICC Yaoundé and DG NIMASA (Nigeria) wish to announce:

- a) Their intention to hold the first GOG-MCF/SHADE online-meeting as soon as practicable.
- b) Given its separate but complementary nature, the G7++FOGG will support the creation of the GOG-MCF/SHADE which will comprise the following:
 - An Open Plenary Session
 - Working Group Meetings
 - Working Group Chairs, Coordination Meeting
 - A Plenary Session Report
- c) Registration details and the agenda will be published shortly.

Both the ICC Yaoundé and Nigeria wish to express their sincere thanks to all maritime stakeholders for their support and would encourage all to become involved in this ground breaking effort to reduce regional maritime insecurity.