



## **2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event**

### ***Effective Maritime Security for Ocean Governance: Resilient Oceans and Maritime Security: Innovation and Partnerships***

1 July 2022, 10:00-11:15, Side Event Room 2

Organized by the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

#### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

Maritime security challenges are interconnected with the resilience of oceans and States' blue economies. Sustainable use and protection of ocean and coastal spaces can only come through holistic ocean governance. In this context, international cooperation, and the use of innovation in preventing maritime environmental crimes and fighting transnational organised maritime crime contribute to (i) protecting these vital spaces and ensuring their peaceful use; (ii) improving the living standards of populations; and (iii) enhancing State and regional capacities to ensure free, safe, and just international trade and tourism, and the sustainable use of their marine resources. Bringing countries and different actors together to transfer knowledge, skills, tools and ideas, international cooperation has the power to build partnerships that help address common challenges and find effective and innovative solutions at the operational, legal, and political levels to secure maritime spaces.

#### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- ✓ The importance of international cooperation, innovative partnerships, and the use of technology in preventing and responding to maritime crimes.
- ✓ In a scenario with limited patrol and operational resources, the importance of technology, data, and AI in helping States identify and respond to crimes at sea—including crimes affecting the marine environment—was addressed. In particular, it addressed the extent to which AI represents a game-changer in this regard, acting as a “maritime law enforcement enabler.” Examples discussed include the experience of the Portuguese navy with unmanned systems, the use of Skylight tools in partnership with UNODC on detecting oil spills and dark *rendez-vous*, Skylight AI applications to maritime security including machine learning tools to recognize patterns and detect behaviors that may be illegal, computer vision techniques to combine with other data sources, detection of fishing events, or the use of technology for joint

management areas (Seychelles/Mauritius) and maritime operation centers (in the Seychelles, intelligence services could identify at least 25 potential illegal activities per month with the use of technology).

- ✓ The increased effectiveness and reduction of costs for maritime law enforcement agencies operation at sea with the use of technology, operational expenses of maritime operations being significantly reduced when guided by maritime intelligence.
- ✓ The link between maritime security and ocean resilience, particularly the facts that piracy and IUU fishing pose a major threat to ocean sustainability, and that coastal communities and/or small island communities are most affected due to their dependence on maritime activities, and the lack of institutional capacity and resources to address these challenges.
- ✓ Certain maritime activities, though not illegal, may be non-compliant with applicable domestic regulations (*e.g.*, on fisheries or marine protection) and have a negative impact in maritime security and ocean governance.
- ✓ The importance of implementing existing regional mechanisms regarding maritime security and ocean governance to respond to transnational organized crime threats at sea, such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, or the new Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities in the West Indian Ocean, and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) for the Western Indian Ocean.
- ✓ Countries' experience in the development of partnerships and the use of technology (Sao Tome e Principe and Seychelles) including concrete cases on the economic loss of IUU fishing and clear links between maritime security and ocean resilience.

#### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- ✓ With the effects of maritime security threats being felt globally, there is an urgent need for cross-regional international cooperation in which best practices are shared and capacities are built to support developing and less resourceful countries. For example, the Portuguese Navy works directly with West African countries by providing patrol resources to combat maritime crime, collective efforts are undertaken within international organizations such as the ECOWAS provide coordinated responses at sea, and UNODC works directly with countries to promote innovative partnerships to link maritime security and ocean resilience objectives.
- ✓ International cooperation should follow a 'win-win' approach whenever possible: coastal, insular and/or developing States both benefit from and contribute to international cooperation on maritime security, with regional and even global benefits. For example, the efforts of São Tomé and Príncipe in preventing and responding to maritime piracy contribute to avoiding a rise in maritime security insurance costs for the shipping industry in the Gulf of Guinea. Another example is that of Seychelles, which contributes to legal finish for counterpiracy operations in the Western Indian Ocean.
- ✓ International cooperation goes beyond improving the operational capacity of States. International initiatives to improve the capacity and effectiveness of domestic judicial systems, through the entire criminal justice chain and prevention measures, such as those of the UNODC, are fundamental to addressing maritime security challenges.
- ✓ The use of technology, including AI, is critical in the fight against maritime crime, especially for countries that need to patrol vast maritime areas. Therefore, it is important to invest in unmanned systems and capacity-building programs. Such an investment will allow States to save resources in the long run and respond more quickly and effectively to maritime crimes.

Technologies, including AI, can significantly reduce many different costs (time, human, logistic and economic costs) in maritime security operations.

- ✓ While State actors are at the forefront of ensuring maritime security, it is increasingly important to engage with coastal communities, civil society, and other stakeholders, including academia, in developing coherent and comprehensive approaches to maritime security challenges.

**Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)**

NA