

Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Workshop

Accra, Ghana, 8-12 April 2013

**Opening remarks by H E Ms Joanna Adamson
Australian High Commissioner to Ghana**

I would like to welcome all participants to this workshop on Maritime Security, funded by Australia's Department of Defence, to be presented by the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, ably led by Professor Martin Tsamenyi.

This workshop is a response to growing concerns about maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. It's timely for Australia to be hosting such an event, given that we have just commenced a two year term as member of the United Nations Security Council, given the links between maritime security and broader concepts of security, and the need for international cooperation if we are to get a grip on the problem.

On the subject of international cooperation, I'm pleased to see representatives from many different countries attending this morning. We hope the contacts you make during this week will serve you well in your future work. We also hope that the workshop will complement the work of many different actors working to strengthen maritime security in this part of the world.

I want to start with a quote from one of Ghana's most famous citizens, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. In the Foreword to **Human Security and the New Diplomacy**, Kofi Annan wrote

"During the cold war, security tended to be defined almost entirely in terms of military might and the balance of terror. Today, we know that 'security' means far more than the absence of conflict. We also have a greater appreciation for nonmilitary sources of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education and health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation, and the proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot be secure amidst starvation, that we cannot build peace without alleviating poverty, and that we cannot build freedom on foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people-centered concept of 'human security' are interrelated and mutually reinforcing."

Alleviating poverty and justice? Problems of environmental degradation? Proliferation of weapons? Maritime security is linked to all of these.

First, maritime security – including safe and secure sea lanes – is vital to the trade that underpins economic growth. The Chatham House Report on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea notes that maritime security is essential to maintaining the flow of revenues from oil and gas, which have the potential to contribute significantly to development in this region. At the same time, maritime resources such as fish, aquaculture and intact ecosystems directly contribute to the livelihoods of many people living here.

Maritime security is obviously critical for countries that have maritime industries, like Ghana and the countries all along the Gulf of Guinea. But it's also important for landlocked countries like Burkina Faso and Niger, which rely on coastal states for international trade.

There is also a critical nexus between security and development. We can't address maritime insecurity in the long term without tackling its root causes, including lack of economic opportunity, employment and effective policing.

When people think of maritime security, they normally think of piracy. And it is true: the hijacking of ships for ransom or to steal cargo is a serious problem in the Gulf of Guinea. But there is a social cost to piracy which people often overlook. Traditional fishers in affected areas can lose their occupations. And the victims that suffer most acutely are often the least visible: crew members held for ransom, their dependent families and the families of jailed pirates. And we know, too, that piracy is often strongly linked to other transnational crimes, like drug-trafficking, arms trafficking and people trafficking, as well as illegal, un-reported and unregulated fishing.

Like so many others, Australia is concerned about the emerging challenges of maritime security, including in South East Asia – our own region – but also off Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea. We hosted an international conference on counter-piracy in Perth, Australia, last July, and co-hosted another with Benin in New York last October. These conferences allowed us to draw together some lessons learned from maritime security efforts across these regions.

First is the importance of strong **national capacities**. Piracy is most effective when there are some gaps in national capacity, and effective international cooperation is based on the capacities of states to manage their own jurisdictions.

Secondly, **international cooperation is essential to handle a cross-national problem**. But international cooperation can only take place where operational procedures are well-established, and well understood. Exercises and training can help to establish these shared approaches and frameworks.

Thirdly, **strengthening information sharing is vital**. A common operating picture is an essential basis for an effective maritime security strategy. And sharing of information is important to assist prosecutions.

Fourthly, we need **strong legal and enforcement capabilities** to support effective prosecutions for crimes committed at sea. This is an important priority for the international community.

Fifthly, **promoting best practice security in the international shipping industry is a sound investment**. I am told that significant progress has been made in this area, but more needs to be done to make sure there is adequate compliance.

Finally, **effective action at sea begins on land**. Piracy and other crimes committed at sea are generally elements of organised crime. They need to be treated as such, and addressed at a variety of levels, not just at sea.

This workshop has been specially designed for the Gulf of Guinea, but I think you will recognise some of these general themes. There will be sessions on commercial shipping; the Law of the Sea and maritime zones; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; and threats to off-shore energy infrastructure. The workshop will also cover regional frameworks for maritime security and the importance of evidence gathering and prosecution in support of maritime security.

Our workshop facilitators are extremely well qualified. They come from the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS), which is based at the University of Wollongong on the beautiful south coast of New South Wales. ANCORS is Australia's only multidisciplinary, university-based centre to

focus on ocean law, maritime security and natural marine resource management. It also provides policy advice and other support services to government agencies in Australia and internationally, as well as to regional and international organisations and ocean-related industries.

ANCORS has an ongoing research and training focus on Africa. One of its current projects is looking into the linkages between fisheries management practices and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. The ANCORS doctoral and Masters degree programmes provide further research and education links with African scholars and practitioners

Martin Tsamenyi is Professor of Law and Director of ANCORS and, if I may say, is a perfect choice to lead this workshop. His first degree, an honours degree in Law, came from the University of Ghana, and he followed this up with a Masters in International Law and a Doctorate from the Australian National University in Canberra. Professor Tsamenyi has had several years of academic and practical experience in ocean law and policy. He is an expert in fisheries law; fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance; shipping law; marine environmental law and ocean policy. He has written extensively on these subjects and has undertaken consultancy and advisory work for several governments and international organisations, including the government of Ghana.

I'm also pleased to welcome Roger Coventry from the British High Commission in Accra, who will present the session on Piracy: Prosecution and Evidence Taking, and Professor Alexander von Ziegler from the University of Zurich, who will present an introduction to the Commercial Environment of International Shipping. I mentioned at the outset the need for international cooperation if we are to get a grip on the problem, so I am delighted that you both can join us, thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you well in your discussions this week, and look forward to seeing you again at the course dinner on Thursday night.

Thank you, and enjoy the workshop.