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EUCAP Nestor hosted debate about enhancing enhancing Maritime Capacities in Somalia

Somalia gathered at the Crowne Plaza in Upper Hill in Nairobi, Kenya, to debate about enhancing Maritime Capacities in Somalia.

The event was organized by EUCAP Nestor, a civilian EU Common Security and Defence Policy Mission which assists Horn of Africa and West Indian Ocean Countries develop self-sustaining capacity for continued enhancement of maritime security, including counter-piracy and maritime governance.

The discussion was opened by the Head of the EU Delegation to Somalia Michele Cervone d'Urso. "A comprehensive approach by the International Community in Somalia means bringing together instruments for a common agenda", said Cervone d'Urso, stressing the importance of improving a coordinated approach among the EU – main donor for Somalia – the UN, Governments and Ngos.

In his intervention, the Head of the EU Delegation to Somalia mentioned the Regional perspective of tackling maritime and piracy related issues.

On this note, the Head of the EUCAP Nestor Mission, Etienne de Poncins, spoke about mission activities and achievements in the Horn of Africa and announced a permanent deployment of the mission personnel to Hargeisa and Mogadishu by the end of this year. De Poncins introduced the International Community the new Head of Country Office Somalia, Pierre-Aime Riccio, from France.

Within EUCAP Nestor major mission achievements in the Regional perspective, Etienne De Poncins mentioned a six weeks training held in Djibouti for the Bosaso Port Police and Galmudug Coast Guard last spring. He also added that Seychelles officers previously trained by EU experts are now able to train Somali officers and are currently engaged in a Mogadishu Port Authority mentoring activity organized by EUCAP Nestor.

Part of the Nairobi International meeting was a round table with the participation of EUCAP Nestor and the EU Delegation to Somalia Heads of Mission, the EUNAVFOR Operation Commander, Oxfam, UNDOC and IOM, moderated by the Finnish Ambassador, Sophie From-Emmesberg.



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How the International Community can improve its comprehensive approach in Somalia in the fields of Justice and security, what happens when pirates make it ashore and how can maritime capacity building impact on Somalia's economic and social development were questions launched for a discussion with the participation of a variegated audience and media representatives.

"The EU is not the only actor working on Peace Building in the Region" said the Finnish Ambassador, stressing the importance of having around the same table several stakeholders engaging in Somalia, as well as the need of increasing coordination for the sake of efficiency in actions.

The new Somali government was mentioned during the debate as a game changer in terms of capacity building capability for the International Community. A strategic framework put in place following the Somali Presidential Elections of 2012 has increased maneuver space in Somalia, as security and Rule of Law became subjects of local and international working groups, finally working on the ground and not remotely.

Somalia Exclusive Economic Zone – EEZ – Fishery and involvement of civil society organization in Maritime security activities were also discussed.

"The declaration of illegal fishing as a crime is a first step" said Julie Carrasco from UNODC interacting with the Oxfam delegate who asked how quickly can police enforcement at sea be achieved.

The issue of document forgery and broad consequences for the organizations working in Somalia was put on the table by the IOM delegate, Hiroko Nishino.

The decrease of piracy as a result of the successful operation at sea of missions such as EUNAVFOR and the paradoxical increase of illegal fishing in an almost simultaneous way was underlined by the Oxfam representative Ed Pomfred.

The need to find a collective response to Somalia social and economic needs is the answer to finally address the root causes of the Regional maritime insecurity.

Answering a question launched by the public, Etienne de Poncins admitted to be aware of the fact that a Naval Coast Guard capability is the facto non existing at the moment in Somalia.

"EUCAP Nestor training in Djibouti is, in this respect, a step in the right direction" said de Poncins, adding: "If it is undeniable that within the next two years (the mission mandates ends in December 2016) maritime security issues will not be resolved, certainly some maritime and costal police capacity will increase". Regional and Federal entities will be able to do some patrolling and the setting a framework for legislation can be put in place added de Poncins.



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“The pirates networking still exists, but we have changed the model: Now is not as profitable as it used to be” said EUNAVFOR Commander General Smith.

The EUCAP Nestor gathering of the 25th coincided with the news coming from Somalia of the release of a German Journalist after two years under Captivity. The reporter, from Der Spiegel Weekly Magazine, was researching on piracy at time of kidnapping.

In two and half years time many things have changed in Somalia. It is still a dangerous place, but safer compared to its recent past.

Background

EUCAP Nestor is a civilian EU mission, under the auspices of the Common Security and Defence Policy, which assists host countries in the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean region in strengthening their capacity to ensure maritime security and in particular to fight piracy.

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