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First Workshop on Maritime Security Cooperation for Somali Maritime Entities ends

On 24 and 25 March, representatives of Maritime entities from the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) as well as from various Somali regions participated in a workshop on maritime security cooperation organised by the European Union's Maritime Security Capacity Building Mission, EUCAP Nestor and the FGS.

The purpose of the two-day event that took place in Djibouti, was to bring together representatives from different Somali maritime entities currently deployed along the Somali Coast and also representatives of Somali regions where there is no maritime capacity yet, to initiate a process of cooperation and to create synergies in terms of training, equipment, information sharing and operations for the first time.

Opening the workshop on Tuesday, the Head of Mission of EUCAP Nestor, Etienne de Poncins, stated: *"It is the first time that this many Somali maritime security bodies, from Somali Federal Government as well as from Somali regions, sit together and discuss issues such as cooperation, information sharing and coordinated training. The aim of this workshop is to enhance cooperation and coordination on maritime issues, such as illegal trafficking, piracy and other maritime crime. Sharing information and establishing contacts is crucial to make progress in the fight against criminal activities at sea"*.

Attendees of the event came from the Somali Federal Government (Operation Commander of the Somali CG), from Puntland (Commander of Puntland Maritime Police Force), Galmudug (Commander of Galmudug Coast Guard) as well as the first international representation from the Interim Southwest Administration (Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources as well as the Commander of the Coast Guard).



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EUCAP Nestor legal and maritime advisors as well as UNSOM and EU Naval Force representatives also participated in the discussions. The workshop organisers applauded the steps taken by Somali maritime entities to increase cooperation amongst themselves and harmonize support from the international community.

Equally important is the regional cooperation and coordination element to the workshop. One session focused on presenting the attendees with different models for Maritime Security Agencies which already exist in the Horn of Africa/Western Indian Ocean region to look for best practices to emulate. EUCAP Nestor's Maritime expert from the Seychelles presented the Seychelles' model where the Coast Guard has achieved considerable success in the past two years and the Commander of Djibouti Coast Guard, presented the Djibouti Coast Guard structure and *modus operandi*.

On the second day, the participants also had the opportunity to visit different maritime security actors in Djibouti: Coast Guard, Navy and Port Authority which have been supported by EUCAP Nestor in the form of tailor-made training courses and equipment in the past two years.

In a *communiqué* issued at the end of the meeting the Somali participants agreed "to increase cooperation". Information sharing on training capacities which could be offered to the other entities and the establishment of a network of maritime security awareness information sharing was equally agreed in this communiqué.

All participants approved that this meeting was a first step to create synergies in terms of training, equipment and operations and permitted to better understand each other's goals and intentions. It was agreed to meet again in the coming weeks to continue the discussion and exchange on maritime security cooperation among the different Somali maritime entities.

Background

EUCAP Nestor is a civilian EU mission, under the Common Security and Defense Policy, with Headquarters in Djibouti which assists host countries in the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean region (Somalia, Djibouti, Seychelles and Tanzania) in strengthening their capacity to ensure maritime security and in particular to fight piracy. This is done through training, advising and mentoring in three competence fields: legal, maritime and police.

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