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European Union and Somalia join hands in maritime security partnership

On 4 September 2013, off the coast of Mogadishu, the EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Atalanta hosted the President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, on board the Dutch EU NAVFOR flagship, HNLMS Johan de Witt. The President, his Ministers and security commanders met with EU Special Envoy to Somalia, Michele Cervone d'Urso, the EU Naval Force Operation Commander, Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant and Head of Mission of EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) Nestor, Etienne de Poncins. It was discussed how the different EU instruments can support the development of a comprehensive Somali Maritime Strategy.

The event built on the first meeting held on June 24 on a EU Naval Force flagship and aimed to further foster the partnership between Somalia and the European Union and constitutes a stepping stone towards the third international counter-piracy conference in Dubai on 11-12 September 2013 and the "New Deal for Somalia" Conference in Brussels on 16 September 2013. The New Deal Conference will endorse a 'Compact' between Somalia and the international community that identifies the key political, security and socio-economic priorities for the coming years.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud: *"Somalia welcomes cooperation with the EU to improve maritime security as part of the broader engagement of the EU in Somalia. Maritime cooperation will have important effect on the stabilization and development of coastal areas in my country. I intend to present the outline of a comprehensive maritime strategy during the Brussels Conference".*

EU Special Envoy to Somalia, Michele Cervone d'Urso said: *"This event was yet another occasion to reiterate the EU's strong commitment to help Somalia on its path towards stability and security. During the upcoming "New deal for Somalia" Conference in Brussels, support to the Somali security sector will be high on the agenda, including maritime security".*

In order to support the Somali authorities to increase their capabilities to fight piracy and other illegal activities off their coastline, the EU NAVFOR Dutch flagship also provided the platform for a EUCAP Nestor maritime crime seminar, including a practical exercise with delegates from Somalia. The delegates, comprising Somali prosecutors, judges and maritime police officers, observed a demonstration of how a suspect pirate vessel is intercepted, including boarding the vessel, detaining suspects, seizing evidence and investigation.

Speaking about the seminar Etienne de Poncins, Head of Mission of EUCAP Nestor, said *"events which include practical exercises such as the one organised on board the Dutch flagship are an important means to demonstrate the broad engagement required from the Somali judiciary and police in order to effectively tackle counter piracy and other illegal activities as to improve maritime security in the Horn of Africa."*

Background

EUCAP Nestor is a civilian led European Union mission aimed at enhancing maritime capacities of countries off the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean.

EU Naval Force deters, prevents and represses acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. EU Naval Force ships protect World Food Programme vessels delivering aid to Somalia and AMISOM shipping. EU Naval Force ships also contribute to the monitoring of fishing activity off the Somali Coast.

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