Promoting regional maritime security in Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean

Speech of Marjaana Sall, Ambassador and Head of European Union Delegation to the Republic of Mauritius on the occasion of the Steering Committee meeting of the "Programme to promote regional maritime security" (MaSe).

- Excellency Mr Hamada Madi, The Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission
- Representatives from the Government of Mauritius
- Excellences and Colleagues of the Diplomatic Corps
- Representatives of the Regional Organisations namely from IGAD, COMESA and EAC
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour for me to be here today for the 5th Steering Committee meeting of the Programme for promoting regional maritime security also known under its acronym MASE.

I'd like to thank IGAD as coordinator of MASE programme for convening the meeting and IOC for helping to organising it.

There is a mounting debate at international level on the maritime domain with a special focus on risks and threats involved.

Our seas and oceans are facing increasing pressure including maritime insecurity.

The recent attacks of fishing ships near the coast of Somalia show us again that maritime insecurity persists and our common vigilance is required.
We have to address these pressures and threats.

This means that we must manage more effectively the human activities affecting our seas and oceans, and at the same time continue our action to fight maritime criminality and insecurity.

We need a coherent and a comprehensive approach involving all sectors and maritime partners. An approach that is based on fair and transparent rules for all.

An approach

• which allows us to secure our oceans;

• and which involves the use of ocean resources sustainably, to the benefit of our economies and our environment.

In short, we need better ocean governance, and better coordination between the various organisations and actors responsible for the seas and oceans.

So the challenge facing this region is to commit and implement a more responsible and inclusive ocean management.

An important step in this regard was the adoption of the binding charter on maritime security and safety at the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Lomé in October 2016.

The charter proposes coordinated action between African countries to combat piracy and trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings on the continent’s shores.

Furthermore, the charter establishes a roadmap on Maritime Security in Africa, including an African strategy for protecting its oceans and seas that provides peace, security and stability.

The Summit commits the signatory countries to promote the blue economy through environmental protection and act on maritime crime as well as illegal fishing, trafficking in drugs, arms and people.

This is important as maritime security is not only a law enforcement and governance issue but also a critical precondition for unlocking the growth potential and economic development.

It is encouraging to observe that the European Union and the African Union converge in their respective approaches on integrated maritime security.

The European Union is already strongly committed in contributing to maritime security around the world in general and in Africa in particular.

Indeed, the European Union assumed the chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) in 2014 and supported the chair of the Republic of Seychelles in 2016.

As we all know that the root causes of piracy is at land, the European Union is, with over 1.2 billion EUR spent on development and capacity building, the largest donor in Somalia.

It supports the Maritime security coordination committee (MSCC) aiming to implement the Somali maritime resource and security strategy.

The European Union has built stronger partnerships with the region, to increase ownership and ensure sustainability in the area of maritime security.
One of them is the MASE programme which emanated from a request of the Ministers of the Region in 2010. The European Union initially put in place a EUR 2 million programme (the start-up MASE) followed in 2013 by the actual MASE Programme which we will discuss during the following days.

The European Union is financing EUR 5 million for the Critical Maritime Routes in the Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO) programme under its Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability.

It is also carrying out concurrently three missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the Horn of Africa region and Western Indian Ocean, namely: the EUNAVFOR Atalanta operation, the regional maritime capacity building mission EUCAP Somalia, and the EU Training Mission in Somalia.

The MASE programme's main objective is to be the vector for regional ownership for maritime safety.

It is also an affirmation of the will of countries of the region and regional organisations to fight against maritime threats.

The Steering Committee meeting of MASE starting today will be an opportunity to take stock of progress and outcomes achieved in each of the five result areas, identify bottlenecks and take necessary decisions to address the challenges.

Our meeting is very timely and significant given that the recommendations of the Mid-Term review of the MASE programme will provide opportunities for review and possible re-orientation and improving of the programme.

As you all know, the programme has been extended until June 2020 and we expect to learn from past experience in order to improve on delivery of services, impact and outcome for each of the result areas.

We are prepared to share our knowledge and experience with you. We are ready to support you to develop long-term and sustainable mechanisms for good ocean governance.

The most recent reallocation of funds by the European Union to directly support the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar and the Regional Maritime Operational Coordination Centre in Seychelles under MASE is a clear signal of our commitment to support all your efforts to increasing maritime security.

The EU is willing to further increase its support to the functioning of the two Centres.

This is a subject to be discussed more deeply during the meeting.

I would like here to emphasise that a shared unity of purpose and effort by all involved is necessary to achieve coherence between regional and national policies and to enable all relevant authorities to operate effectively together, thus enhancing a regionally-owned response to risks and threats in the maritime domain.

Finally, let me inform you that the EU has fielded a mission of experts to the region regarding maritime safety and security in ports.

The new programme of around EUR 20 million will focus on harmonising maritime port safety regulations at the regional and national level.

More generally, through this maritime envelope, the European Union looks forward to working with all
stakeholders in the region and with the international community by increasing awareness and the rule of law along the coast to improve maritime safety of navigation and maritime security.

Before I end, let me wish you fruitful deliberations for the meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention.