Maritime security: A Delegation including ambassadors from the European Union (EU) and several EU Member States visits the Regional Coordination and Operational Centre for the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean

A delegation comprising of ambassadors of the European Union (EU) and several EU Member States and the Minister of Home Affairs, Local Government, Youth, Sports, Culture, and Risk & Disaster Management (Designated Minister) visited the Regional Coordination and Operational Centre (RCOC) to see how the regional centre combats maritime crimes in the region and coordinates regional operations at sea.

The Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Seychelles, Ms. Marjaana Sall said:

- “The European Union and the Republic of Seychelles have built a solid partnership in the fight against piracy and promotion of regional maritime security. The Regional Coordination Operation Centre that we are visiting today is a concrete example of how collaborative actions by countries in the region and the European Union can improve security of our oceans. The European Union is the key funder of the centre which is being called upon to coordinate regional actions at sea in order to combat maritime crimes. The EU will continue to work hand in hand with Seychelles and countries in the region to promote maritime security. "

The site visit at the Regional Coordination and Operational Centre is an opportunity for ambassadors from the EU Member States to see how the centre operates and understand its pivotal role in promoting maritime security in the region.

Seychelles has been hosting the Regional Coordination and Operational Centre (RCOC) of the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean since in July 2017. Seychelles has signed two regional agreements (one on the exchange of maritime information and one on the coordination of operations at sea) that will enable Seychelles to work together countries of the region and pool resources in a
cost-efficient manner to address maritime crimes. The European Union supports the operationalisation of the RCOC in Seychelles and the Regional Maritime Information Exchange and Sharing Mechanism in Madagascar. The two regional centres are pivotal for a more effective and coordinated fight against piracy in the region.

The RCOC is using IORIS, a new secure information sharing and incident management tool that has been developed under the EU-funded programme CRIMARIO. This tool enables countries in the region to coordinate operations when incidents at sea occur. The RCOC also collaborates with EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta, the EU first ever naval force mission which has been operating since December 2008, notably to fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Maritime security is a key pre-condition for sustainable development of the ocean economy. For over a decade, the EU and Seychelles have built a solid partnership in the fight against piracy and promotion of regional maritime security. The EU will continue to support countries in the region and has earmarked 460 million Seychelles Rupees for a new programme to enhance Maritime Port Security in the region. It will reinforce the capacities of port authorities and improve port infrastructures in line with international regulations on maritime governance in order to improve maritime safety and security in the region. The programme will support Seychelles and countries in the region to track illicit trade, drug trafficking and smuggling of weapons.

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