

**Remarks of the UNODC Executive Director
Our Ocean Conference Panel on Security at Sea
Valletta, 5 October 2017**

**Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Piracy, drug trafficking, wildlife crime, human trafficking, migrant smuggling: transnational organized crime represents a major threat to security and safety at sea and on land.

Countering maritime crime and ensuring justice on the high seas is crucial for safeguarding lives and livelihoods, protecting human rights, promoting economic development and realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime is an engaged partner of the European Union in addressing these multifaceted challenges.

We are strengthening coordination to disrupt criminal activities in the Indian Ocean as well as off the Horn of Africa and the coast of West Africa, including piracy and armed robbery, heroin trafficking and fisheries crime.

We are supporting fair and efficient piracy trials, and helping to develop maritime law enforcement capacities, including with a view to rescuing migrants at sea.

Our assistance is based on UNODC's mandates as guardian of the UN conventions against transnational organized crime and corruption, and on our long experience and expertise with strengthening criminal justice responses and facilitating international cooperation to address shared challenges.

Our commitment to promote security at sea is concrete and focuses on two areas.

Firstly, UNODC is working to develop effective sea patrol and responses to counter drug trafficking, piracy and all forms of maritime crime using satellite imagery.

Satellite images, provided with the appropriate technical support, have proved extremely useful.

They have enabled countries with limited means to patrol and conduct ad hoc inspections on well-selected targets, thus improving the standards of maritime security.

UNODC has a partnership with the European Maritime Safety Agency, EMSA, and the Copernicus Maritime Surveillance Service for the provision of satellite images, to be used in any Member State sea operation coordinated and facilitated by our Global Maritime Crime Programme.

Our office has conducted three such operations to date, in Sao Tome & Principe, Sri Lanka and Senegal.

We are seeking to further strengthen our capacity building efforts with EMSA, to focus in particular on facilitating sea operations using satellite images in countries where UNODC has embedded mentors in national maritime law enforcement agencies.

This includes providing support to five member states in West and East Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean in 2018.

These joint sea operations will increase maritime law enforcement capacity, ensure more specific targeting of unlawful behaviour and crime at sea, and allow for more cost efficient and effective responses.

Secondly, UNODC is helping to counter crimes along the whole of the fisheries value chain.

UNODC research into transnational organized crime in the fishing industry found that the sector is vulnerable to multiple crimes, including corruption, document fraud, tax crimes and human trafficking.

SDG target 14.4 calls for ending over-fishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices.

In view of UNODC's mandate, our support is focused on associated crimes, which include a range of serious offences committed along the entire fisheries value chain.

This work is coordinated with our partners and complements the activities of ILO, INTERPOL and OECD, among others.

Last month, UNODC hosted the Third International Symposium on Fisheries Crime, in cooperation with Indonesia and Norway, as well as INTERPOL, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group.

We have also launched a new four-year programme, with the financial assistance of Norway, to support developing countries in strengthening their legal and policy frameworks as well as building capacities to investigate and prosecute associated crimes in the fisheries value chain.

UNODC will also provide training for eleven Indian Ocean states in the collection of evidence of fisheries crime to strengthen prosecutions.

Excellencies,

UNODC remains committed to supporting you to advance our collective efforts to counter maritime crime and promote security at sea.

We look forward to further expanding our cooperation with the European Union and all our partners, and I welcome your ideas and support.

Thank you.