

**CODE OF CONDUCT
CONCERNING THE REPRESSION OF PIRACY, ARMED ROBBERY
AGAINST SHIPS, AND ILLICIT MARITIME ACTIVITY
IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

The Governments of Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo] (hereinafter referred to as “the Signatories”),

CONSIDERING the relevant provisions of the United Nations Millennium Declaration 55/2, in particular Section II on Peace, Security and Disarmament; Section III on Development and poverty eradication; section IV on Protecting our common environment; and section VII on Meeting the special needs of Africa.

NOTING Resolution 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012) of the United Nations Security Council in relation to piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, which, inter alia, welcomes the intention to convene a summit of Gulf of Guinea Heads of State in order to consider a comprehensive response in the region and encourages the States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) to develop a comprehensive strategy, including through:

- (a) the development of domestic laws and regulations, where these are not in place, criminalizing piracy and armed robbery at sea;
- (b) the development of a regional framework to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea, including information-sharing and operational coordination mechanisms in the region;
- (c) the development and strengthening of domestic laws and regulations, as appropriate, to implement relevant international agreements addressing the security of navigation, in accordance with international law;
- (d) the need for enhancing international cooperation at all levels in the fight against maritime security and safety of offshore oil infrastructures;

NOTING IN PARTICULAR that resolution 2039 (2012) recognizes the urgent need to devise and adopt effective and practical measures to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea; emphasizes the importance of building on existing national, regional and extraregional initiatives to enhance maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea; and welcomes the initiatives already taken by States in the region and regional organizations, including ECCAS, ECOWAS, GGC, and the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa (MOWCA), to enhance maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea,

NOTING ALSO that the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its sixth-seventh session, adopted, on 5 December 2012, resolution 67/78 on Oceans and the Law of the Sea which, inter alia:

- (a) Notes with concern the continuing problem of transnational organized crime committed at sea, including illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, and threats to maritime safety and security, including piracy, armed robbery at sea, smuggling, and terrorist acts against shipping, offshore installations and other maritime interests, and deploring the loss of life and adverse impact on international trade, energy security, and the global economy resulting from such activities,
- (b) Recognizes the crucial role of international cooperation at the global, regional, sub-regional, and bilateral levels in combating, in accordance with international law, threats to maritime security, including piracy, armed robbery at sea, terrorist acts against shipping, offshore installations and other maritime interests, through bilateral and multilateral instruments and mechanisms aimed at monitoring, preventing and responding to such threats, the enhanced sharing of information among States relevant to the detection, prevention and suppression of such threats, and the prosecution of offenders with due regard to national legislation, and the need to sustainably build capacity which permits the attainment of these objectives,
- (c) Underscores the importance of enhancing international cooperation at all levels to fight transnational organized criminal activities, including illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances within the scope of the United Nations instruments against illicit drug trafficking, as well as the smuggling of migrants, and trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking in firearms and criminal activities at sea falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

RECALLING that the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 67/79 on sustainable fisheries of December 11, 2012 expressed its serious concern that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing remains one of the greatest threats to fish stocks and marine ecosystems and continues to have serious and major implications for the conservation and management of ocean resources, as well as the food security and the economies of many States, particularly developing States, and renews its call upon States to comply fully with all existing obligations and to combat such fishing and urgently to take all necessary steps to implement the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;

RECALLING the decision Assembly/AU/Dec.252(XIII) adopted at the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union (AU), held in Sirte, Libya, in July 2009, in which the Assembly expressed its serious concern at the mounting insecurity in Africa's maritime domain, strongly condemned all illegal activities therein and welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the Commission to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy to address Africa's geostrategic maritime challenges and opportunities;

RECALLING ALSO the Decision of the 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the AU held in Kampala, Uganda in July 2010 [Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.294(XV)] by which the Assembly lent its support to the efforts being undertaken by the Commission, including the elaboration of an integrated maritime strategy for the management of the continent's maritime domain.

RECALLING the efforts made by the AU, including the Africa Maritime Transport Charter (AMTC), which was first adopted in 1994 and updated in Durban in October 2009, the Durban resolution (2009) and the Plan of Action on maritime transport (adopted in Abuja in February 2007 and updated in April 2008 in Algiers and in October 2009 in Durban);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Treaty for an Economic Community of West African States (Treaty of Lagos) on 28 May 1975, as amended by the revised ECOWAS Treaty July 1993; and the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security, done at Lomé on 10 December 1999, and in particular its Chapter X on Sub-Regional Security,

TAKING ALSO INTO ACCOUNT the Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of Central African States; and the ECCAS comprehensive joint maritime security architecture to counter piracy in the Central African sub-region, including the December 2009 Protocol on Maritime Cooperation, the establishment of the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, Congo, as well as the multinational coordination centres in the region,

FURTHER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the GGC Treaty establishing as one of its organs the Ad Hoc Arbitration Mechanism,

RECALLING that the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Sub-Regional Integrated Coast Guard Network in West and Central Africa, adopted in Dakar, Senegal on 30 July 2008, signed by fifteen coastal States from West and Central Africa, provided a framework to promote regional maritime cooperation and a stable maritime environment, contribute to the peace, good order and continuing prosperity of the West and Central Africa,

RECALLING the Assembly of IMO, at its twenty-sixth regular session, adopted on 2 December 2009 resolution A.1025(26) on the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships which amongst others invited Governments to develop, as appropriate, agreements and procedures to facilitate co-operation in applying efficient and effective measures to prevent acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Special measures to enhance maritime security adopted on 12 December 2002 by the Conference of Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 as amended, including the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code;

INSPIRED by the Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden ("the Djibouti Code of Conduct") adopted in Djibouti on 29 January 2009;

INSPIRED ALSO the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on 10th December 1982 in its Article 100 in the fight against piracy armed robberies, and illicit activities at sea;

RECALLING that the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 1988 and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, 1988 (hereinafter referred to as “SUA Treaties”) provide, inter alia, for parties to create criminal offences, establish jurisdiction, and accept delivery or persons responsible for or suspected of seizing or exercising control over a ship by force or threat thereof or any other form of intimidation;

WELCOMING the initiatives of the United Nations, including the United Nations Regional Offices for West Africa (UNOWA) and Central Africa (UNOCA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the United Nations Development Programme, the International Maritime Organization, ECOWAS, ECCAS, GGC, MOWCA, donor States and other relevant international entities to provide training, technical assistance and other forms of capacity building to assist Governments, upon request, to adopt and implement practical measures to apprehend and prosecute those persons engaged in transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing;

CONVINCED that the following transitional Code of Conduct will promote regional maritime cooperation and a stable maritime environment, contribute to the peace, good order and continuing prosperity of the West and Central Africa;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1: DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, the following terms, expressions, and acronyms are understood as specified below unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “Signatory” is a State having signed this present Code of Conduct.
2. “Host Signatory” is a State having signed this Code of Conduct and that receives the embarked officers of another Signatory State with that State’s authorization.
3. “Piracy” consists of any of the following acts:
 - (a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:
 - (i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;
 - (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
 - (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;

- (c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).
4. “Armed robbery at sea” consists of any of the following acts:
- (a) unlawful act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a State’s internal waters, archipelagic waters or territorial sea;
 - (b) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a).
5. “Transnational organized crime in the maritime domain” includes but is not limited to any of the following acts when committed at sea:
- (a) money laundering,
 - (b) illegal arms and drug trafficking,
 - (c) piracy and armed robbery at sea,
 - (d) illegal oil bunkering,
 - (e) crude oil theft,
 - (f) human trafficking,
 - (g) human smuggling,
 - (h) maritime pollution,
 - (i) IUU fishing
 - (j) illegal dumping of toxic waste
 - (k) maritime terrorism and hostage taking
 - (l) vandalism of offshore oil infrastructure.
6. ECOWAS : Economic Community of West African States;
7. ECCAS : Economic Community of Central African States;
8. GGC : Gulf of Guinea Commission;
9. UNOWA : United Nations Offices for West Africa;
10. UNOCA : United Nations Offices for Central Africa ;
11. MOWCA : Maritime Organisation for West and Central Africa ;
12. IUU : Illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing;
13. "Embarked Officers" consists of law enforcement officers or other authorized officials embarked on ships or patrol aircraft;

14. "Pirate ship" means a vessel effectively controlled by people who intend to use it to commit an act of piracy, or used it to commit such an act, as long as it remains under the control of such persons;

Article 2: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. Consistent with their available resources and related priorities, their respective national laws and regulations, and applicable rules of international law, the Signatories intend to co-operate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea with a view towards:

- (a) sharing and reporting relevant information;
- (b) interdicting ships and/or aircraft suspected of engaging in transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea;
- (c) ensuring that persons committing or attempting to commit transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea are apprehended and prosecuted; and
- (d) facilitating proper care, treatment, and repatriation of seafarers, fishermen, other shipboard personnel and passengers subjected to transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing, and other illegal activities at sea, particularly those who have been subjected to violence.

2. The Signatories intend this Code of Conduct to be applicable in relation to transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea in Central and West Africa.

3. The Signatories should carry out their obligations and responsibilities under this Code in a manner consistent with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States.

4. Operations to suppress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea in and over the territorial sea of a Signatory are the responsibility of, and subject to the sovereign authority of that Signatory.

Article 3: Guiding Principles

1. The Signatories intend that any measures taken pursuant to this Code of Conduct should be carried out by law enforcement or other authorized officials from warships or military aircraft, or from other ships or aircraft clearly marked and identifiable as being in government service and authorized to that effect.

2. The Signatories recognize that multiple States, including the flag State, State of suspected origin of the perpetrators, the State of nationality of persons on board the ship, and the State of ownership of cargo may have legitimate interests in cases arising pursuant to Articles 4 and 5. Therefore, the Signatories intend to liaise and co-operate

with such States and other stakeholders, and to coordinate such activities with each other to facilitate the rescue, interdiction, investigation, and prosecution.

3. The Signatories intend, to the fullest possible extent, to conduct and support the conduct of investigations in cases of international organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea taking into account the relevant international standards and practices, and, in particular, recommendations adopted by IMO.

4. The Signatories intend to co-operate to the fullest possible extent in medical and decedent affairs arising from operations in furtherance of the repression in international organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea.

5. The Signatories intend to ensure that, in seeking the fulfilment of the above objectives, a balance is maintained between the need to enhance maritime security and facilitation of maritime traffic and to avoid any unnecessary delays to international maritime trade in West and Central Africa;

Article 4: MEASURES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

1. The Signatories intend to develop and implement, as necessary:

- (a) Appropriate national maritime security policies to safeguard maritime trade from all forms of unlawful acts;
- (b) National legislation, practices and procedures, which together provide the security necessary for the safe and secure operation of port facilities and ships at all security levels; and
- (c) National legislation which ensures effective protection of the marine environment,

2. The Signatories intend to establish, as necessary, a national maritime security committee or other system for co-ordinating the related activities between the departments, agencies, control authorities, and other organizations of the State, port operators, Companies and other entities concerned with, or responsible for the implementation of, compliance with, and enforcement of, measures to enhance maritime security and search and rescue procedures,

3. The Signatories intend to establish, as necessary, a national maritime security plan with related contingency plans (or other system) for harmonizing and co-ordinating the implementation of security measures designed to enhance the security in the international maritime transport sector with those of other modes of transport,

4. The Signatories intend to prosecute, in their domestic courts and in accordance with relevant domestic laws, perpetrators of all forms of piracy and unlawful acts against seafarers, ships, port facility personnel and port facilities,

5. The organization and functioning of this national system is exclusively the responsibility of each State, in conformity with applicable laws and regulations.

Article 5: PROTECTION MEASURES FOR SHIPS

The Signatories intend to encourage States, ship owners, and ship operators, where appropriate, to take protective measures against transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, and other illegal activities at sea, taking into account the relevant international Conventions, Codes, Standards and Recommended Practices, and guidance adopted by IMO. The Signatories intend to cooperate in the implementation of measures to protect ships.

Article 6: MEASURES TO REPRESS PIRACY

1. Consistent with Article 2, each Signatory to the fullest possible extent intends to co-operate in:
 - (a) arresting, investigating, and prosecuting persons who have committed piracy or are reasonably suspected of committing piracy;
 - (b) seizing pirate ships and/or aircraft and the property on board such ships and/or aircraft; and
 - (c) rescuing ships, persons, and property subject to piracy.
2. Any Signatory may seize a pirate ship beyond the outer limit of any State's territorial sea, and arrest the persons and seize the property on board.
3. Any pursuit of a ship, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the ship is engaged in piracy, extending in and over the territorial sea of a Signatory is subject to the authority of that Signatory. No Signatory should pursue such a ship in or over the territory or territorial sea of any coastal State without the permission of that State.
4. Consistent with international law, the courts of the Signatory which carries out a seizure pursuant to paragraph 4 may decide upon the penalties to be imposed, and may also determine the action to be taken with regard to the ship or property, subject to the rights of third parties acting in good faith.
5. The Signatory which carried out the seizure pursuant to paragraph 4 may, subject to its national laws, and in consultation with other interested entities, waive its primary right to exercise jurisdiction and authorize any other Signatory to enforce its laws against the ship and/or persons on board.
6. Unless otherwise arranged by the affected Signatories, any seizure made in the territorial sea of a Signatory pursuant to paragraph 5 should be subject to the jurisdiction of that Signatory.
7. The signatories intend to encourage states, ship owners and ship operators, as deemed appropriate, to take measures to protect against pirates, taking into international conventions, codes, standards and recommended practices and in particular, the recommendations adopted by IMO.

Article 7: MEASURES TO REPRESS ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS

1. The Signatories intend for operations to suppress armed robbery against ships in the territorial sea and airspace of a Signatory to be subject to the authority of that Signatory, including in the case of hot pursuit from that Signatory's territorial sea or archipelagic waters in accordance with UNCLOS.

2. The Signatories intend for their respective focal points and Centres (as designated pursuant to Article 8) to communicate expeditiously alerts, reports, and information related to armed robbery against ships to other Signatories and interested parties.

Article 8: MEASURES TO REPRESS ILLEGAL, UNREGULATED AND UNREPORTED FISHING

1. The Signatories shall consult at the bilateral and sub-regional levels in the formulation and harmonization of policies for the conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources that straddle maritime zones, or which are highly migratory, or occur in the high seas.

2. The Signatories shall co-operate and collaborate with the sub-regional fisheries bodies and the Food and Agriculture Organization on preventing and combating illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, and protecting fisheries resources for sustainable long term utilization to sustain livelihoods in West and Central Africa;

Article 9: EMBARKED OFFICERS

1. In furtherance of operations contemplated by this Code of Conduct, a Signatory may nominate law enforcement or other authorized officials (hereafter referred to as “the embarked officers”) to embark in the patrol ships or aircraft of another Signatory (hereafter referred to as “the host Signatory”) as may be authorized by the host Signatory.

2. The embarked officers may be armed in accordance with their national law and policy and the approval of the host Signatory.

3. When embarked, the host Signatory should facilitate communications between the embarked officers and their headquarters, and should provide quarters and messing for the embarked officers aboard the patrol ships or aircraft in a manner consistent with host Signatory personnel of the same rank.

4. Embarked officers may assist the host Signatory and conduct operations from the host Signatory ship or aircraft if expressly requested to do so by the host Signatory, and only in the manner requested. Such request may only be made, agreed to, and acted upon in a manner that is not prohibited by the laws and policies of both Signatories.

5. When duly authorized, embarked officers may:

a. embark on law enforcement vessels of any of the Signatories;

b. enforce the laws of the designating Signatory to suppress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing, and other illegal activities at sea in the waters of the designating Signatory, or seaward of its waters in the exercise of the right of hot pursuit or otherwise in accordance with international law;

c. authorize the entry of the law enforcement vessels on which they are embarked into and navigation within the waters of the designating Signatory;

- d. authorize the law enforcement vessels on which they are embarked to conduct patrols in the waters of the designating Signatory;
- e. authorize law enforcement officials of the vessel on which the embarked officer is embarked to assist in the enforcement of the laws of the designating Signatory to suppress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing, and other illegal activities at sea; and
- f. advise and assist law enforcement officials of the other Signatory in the conduct of boardings of vessels to enforce the laws of the other Signatory to suppress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing, and other illegal activities at sea.

Article 10: ASSET SEIZURE AND FORFEITURE

1. Assets seized, confiscated or forfeited in consequence of any law enforcement operation pursuant to this Code, undertaken in the waters of a Signatory, should be disposed of in accordance with the laws of that Signatory.
2. Should a flag State Signatory have consented to the exercise of jurisdiction by another Signatory pursuant to Article 18, assets seized, confiscated or forfeited in consequence of any law enforcement operation of any Signatory pursuant to this Code should be disposed of in accordance with the laws of the boarding Signatory.
3. To the extent permitted by its laws and upon such terms as it deems appropriate, a Signatory may, in any case, transfer forfeited property or proceeds of their sale to another Signatory or an intergovernmental body specialising in the fight against piracy, armed robbery, and other illicit maritime activity.

Article 11: COORDINATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

1. Each Signatory should designate a national focal point to facilitate coordinated, effective, and timely information flow among the Signatories, consistent with the purpose and scope of this Code of Conduct. In order to ensure coordinated, smooth, and effective communication between their designated focal points, the Signatories intend to use the piracy information sharing centres. Each Centre and designated focal point should be capable of receiving and responding to alerts and requests for information or assistance at all times.
2. Each Centre and designated focal point should be capable of receiving and responding to alerts and requests for information or assistance at all times
3. Each Signatory intends to:
 - (a) declare and communicate to the other Signatories its designated focal point at the time of signing this Code of Conduct or as soon as possible after signing, and thereafter update the information as and when changes occur;
 - (b) provide and communicate to the other Signatories the telephone numbers, telefax numbers, and e-mail addresses of its focal point, and, as appropriate, of its Centre and thereafter update the information as and when changes occur; and

- (c) communicate to the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization [the Secretary General of ECCAS, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, and the GGC Executive Secretary] the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) and thereafter update the information as and when changes occur.
4. Each Centre and focal point should be responsible for its communication with the other focal points and the Centres. Any focal point which has received or obtained information about an imminent threat of, or an incident of, piracy or armed robbery against ships should promptly disseminate an alert with all relevant information to the Centres. The Centres should disseminate appropriate alerts within their respective areas of responsibility regarding imminent threats or incidents to ships.
5. Each Signatory should ensure the smooth and effective communication between its designated focal point, and other competent national authorities including search and rescue coordination centres, as well as relevant non-governmental organizations.
6. Each Signatory should make every effort to require ships entitled to fly its flag and the owners and operators of such ships to promptly notify relevant national authorities, including the designated focal points and Centres, the appropriate search and rescue coordination centres and other relevant the contact points, of incidents of piracy or armed robbery against ships.
7. Each Signatory intends, upon the request of any other Signatory, to respect the confidentiality of information transmitted from a Signatory.
8. To facilitate implementation of this Code of Conduct, the Signatories intend to keep each other fully informed concerning their respective applicable laws and guidance, particularly those pertaining to the interdiction, apprehension, investigation, prosecution, and disposition of persons involved in piracy and armed robbery against ships. The Signatories may also undertake and seek assistance to undertake publication of handbooks and convening of seminars and conferences in furtherance of this Code of Conduct.

Article 12: INCIDENT REPORTING

1. The Signatories intend to undertake development of uniform reporting criteria in order to ensure that an accurate assessment of the threat of piracy and armed robbery in the West and Central Africa is developed taking into account the recommendations adopted by IMO. The Signatories intend for the Centres to manage the collection and dissemination of this information in their respective geographic areas of responsibility.
2. Consistent with its laws and policies, a Signatory conducting a boarding, investigation, prosecution, or judicial proceeding pursuant to this Code of Conduct should promptly notify the results thereof to any affected flag and coastal States and the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization [the Secretary General of ECCAS, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, and the GGC Executive Secretary].
3. The Signatories intend for the Centres to:
 - (a) collect, collate and analyse the information transmitted by the Signatories concerning piracy and armed robbery against ships, including other

relevant information relating to individuals and transnational organized criminal groups committing transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing or other illegal activities at sea in their respective geographical areas of responsibility; and

- (b) prepare statistics and reports on the basis of the information gathered and analyzed under subparagraph (a), and to disseminate them to the Signatories, the shipping community, and the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization [the Secretary General of ECCAS, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, and the GGC Executive Secretary].

Article 13: ASSISTANCE AMONG SIGNATORIES

1. A Signatory may request any other Signatory, through the Centres or directly, to co-operate in detecting:
 - (a) persons who have committed, or are reasonably suspected of committing, transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing, and other illegal activities at sea;
 - (b) pirate ships, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that those ships are engaged in piracy;
 - (c) other ships or aircraft, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that those ships or aircraft are engaged in transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing, or other illegal activities at sea and
 - (d) ships or persons who have been subjected to piracy or armed robbery against ships.
2. A Signatory may also request any other Signatory, through the Centres or directly, to take effective measures in response to reported transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, IUU fishing or other illegal activities at sea.
3. Co-operative arrangements such as joint exercises or other forms of co-operation, as appropriate, may be undertaken as determined by the Signatories concerned.
4. Capacity building co-operation may include technical assistance such as educational and training programmes to share experiences and best practices.

Article 14: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

1. The Signatories intend to co-operate on the development and promotion of training and educational programs for the management of the marine environment, particularly for the maintenance of safety and law and order at sea, the preservation and protection of the marine environment, and the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution. Such cooperation might include:
 - a) the offer of places on national training courses to other States, subject to payment of relevant costs;
 - b) sharing curriculum and course information;

- c) the exchange of naval and law enforcement personnel, scientists and other experts;
- d) the exchange of views on maritime issues;
- e) holding conferences, seminars, workshops and symposia on maritime subjects of common interest; and
- f) fostering cooperation among maritime training institutions and research centres and the offer of places on national training courses to other States, subject to payment of relevant costs and training provided by the International Seabed Authority ;

2. Signatories are invited to institute regular meetings to enhance cooperation and coordination in their maritime enforcement activities.

Article 15: INDICTMENT, PROSECUTION AND CONVICTION

Signatories are encouraged to incorporate in national legislation, transnational crimes in the maritime domain, as defined in Article 1 (3) of this Code of Conduct, in order to ensure effective indictment, prosecution and conviction in the territory of the Signatories. Signatories are encouraged to develop adequate guidelines for the exercise of jurisdiction, conduct of investigations and prosecution of alleged offenders.

Article 16: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

The Signatories intend to settle by consultation and peaceful means amongst each other any disputes that arise from the implementation of this Code of Conduct.

Article 17: CONSULTATIONS

Within three (3) years of the effective date of this Code of Conduct; the Signatories intend to consult, at the invitation of the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre to

- a) Eventually transform this Code of Conduct into a binding multi-lateral agreement.
- b) Assess the implementation of this Code of Conduct
- c) Share information and experiences and best practices
- d) Review activities which National Maritime Security Centres have carried out and recommend actions to be taken thereafter
- e) Review all other issues concerning Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

Article 18: CLAIMS

Any claim for damages, injury or loss resulting from an operation carried out under this Code of Conduct should be examined by the Signatory whose authorities conducted the operation. If responsibility is established, the claim should be resolved in accordance with the national law of that Signatory, and in a manner consistent with international law, including Article 106 and paragraph 3 of Article 110 of UNCLOS.

Article 19: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Nothing in this Code of Conduct is intended to:

- (a) create or establish a binding agreement, except as noted in Article [13];
- (b) affect in any way the rules of international law pertaining to the competence of States to exercise investigative or enforcement jurisdiction on board ships not flying their flag;
- (c) affect the immunities of warships and other government ships operated for non-commercial purposes;
- (d) apply to or limit boarding of ships conducted by any Signatory in accordance with international law, beyond the outer limit of any State's territorial sea, including boardings based upon the right of visit, the rendering of assistance to persons, ships and property in distress or peril, or an authorization from the flag State to take law enforcement or other action;
- (e) preclude the Signatories from otherwise agreeing on operations or other forms of co-operation to repress piracy and armed robbery against ships;
- (f) prevent the Signatories from taking additional measures to repress piracy and armed robbery at sea through appropriate actions in their land territory;
- (g) supersede any bilateral or multilateral agreement or other co-operative mechanism concluded by the Signatories to repress piracy and armed robbery against ships;
- (h) alter the rights and privileges due to any individual in any legal proceeding;
- (i) create or establish any waiver of any rights that any Signatory may have under international law to raise a claim with any other Signatory through diplomatic channels;
- (j) entitle a Signatory to undertake in the territory of another Signatory the exercise of jurisdiction and performance of functions which are exclusively reserved for the authorities of that other Signatory by its national law;
- (k) prejudice in any manner the positions and navigational rights and freedoms of any Signatory regarding the international law of the sea;
- (l) be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the Signatories to this Code of Conduct as provided under international or national law; or
- (m) preclude or limit any Signatory from requesting or granting assistance in accordance with the provisions of any applicable Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement or similar instrument.

Article 20: SIGNATURE, ENTRY INTO FORCE AND DEPOSITORY

This Code of Conduct is open for signature on the 25th June 2013 in Yaoundé and at the Headquarters of the ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC.

2. This Code of Conduct shall enter into force upon date of signature by two or more Signatories

3. It becomes effective for subsequent Signatories upon the respective date of deposit of a signature instrument at the African Union Commission (AUC).

4. The AUC shall be the depository and shall transmit the signed copy to the IMO and to any other organizations agreed upon by the Signatories.

Article 21: LANGUAGES

This Code of Conduct is established in the English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish languages, each text being equally authentic.

DONE in Yaounde this 25th day of June two thousand and thirteen.