



G7++ FRIENDS OF THE GULF OF GUINEA ROME, 26-27 JUNE 2017

ROME DECLARATION

1. We, the G7++ Group of Friends of Gulf of Guinea, representatives of Angola, Belgium, Benin, Brazil (observer), Cabo Verde, Cameroun, Canada, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, the United Kingdom, United States of America and of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), INTERPOL, the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC), the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) gathered in Rome on June 26-27 under the Italian Presidency to jointly address developments and concerns on piracy, armed robbery at sea and other illegal maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea and exchanged views and coordinating actions as set out below.

2. We believe maritime security and economic prosperity in Africa are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The maritime sector is fundamental to a State's security, social and economic goals and objectives. Africa's oceans and seas are crucial sources of livelihood and food security for many communities as well as a reservoir of natural resources and a platform for trade (including landlocked countries). If poorly governed, Africa's oceans and seas can become a theatre for potential conflict, and an area transnational criminal networks can exploit with impunity. Improvement on maritime security can positively contribute to increased national, regional and continental stability, and by the same token, make a substantive contribution to global security. The untapped potential of the blue economy in the Gulf of Guinea, which is a zone of common interest, is also dependent on maritime security and oceans governance.
3. We therefore also believe that the management of the maritime domain and its resources optimization is needed while preserving the environment and nature.
4. We reiterate our commitment to the UN Security Council resolutions 2018 and 2039 and to the UNSC Presidential Statement of April 25, 2016 and we renew our support to the Lisbon Declaration of June 7 2016.
5. We welcome the African Union Summit on maritime security and safety and development in Africa, held in October 2016 in Togo, and the Lomé Charter adopted on that same occasion and already signed by some African countries. We encourage African Union members to pursue the ratification process allowing a swift entry into force of the Charter and to enhance dialogue on the follow-ups of the Charter, including the approval of its Annexes.
6. We call on the Economic Communities of Central and West African States to raise awareness and encourage their member States, with also the technical assistance of the Inter-regional Coordination Center,

for the signature and ratification of The Lomé Charter on Maritime Safety and Security and Development in Africa.

7. In the spirit of the African peace and security architecture and in support of the Yaoundé Process, we commit to pursuing a holistic approach in order to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. We commend the progress made by Gulf of Guinea Commission, the Economic Communities and the States of the region in implementing the African Union Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, in particular on improving security and fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea. We also encourage signatories of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct to consider making the agreement binding.
8. We are committed to supporting regional maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea through comprehensive capacity building in areas such as maritime governance, coast guard authorities and functions, disaster relief, maritime search and rescue, and maritime information sharing including Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), as well as efforts to improve legislative, investigative, judicial, and prosecutorial capacities.
9. We commend States that have already embarked on appropriate national reforms allowing an improved enforcement of the law in the maritime environment and we urge those which are still in this process to further develop appropriate domestic regulations criminalizing piracy and armed robbery at sea and to enhance capacities to achieve prosecutions and prevent all criminal acts at sea.
10. Recognizing that the primary responsibility to counter threats and challenges at sea rests with the States of the region and that only a combined effort will allow for a comprehensive response to threats to maritime security, we stand ready to enhance regional and international cooperation.
11. To this purpose we recognize the need to reinforce coordination amongst interested stakeholders between the G7++FoGG meetings on issues of common interest in direct support to the Yaoundé Process.

We therefore support the Yaoundé Interregional Coordination Centre's suggestion to formulate and lead the first informal technical working-level forum around the issue of Maritime Domain Awareness with a kick-off conference call scheduled by the end of July with interested stakeholders. The CIC will provide an update on MDA priorities and associated activities at the next G7++ FoGG meeting.

12. The Group takes note of the annexed Chair Summaries of Round Tables held in Rome on June 26-27, 2017 and thanks Nigeria for accepting to host the second G7++ FoGG meeting under Italian Presidency in Lagos in December 2017. It also approves the proposal of the Ivory Coast to have an African co-chairmanship of the G7++ Gulf of Guinea Group and accepts its candidacy to co-chair it in 2018. These decisions underline the growing awareness and sense of ownership of the States of the Gulf of Guinea on the important challenges at stake in the region and will contribute to the implementation of the decisions taken at the regional and international level to make the Gulf of Guinea a safe and prosperous area.