



United Arab Emirates

MORE THAN 50 COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IN UAE COUNTER-PIRACY CONFERENCE

Final countdown begins for region's first public-private partnership to respond to growing threat of maritime piracy

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, April 16, 2011: - With new attacks on vessels happening daily, government and industry leaders representing over 50 countries will on Monday, April 18 group in Dubai to seek meaningful solutions to the serious humanitarian and economic issue of piracy in the first high-level public-private counter piracy conference to be held in the region on the widespread threats of piracy and collaborative means to eradicate it.

Co-convened by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and global marine terminal operator DP World, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, and His Excellency Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Chairman, DP World, will inaugurate the two day conference. It brings together officials and industry leaders from more than 50 countries for high level deliberations.

Under the theme "Global Challenge, Regional Responses: Forging A Common Approach to Maritime Piracy", the summit will be attended by more than 30 foreign ministers, including from the GCC countries, senior representatives from a further 25 countries, the United Nations, the International Maritime Organisation, scores of industry leaders and international experts on maritime security and community development issues.

Included are the Foreign Ministers of most GCC countries, the Foreign Ministers of states directly affected by piracy such as Somalia, Djibouti, the Comoros, and Tanzania, the United Nations Deputy Secretary General, and Foreign Ministers from major international players such as Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Those from the maritime industry attending include Morten Engelstoft, COO, Maersk, Peter Swift, President, International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, Ron Widdows, President, and CEO of Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) and Chairman, World Shipping Council, Dr Stefano Messina, CEO, Messina Line and Giles Noakes, Chief Maritime Security Officer, BIMCO. Experts participating include Dr Martin Murphy, Kings College, London, and Pottengal Mukundan, Director, International Maritime Bureau, amongst others.

During the conference, both public and private initiatives to counter the devastating effects of piracy on the captives and their families and communities as well as the threat it poses to peace and security internationally will be discussed, with the aim of introducing initiatives that merge the efforts of both sectors in areas of community development, security, and information sharing. Panel discussions will also tackle root causes of piracy, relevant international law issues, and opportunities of furthering civilian-military cooperation to ward off attacks.

On the sidelines of the conference, the UAE and the United Nations will hold a fundraising session in support of the UN's Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. The aim of the fundraiser is to attract new and traditional donors to the Fund, which was established in January 2010 by the UN Secretary-General at the request of the international Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.

The Trust Fund has launched a number of land-based counter piracy initiatives established and supported by both public and private sectors. In this vein, UAE Foreign Ministry officials have revealed that the UAE will make a significant contribution to the UN Trust Fund at the conference in reflection of its ongoing commitment to the international efforts in the field of counter-piracy.

The conference is also expected to conclude with a declaration outlining areas of cooperation between the private and public sectors with the aim of establishing a working frame to further advance cooperation in various counter piracy initiatives as well as propose others.

The UAE's position as a global hub for trade and commerce together with its significant regional and international partnerships are expected to make the event a key platform for the coordination of the urgent international response to end the far reaching and devastating threats of piracy.

According to the International Maritime Bureau, as of April 14, 2011 and despite a heightened level of international response, there were at least 107 incidents of attacks or attempted attacks on commercial cargo ships in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and off the east African coast – with 17 vessels hijacked. At least 26 ships are currently estimated to be under pirate control, together with 532 mariners held captive, many in appalling conditions. In addition to the devastating human cost of piracy, the financial cost to global trade is also huge, with estimates as high as US\$12 billion a year.

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