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வெளிநாட்டு அமைச்சு
FOREIGN MINISTRY

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Media Release

Foreign Ministry hosts webinar to review measures of Port State Control and Maritime Safety and Security in the Indian Ocean Region

Eminent international legal luminaries, Managing Director and Head of Projects for Morocco and Sudan at the Max Planck Foundation Prof. Rüdiger Wolfrum and Director of the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea located at the Faculty of Law, UiT the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Prof. Tore Henriksen were among the speakers at a webinar organized by the Foreign Ministry on 04 May 2021, as part of its responsibilities as the lead country for the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Working Group on Maritime Safety and security on the theme “Port State Control (PSC) and Maritime Safety and Security (MSS) in the Indian Ocean Region”.

PSC inspections are intended as a second line of defence against substandard shipping and as a backup to flag State implementation. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted resolution A.682(17) on Regional co-operation in the control of ships and discharges promoting the conclusion of regional agreements. A ship going to a port in one country will normally visit other countries in the region and it can, therefore, be more efficient if inspections can be closely coordinated in order to focus on substandard ships and to avoid multiple inspections. This ensures that as many ships as possible are inspected but at the same time prevents ships being delayed by unnecessary inspections. The primary responsibility for ships' standards rests with the flag State - but PSC provides a "safety net" to identify substandard ships.

Given the broad scope of PSC, the Webinar was divided into two parts. Session One dealt with PSC, Maritime Safety and Security and the Law of the Sea. This part was more theoretical in nature, and discussed the meaning and scope of PSC; the relationship between improving MSS and PSC; and the legal regime governing PSC under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other international instruments. This included presentations on the interconnectedness between PSC and MSS, focussing on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing) as well as a brief discussion of the international instruments enacted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) providing measures for PSC.

Session II dealt with PSC in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) – Towards Harmonization and Strengthening Regional Practices. This part discussed technical and regional issues relating to PSC and MSS in the IOR. This part included a comparative analysis of the Indian Ocean MoU in light of other PSC regimes, with a view to identifying challenges, opportunities and best practices that

can enhance PSC in the IOR. Secondly, the session included a discussion around seaworthiness and PSC, focusing on inspections under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), and the practical issues and best practices in this regard. Thirdly, it discussed about optimizing PSC procedures to respond to trans-national maritime crime and terrorism, and the challenges and opportunities that may arise in this regard.

In conclusion, the panel agreed that a better understanding of PSC, including the legal foundation of PSC and the interconnectedness between PSC and MSS is needed and that measures should be taken to strengthen domestic PSC regimes, which will in turn further MSS-related objectives within the IOR. Achieving a better understanding of PSC and creating awareness would assist in effectively implementing the objectives of the Jakarta Concord, the IORA Action Plan (2017-2021) and the Work Plan of the WGMSS and would strengthen the shared identity of the IOR and encourage regional collective responses to MSS-related issues. Relevance of PSC measures for IORA Member States in benefiting from ocean resources in a sustainable manner too was highlighted.

For Sri Lanka, implementing of PSC measures effectively as well as signing up to other ancillary regional and international instruments connected to ocean governance, augments well with its endeavours to effectively promote the country as a maritime and a logistic hub, leveraging its geo-strategic location.

The other speakers included Master Mariner Captain Upul Peiris from the Merchant Shipping Secretariat, former Executive Director of Ceylon Shipping Corporation Dr. Dan Malika Gunasekera and Senior Deputy Solicitor General at the Attorney General's Department Vikum De Abrew. The Webinar was moderated by Director General of Ocean Affairs, Environment & Climate Change of the Foreign Ministry Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake who also delivered the Opening Remarks at the Webinar. 50 participants comprising of senior officials, academics and practitioners from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners joined the webinar.

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