

Address by Mr. Alan Cole, Head, Global Maritime Crime Programme (UNODC)

Moderator,

Distinguish Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Director of UNODC Mr. Yuri Fedotov, let me thank the Sri Lanka Navy and the Government of Sri Lanka for the invitation to UNODC to participate at the 7th Galle Dialogue. It is always a pleasure to visit Sri Lanka and in particular the Galle Dialogue given the exceptional arrangements and organization of the conference. The Galle Dialogue has now well established as a premier international conference of the Indian Ocean region. Indeed it is a privilege to present before such a distinguish audience.

As most of you are aware the mandate of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is to develop cooperation both at a regional and international level, and build law enforcement capacity among member states to counter serious organized crime. In so far as crimes associated with the maritime domain is concerned, the Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) takes the leadership role within UNODC to develop the strategic vision and strengthen the operational capabilities for maritime law enforcement.

In support of this, the Global Maritime Crime Programme delivers programming in littoral states across the Indian Ocean, Atlantic and the Pacific.

In the Indian Ocean region, GMCP has achieved in stemming the threat of maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia. The Piracy Prosecution Model developed by GMCP provided a regional solution to a regional problem. GMCP supported prosecution of pirates detained on the

high seas of the Indian Ocean in four countries namely, Kenya, Seychelles, Mauritius and Tanzania. The piracy prosecution model has been responsible for the trial of 323 suspected Somali pirates in three piracy prosecution states. The establishment of a viable deterrent mechanism together with enhanced naval presence and on-board security measures contributed to a sharp decline in successful piracy attacks. There has not been a successful pirate attack on large commercial vessels off the coast of Somalia in the last three years. That said, the threat of piracy remains as the motivations for piracy and conditions in Somalia remain unchanged.

We believe there is a need to develop a more sustainable strategy to counter maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia. In this regard we are building local capacity within Somalia to effectively monitor and patrol the Somali coastline. GMCP has five project offices based in Somalia developing maritime law enforcement capacity,

procuring boats and developing a coastal monitoring capability.

GMCP is now embarking on combating maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. We have made the first steps in achieving this objective by supporting the West African states enact piracy legislation. We are happy to report that this year Togo enacted piracy laws which will now enable the prosecution of suspected maritime pirates. In the next few months we expect several West African states to enact piracy legislation which we have helped develop.

In West Africa, we have also developed MDA capability using satellite imagery to better understand the pattern of life at sea in an effort to counter fisheries crime. Our pilot project of analyzing satellite imagery off the seas of Sao Tome and Principe identified potential vessels engaged in fisheries crime.

We are working on developing a counter narcotics programme in the Caribbean to combat the trafficking of Cocaine in that region.

In the Pacific, GMCP will develop maritime law enforcement dialogues that will enhance regional cooperation and operational capability.

We may not be across all the seven seas as yet, but we are definitely engaged where it matters most to counter maritime crime.

The topic assigned to me which is “Results Oriented Partnerships to Prevent Emerging Maritime Crimes” is very pertinent especially in relation to the Indian Ocean region.

The high seas of the Indian Ocean continue to be used for the pursuit of criminal enterprise and one crime above others has emerged as a significant threat in the Indian

Ocean in the last few years, the trafficking of Afghan heroin.

UNODC terms this trafficking route the ‘Southern Route’ and it involves the movement of drugs by sea from the Makran Coast to East Africa and South Asia

The key attraction of the southern route for narcotics trafficking is the lack of enforcement capacity on the high seas. Dhows depart from the Makran coast with heroin consignments to drop-offs points near the Swahili coast in East Africa or points near Sri Lanka or Maldives in South Asia.

In the Western Indian Ocean region, the US led Combined Maritime Force (CMF) has seized over 9300kgs of heroin at sea in the last three years. While these account for some of the largest heroin seizures globally, it’s simply a drop in the ocean when compared to the volumes trafficked on the Southern Route. It is estimated that 30-

40% of the heroin production from Afghanistan is trafficked via the Southern Route.

I must commend the work of the Sri Lanka Navy and the Police Narcotics Bureau for the interdiction of a dhow trafficking 101 kg of heroin in March 2016. This mid sea operation conducted off the Southern Coast of Sri Lanka demonstrated the capability and commitment of the Sri Lanka Navy to counter narcotics trafficking in the Indian Ocean. This seizure is the largest heroin seizure at sea by an Indian Ocean island state. We are confident that other Indian Ocean littoral states will follow the example set by the Sri Lankan Navy.

In an effort to meet the challenges faced by the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, GMCP convened the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC). The IOFM narcotics trafficking, fisheries crime and terrorism support, with a cross-cutting group the Indian Ocean Prosecutors Network. The IOFMC reflects in the best

possible sense a results oriented partnership to prevent emerging maritime crimes.

The drug trafficking group of IOFMC has held three plenary meetings since 2015, and not surprisingly two of which were in Colombo. In addition to the formal and informal interactions between the drug enforcement community of the Indian Ocean Region, the group has developed practical and operational engagement.

We have been reliably informed that the contact list distributed after the last meeting in October 2015 proved invaluable for regional coordination during a recent seizure of heroin in April this year. It is not only the deliberations during the meetings but also the regular updates on counter narcotics activity that maintains the vibrancy of the IOFMC drug trafficking group.

In another seizure in March this year the Compendium of Drug Seizures at Sea proved to be a valuable asset to

determine the drug stamps and comparison with other seizures.

The collection of data has also improved with regional states making the extra effort to conduct purity and adulterant testing required for the submissions to the Compendium based on the standardized data sets.

IOFMC convened a meeting of experts in March 2016 to examine the use of isotope values to establish geo-locations on the origins of the heroin and establish if such areas are under the control of the Taliban and thereby establishing a link to funding of terrorism. Now the Royal Australian Navy through the Australian Federal Police is providing Isotope data for all drug seizures at sea.

There has also been South-South Cooperation generated as a result of IOFMC. The Sri Lanka Navy provided a one month residential VBSS training programme facilitated by UNODC for boarding teams from Madagascar and

Comoros in March this year. This training has served to be invaluable in strengthening the counter narcotics capability for maritime drug seizures in the Mozambique Channel region. The Sri Lanka Navy has offered to provide VBSS training to other states of the Indian Ocean region in partnership with UNODC.

IOFMC is also conducting a pilot initiative to track the onward route of a drug stamp to destination markets. The IOFMC Compendium of Drug Seizures at Sea documented all drug stamps found on seizures at sea. Further investigations revealed that one specific drug stamp was found in the UK on several occasions. IOFMC together with NCA embarked on an ambitious initiative to establish if the same drug stamp was found in other jurisdictions. This will indicate the reach of the distribution network and provide more details relating to onward routes.

There is no doubt, efforts of the drug enforcement agencies, coast guards and naval forces of the region have had an impact and all credit to the dedicated officers from these agencies. However, we can do more and must do more, to prevent narco-criminal networks gaining a foothold in this region.

Look no further than criminality surrounding cocaine trafficking in parts of South and Central America. The shadow of narco-criminal networks impact almost every sphere of life. It is governments of the Indian Ocean region take pro-active steps to avert this region spiraling down that path.

There is no doubt the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC) has played a pivotal role in reshaping the counter narcotics paradigm in the Indian Ocean region.

While there is much success to talk about, there is also a compelling need for all stakeholders in this space to work

in a more collaborative approach so that we maximize the impact of our work.

There is a wealth of expertise in this region which we need to harness, there is also goodwill among the drug enforcement agencies, coast guards and naval forces for better regional cooperation. The donors, international organizations and partner agencies remain committed to support the region.

The Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC in partnership with the Ministry of law & Order in Sri Lanka, convened a High Level Meeting of Interior Ministers of the Indian Ocean Region on 29 October 2016 at the BMICH here in Colombo. The high level meeting was well attend by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Special Envoys from 18 Indian Ocean states that adopted the Colombo Declaration which gave birth to the Southern Route Partnership.

The Southern Route Partnership will provide a platform for improved collaboration and coordination of counter narcotics initiatives in the Indian Ocean region. The SRP will have three pillars,

Pillar 1 of the Southern Route Partnership (SRP) will focus on capacity building for maritime drug enforcement. The need for improved capability both in terms of specialized skills and training, and technical support were identified. As a way forward, the national drug enforcement agencies, international organisations and partner law enforcement agencies engaged in counter narcotics operations in the Indian Ocean region and will,

- a) Identify priority areas for intervention, in particular developing capacity and capability of national drug enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, coast guards and naval forces to counter drug trafficking in the maritime domain.**

- b) Nominate agency focal points to the Southern Route Partnership (SRP) to improve coordination and collaboration.**
- c) Convene regular Southern Route Partnership (SRP) focal points meetings using virtual technology.**
- d) Convene regular Southern Route Partnership (SRP) focal points meetings using virtual technology.**
- e) Circulate a quarterly update of programming activity by international organizations and partner law enforcement agencies to better target the Southern Route and prevent duplication and overlap of efforts.**
- f) Encourage joint initiatives and sharing of expertise between international organizations and partner agencies to better target drug trafficking on the Southern Route**

Pillar 2 of the Southern Route Partnership will focus on Illicit Financial Flows and follow the money trails. The need for expertise in financial investigation to augment investigative tools in drug investigations was identified and in this regard will,

- a) Develop a framework to enhance the understanding of financial flows relating to the Southern Route.**
- b) Convene a Southern Route financial flows meeting bringing together financial investigators and drug enforcement officials from the Indian Ocean region to develop strategies to target the financial proceeds derived from drug trafficking on the Southern Route. The meeting will be held at the end of February 2017 in Zanzibar, Tanzania.**
- c) Capacity building for financial investigation,**
 - Enhance financial investigation capability of drug enforcement agencies and financial intelligence units (FIU).**

- **Develop training on evidence collection for financial investigations.**
 - **Training on digital forensics in financial investigations.**
- d) Continue to pursue the outcomes of the Heroin Signature testing and IRMS (Isotope) meeting in March 2016 in Colombo to identify seized heroin to cultivation regions in Afghanistan.**

Pillar 3 of the Southern Route Partnership will focus on regulating dhow fleets of Indian Ocean states and the related activities such as,

- a) Share information on the details of dhow registration books found on drug dhows with the UNSC investigation bodies such as the UNSC Res 1988 Sanction Team and the UNSC Res 2244**

Team to link dhow owners transporting drug to supporting the funding of terrorism.

- b) Engage with states having large fleets of dhows that engage in trans-continental cargo movement to improve the regulatory framework and better monitoring of dhow movements.**

In addition to establishing the Southern Route Partnership, the Colombo Declaration called on littoral states of the Indian Ocean to work towards making the Indian Ocean a Drug Free Zone.

The Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNDOC will provide the Secretariat role for the Southern Route Partnership and in support of this and wider focus on South Asia and the Bay of Bengal, UNODC will open an office in Sri Lanka from 01 January 2017.

We are confident with a resident presence in Colombo, UNODC will be well positioned to better address issues related to maritime crime in the Indian Ocean region.

In so far as developing results oriented partnerships to prevent emerging maritime crimes, the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC) and within it, the Southern Route Partnership stand out as exemplar mechanisms that deliver practical results and set attainable goals for the future. GMCP is proud to be part of such an active forum and support its growth.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Sri Lanka Navy for organizing this prestigious forum and the foresight to include elements on maritime crime and law enforcement. UNODC is always happy to contribute to such forums. We have been part of the Galle Dialogue

**since 2014 and look forward to continue the partnership
in the future.**

Thank you for your kind attention.