



# Security Council

Eightieth year

## 9919

<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 20 May 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Mitsotakis/Mr. Gerapetritis/Mr. Stamatekos. . . . .	(Greece)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria. . . . .	Mr. Yahiaoui
	China. . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark . . . . .	Mr. Ruge
	France . . . . .	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Guyana . . . . .	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Pakistan. . . . .	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama . . . . .	Mr. Hoyos
	Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Totangi
	Slovenia. . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia . . . . .	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America. . . . .	Ms. Shea

## Agenda

### Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening maritime security through international cooperation for global stability

Letter dated 9 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2025/300)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

#### **Strengthening maritime security through international cooperation for global stability**

#### **Letter dated 9 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2025/300)**

**The President:** I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, Ministers and other high-level representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

Before each member is a list of speakers who have requested to participate in accordance with rules 37 and 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, as well as the previous practice of the Council in this regard. We propose that they be invited to participate in this meeting.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2025/300, which contains the text of a letter dated 9 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres.

**The Secretary-General:** I thank the presidency of Greece for convening today's open debate on the importance of strengthening maritime security through international cooperation. This debate underscores first of all that the basic condition to preserve maritime security is the respect by all countries of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

From time immemorial, maritime routes have bound the world together. They have long been the primary means for the trade and transport of not only people, goods and commodities, but also cultures and ideas.

All of humankind depends on the world's oceans and seas — from the oxygen we breathe to the biodiversity that sustains all life, to the economies, trade and jobs supported by maritime industries.

Today's debate shines a light on a fundamental fact: without maritime security, there can be no global security.

But maritime spaces are increasingly under strain from both traditional threats and emerging dangers — from challenges around contested boundaries to the depletion of natural resources at sea, to escalating geopolitical tensions fanning the flames of competition, conflict and crime.

Over the years, the Security Council has sought to address a range of threats that undermine maritime security and global peace — from piracy, armed robbery, trafficking and organized crime to destructive acts against shipping, offshore installations and critical infrastructure, to terrorism in the maritime domain, which poses a significant threat to international security, global trade and economic stability. No region is spared. And the problem is getting worse.

After a modest global decrease in reported piracy and armed robbery incidents in 2024, the first quarter of 2025 saw a sharp upward reversal. According to the International Maritime Organization, reported incidents rose by nearly half — 47.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2024. Incidents in Asia nearly doubled, especially in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. In the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, attacks by the Houthis on commercial vessels have disrupted global trade and increased tensions in an already volatile region. The Gulf of Aden and the Mediterranean Sea remain treacherously active routes for migrant smuggling and the trafficking of weapons and human beings. The Gulf of Guinea continues to grapple with piracy, kidnappings, armed robbery at sea, oil theft, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and the illicit trafficking in drugs, weapons and people. Heroin from Afghanistan continues to reach East Africa through the Indian Ocean. Cocaine moves through the coasts of the Western Hemisphere and across the Atlantic Ocean to West Africa and European ports. And cyberattacks are a fast-emerging security threat for ports and shipping companies. Facing those and other threats, the world's maritime routes and the people depending on them are sending a clear SOS.

Across the United Nations system, our agencies are supporting many regional initiatives that are gathering partners around maritime security across the globe. That includes initiatives to address insecurity from the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea to the Gulf of Guinea and the Persian Gulf. It includes efforts to ensure safe navigation in the Black Sea. It includes our work to help countries build strong maritime forces and legal systems. It includes efforts to tackle armed robbery against ships in Asia and fight piracy off the coast of Somalia. It includes our support of the Yaoundé Architecture for maritime security — an interregional, multilevel coordination mechanism to counter piracy in West and Central Africa — which has seen a decline in piracy from 81 incidents in 2020 to just 18 last year. And the International Maritime Organization continues to play a fundamental role in de-escalating tensions at sea and bringing together Member States and the shipping industry to find solutions.

Looking ahead, action is needed in three key areas.

First, there must be respect for international law. Respect for international law is the anchor of maritime security. The international legal regime for maritime security — with the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at its core — strikes a careful balance between States' sovereign rights, jurisdictions and freedoms and their duties and obligations. And it provides a strong cooperative framework for addressing crimes at sea and ensuring accountability. However, that framework is only as strong as States' commitment to full and effective implementation. All States must live up to their obligations. And they must resolve any differences in relation to maritime security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, we need to intensify efforts to address the root causes of maritime insecurity. Threats to maritime security cannot be addressed without also addressing issues such as poverty, a lack of alternative livelihoods, insecurity and weak governance structures. Across the United Nations family, we are working with impoverished coastal communities to develop new opportunities for decent and sustainable work. Collectively, we must do more to reduce the likelihood that desperate people will turn to crime and other activities that threaten maritime security and degrade our ocean environment. We must help developing countries build their capacity to deal with those threats through technology, training, capacity-building, judicial reforms and modernized naval forces, marine police units, maritime surveillance and port security. And we need to ensure that our oceans and seas can continue thriving and support humankind's economic, social, cultural and environmental development for generations to come. The upcoming Oceans Conference in Nice will provide an important moment for the countries of the world to take action.

*(spoke in French)*

And thirdly, we need partnerships at all levels. We must involve everyone with a stake in maritime spaces in action we take in this area — from coastal communities to Governments, regional groups, shipping companies, flag registries, the fishing and extraction industries, insurers and port operators, as well as the Security Council, which has drawn attention to maritime security and the need for collective action, de-escalation and cooperation, and civil society groups focused on women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by challenges such as piracy and human trafficking. As threats to maritime security are becoming more complex and interconnected, enhanced coordination and stronger maritime governance are essential.

The United Nations system stands ready to continue to support the Council and all Member States in ensuring peaceful, secure and prosperous maritime spaces for generations to come. Let us take action to preserve and secure maritime spaces and the communities and people who count on them.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Travlos.

**Ms. Travlos:** It is a privilege and an honour to be here today, at the heart of global peace and security, to address an issue that transcends borders and unites our collective interests. I would like to express my gratitude to the Greek Government and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis for highlighting the vital importance of maritime security.

Greece is a proud maritime nation, by identity and by history. Greek shipping accounts for over 20 per cent of the global, and 61 per cent of the European Union, fleet. That achievement is not just a point of national pride; it is a testament to Greece's lasting legacy of maritime excellence.

The security of our seas affects everyone, everywhere. It is a significant imperative of our time yet often overlooked. The seas are not merely boundaries between nations; they are the lifeblood of global trade and stability, connecting our economies and sustaining our societies.

Allow me to present the facts: 110,000 ships navigate the seas globally, carrying 90 per cent of international trade efficiently, reliably, cost-effectively. More than 12 billion tons of goods are transported annually — food, medicines, energy, raw materials, consumer goods — everything that sustains our daily lives. Even 1.3 million kilometres of undersea cables for communication and electric power transmission are laid by ships. At the heart of our industry stand nearly 2 million seafarers working day and night to keep the world moving.

A recent joint study by the World Maritime University and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development produced staggering results. If the global shipping system were to come to a halt, the world economy — indeed the entire planet — would collapse within 90 days.

Shipping is more than a means of trade; it is the silent guardian of global welfare. It unites the world, not occasionally, but consistently. It delivers, under any circumstances, even during universal crises.

In the coronavirus disease pandemic, when all other sectors shut down, we kept supply chains alive, delivering the medicines and goods that people needed everywhere. Yet national restrictions kept seafarers isolated and deprived of access to medical care, a human right taken for granted by those of us on shore.

In humanitarian crises such as mass migration and displacement, our vessels regularly participate in rescue operations. But let us be clear, merchant ships are neither designed nor equipped for large-scale rescue missions. While we diligently uphold our legal obligations and moral duty, States must assume their own responsibilities.

Our industry never truly sails through calm waters. We have always lived with the perils of the sea — they come with the job. But today's multiple risks go far beyond them. Shipping is increasingly being weaponized — economically, politically and physically.

Piracy is not a distant memory. It is evolving, not retreating. It poses constant risks to vessels, crews and cargoes. In 2024, 116 incidents were reported, approximately 50 per cent more than in the previous year.

Geopolitical conflict and political instability are increasingly endangering security at sea. An unprecedented number of commercial vessels have been attacked with military weapons — missiles, bombs, torpedoes, mines and drones. Crew members have been killed or taken hostage. Ships and cargoes have been lost.

Organized crime at sea — drug trafficking, arms smuggling and human trafficking — is also a growing threat that exposes the vulnerability of ships to crimes beyond the industry's control, leading to its unfair penalization.

Now, a new frontier of danger has emerged — cyber warfare. A single cyberattack can disrupt a vessel's operations, compromise safety at sea, leak sensitive commercial data or even trigger environmental disasters. In addition, the growing misuse by criminal networks of artificial intelligence and digital tracking technologies turn vessels into highly visible sitting ducks for targeted attacks.

We, as an industry, work tirelessly to safeguard maritime security. We constantly update our industry's best management practices, strictly adhere to global security regulations, cooperate closely with naval forces in high-risk regions and even, when necessary, adopt self-protection measures, such as placing armed guards aboard civilian merchant vessels.

Responding swiftly and effectively to changing conditions is a hard fact of our job. But to have to resort to our people's own resourcefulness in order to deal on the spot with potentially fatal security emergencies should, certainly, not be part of that job. Although our industry is resilient, it cannot and should not be expected to carry every burden alone. Its resilience should never be assumed, it should be assured.

A global commitment is needed to uphold maritime security as a high priority and a standing policy issue within the United Nations; to embrace a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated maritime security governance; and to include the shipping industry's valuable experience and know-how when addressing old and new maritime security threats.

In the dynamic maritime security landscape, we must shift from reaction to prevention, from crisis response to crisis readiness. I would use the Greek word synergy to describe how maritime security should be addressed. It cannot be achieved in silos.

We recognize and applaud the United Nations' steadfast commitment to solidarity and global cooperation, and we praise the personal engagement of Secretary-General António Guterres in that regard. We all need to embody the spirit of the United Nations in its truest form, standing together, not just in name but in purpose. We need to collectively defend the freedom of navigation, as a shared global responsibility and a cornerstone of peace and humankind. The seas must be open, free, safe and secure.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Travlos for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Bueger.

**Mr. Bueger:** At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to Greece for convening this high-level open debate and for the invitation to participate.

In 2021, a single ship — the *Ever Given* — blocked the Suez Canal for just six days, costing the global economy billions of dollars and disrupting supply chains worldwide. That stark reminder of our maritime vulnerability underscores a critical truth — never before in history have we been as dependent on the sea as we are today. The data are clear; since the 1990s, our use of the sea has been massively accelerating, with maritime trade increasing by 300 per cent and nearly 60 per cent of global oil and gas supplies being transported across the oceans. That expansion leads to new threats and vulnerabilities.

Maritime security is a vital component of international security and peace. It is about protecting the lifeline of the global economy, trade and communications, and ensuring access to energy and food for billions of people worldwide.

Over the past two decades, that reality has increasingly been reflected on the Council's agenda. Threats to peace and security — ranging from transnational blue crimes such as piracy, sanctions violations and armed attacks on shipping, to the spillover of conflict from land — have recurrently featured in Council discussions. However, as discussed at the 2021 high-level open debate on maritime security, the Council has been dealing with those issues in an ad hoc manner. There are no sustained efforts to address maritime security systematically. Consequently, many emerging issues lack adequate attention. Today presents an opportunity for the Council to lay out pathways for meaningful change and to recalibrate collective efforts.

In 2024, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research launched a new workstream on maritime security. As part of that, I had the pleasure to lead a first comprehensive assessment of global maritime security and of how the United Nations system can address it more effectively. Allow me to highlight four key insights from our research.

First, despite significant international efforts, blue crimes such as piracy and smuggling persist, and they continue to undermine regional stability. The resurgence of piracy off the coast of Somalia last year — previously believed to be contained — serves as an important reminder that our efforts in combating crimes at sea must be sustainable. Specifically, small island States and States recovering from war need ongoing, not intermittent, support.

Secondly, our report details a set of arising maritime security challenges. The proliferation of autonomous weapons systems, naval mines, maritime cybersecurity threats, substandard shipping linked to sanction evasion and the need to protect critical maritime infrastructure, such as Internet cables or green energy platforms, all require sustained and systematic attention.

Thirdly, there is a strong need for evidence-based decision-making. We need a clear understanding of where maritime security threats are evolving, where they are escalating and how they can be addressed. Yet, so far, we lack such evidence on a global level. The ongoing World Ocean Assessment — to give but one example — barely considers maritime security. New initiatives — such as the International Platform for Ocean Sustainability, which will be launched at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Nice this year — do not adequately address security dimensions either. We launched the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research maritime security workstream to assist, but more efforts are needed.



Fourthly, it is our conclusion that the United Nations system's approach to maritime security needs recalibration and streamlining. There is no global strategy and no coordination instrument in place. More than 22 agencies address aspects of maritime security under different mandates. That includes what we call in the report the Big Five: the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration. None of those has a comprehensive mandate. That implies that there is a high risk of duplication and reduced effectiveness in capacity-building.

The Council should therefore consider supporting and synchronizing coordination, information-sharing and strategic thinking. That could be done through a standing item on the Council agenda. For instance, the women and peace and security agenda might serve as a useful template. The Council should also consider creating an office of a special rapporteur. That would enable the United Nations as a whole to address maritime security more consistently and ensure that capacity-building becomes more effective. As the waters that connect us face growing threats, our response must be equally connected. The security of our oceans is not merely a matter of protecting shipping lanes — it is about safeguarding our shared ocean future. I urge the members of the Council to chart a course towards more systematic, evidence-based and coordinated maritime security governance.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Bueger for his briefing and his very concrete suggestions.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic.

I thank everyone for joining us here today for this open debate on maritime security. Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the role of the United Nations in addressing this very important issue. This is the right place to have a discussion on maritime security. The United Nations is at the centre of international efforts to protect and preserve our oceans. As the Secretary-General pointed out, it is the custodian of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and it is the locus of international cooperation to address global challenges that affect us all. I would like to personally commend Secretary-General Guterres for his tireless efforts on the matter and to thank him again for his presence here today.

Threats to maritime security are indeed of a global dimension. They affect all nations, whether coastal or landlocked. As Ms. Travlos pointed out, maritime security is critical for the safety of our global supply chains. More than 80 per cent of the volume of international trade is carried by ship. A secure maritime domain promotes global political stability, economic stability — including price stability — sustainable development and the well-being of all people. We are increasingly encountering asymmetrical maritime threats, such as smuggling, terrorism and piracy, but also hybrid attacks, which equally affect ships, connections and ports. At the same time, rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions may distort port operations and shipping routes. Global problems need global solutions, and threats to maritime security are no different. We can only address them effectively through international cooperation, whether at State level, the level of international organizations or private sector level. It is clear that we must do more, and such efforts should place emphasis on six key areas.

First, we must have increased maritime domain awareness — effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could affect security, safety, the economy or the marine environment. That requires us to improve global education and information-sharing mechanisms and integrate new technologies to improve surveillance capabilities, communication and information-sharing.

Artificial intelligence should be part of that project, keeping in mind the potential dangers that it may connote.

Secondly, we must tackle any unsafe or illicit shipping practices that pose a serious threat to global trade but also to the marine environment. Those include fraudulent activities related to registration in the maritime sector, substandard shipping and sanctions evasion, but also phenomena such as shadow fleets, for which Greece shows no tolerance. Once again, coordination and prevention are the key issues in order to improve monitoring and enhance the effective implementation of the relevant international instruments. That macroscopic vision is the only effective one in that respect.

Thirdly, enhancing capacity-building, including law enforcement capacities, in the fields of navigation, ports and connectivity, is key to combating security threats. The Secretary-General referred to the situation in the Red Sea over the past few years, which is a typical case of a serious maritime threat that may reasonably result in the increase of prices of essential goods, and that is something that affects all of us. Collective action in those cases is inevitable. My country's strong engagement in the matter is demonstrated by the leading role that Greece has assumed in European Union's naval Operation Aspides, but also in Operation Atalanta and the European Union military operation in the Mediterranean. Capacity-building should equally focus on promoting safe and resilient ports and on addressing cybersecurity issues. That should include the development of digital skills in the wider range of the maritime cluster, including supply chains. And very importantly, the freedom of electricity and data connectivity, via submarine cables, is something — and I reiterate this to the Secretary-General — that should be non-negotiable. That is a prerequisite for diversified, high-quality and affordable energy and data connectivity, which is a critical issue for the entire world.

Fourthly, reinforcement of legal frameworks is, again, essential. In that respect, UNCLOS sets out the basis for global governance at sea in order to address current and emerging security threats. UNCLOS basically reflects international customary law and must be altogether respected. We also need to further enhance the work of the International Maritime Organization, especially with reference to international rule-making and the protection of the seas. More effective coordination is required for the various offices currently operating under the auspices of the United Nations, as Mr. Bueger pointed out.

Fifthly, there is the environmental dimension, which is also a security challenge. The implications of climate change and environmental degradation multiply existing threats and have a wider effect on global stability. We must work to counter marine pollution and the environmental risks to our security posed by illegal dumping, discharges and anthropogenic emissions, in violation of international standards. The salvage of the *MV Sounion* tanker in the Red Sea in 2024 was a case in point. That salvage prevented a huge environmental and humanitarian catastrophe, highlighting the global dimension of maritime security and its far-reaching repercussions. Last year, we hosted, in Athens, the ninth "Our Ocean" Conference, at which more than 100 delegations made upwards of 400 pledges, exceeding \$10 billion in value.

Sixthly, we should not disregard the need to enhance the protection and security of the 2 million seafarers who secure international maritime transport and uninterrupted operation of the global trade. As an old maritime motto underlines, without them half of the world would freeze, and half of the world would starve. Recalling the recent extreme risks to which seafarers have been exposed, ranging from the pandemic to war hostilities and terrorist attacks, we must bear in mind that their well-being and their continuous training in new operational modes are necessary for maritime safety.



Maritime security is directly and closely related to the core values of the free world. No one can really enjoy the well-established principle of the freedom of the seas or that of the related freedom to commerce and trade, ensuring economic and peaceful interconnection, without the prerequisite of maritime security. And today I am happy to realize, as evidenced by the broad participation of Member States in this debate, that we share the view that maritime security is of the utmost importance.

Greece is the country with the largest merchant maritime fleet in the world. It is a maritime nation with a rich and deep seafaring history, thousands of islands and one of the world's longest coastlines — a real cross-trading nation connecting and contributing to the supply of dozens of third countries. For us as Greeks, the sea has always been part of our identity. I am privileged to participate in this discussion, and before all those present, I wish to make the firm commitment that the country that I am honoured to represent, Greece, will remain the guardian of the freedom of navigation. Hand in hand with all Members of the United Nations, we will work together to champion that very important cause during our Security Council tenure and beyond.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Hoyos** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama expresses its gratitude to the presidency of the Council for convening this meeting. We welcome and appreciate the participation of the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Georgios Gerapetritis; and the representatives of the other delegations, who honour us with their presence. We extend our greetings and thanks to His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations. We also acknowledge the participation of Ms. Melina Travlos, President and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Union of Greek Shipowners, and Mr. Christian Bueger, Professor of International Relations at the University of Copenhagen and researcher at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. We thank them for their valuable presentations.

International maritime security faces increasingly complex threats and challenges. In accordance with public international law, maritime security must be based on fundamental principles that seek to protect the freedom of navigation, human life at sea and the marine environment and to prevent pollution, in addition to protecting the means for the harmonious development of all nations.

Custom and various instruments of international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, enshrine fundamental principles and rules, such as the jurisdiction of States over the seas, maritime safety and the fundamental rules that enshrine the freedom of navigation and the right to navigation. Maritime navigation, a fundamental pillar of globalization, has been a key driver of the development of nations by facilitating trade through an extensive network of interconnected trade routes.

Currently, international maritime transport moves approximately 80 per cent of the world's goods. In an increasingly complex geopolitical context, that vast global interconnection faces growing challenges that imperil its security and stability. However, there are threats to those principles, such as border disputes, competition for natural resources, piracy, terrorist attacks and transnational organized crime. Those risks are compounded by the worrisome erosion of respect for international law, especially the law of the sea. That erosion weakens existing legal frameworks and hinders efforts to ensure peaceful maritime governance based on international cooperation.

The increase in attacks against commercial ships and vessels in the world's major shipping lanes, which are vital to global trade, not only poses a direct threat to innocent human lives but also does grave harm to the shipping industry and, consequently, to the global economy. During 2024, the international shipping industry faced one of the most critical periods in its recent history. The escalation of attacks perpetrated by the Houthis in the Red Sea caused a severe disruption to commercial shipping, significantly affecting global supply chains and compromising maritime security on one of the most strategic international trade routes. As a result, more than 100 vessels of different flags were attacked by drones, explosive devices, vessel-boarding and other methods, including such acts of extreme gravity as the kidnapping of the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, whom the Houthis have held illegally for more than a year.

Those unfortunate events should serve as a wake-up call to the international community regarding the urgent need to put an end to arbitrary detentions and acts of kidnapping, practices that not only violate international law, but also jeopardize the security and stability of global maritime trade. The seriousness of the situation has forced many shipowners to divert their vessels in order to avoid high-risk areas, opting for safer alternative routes. That measure has led to a considerable increase in transit times, pollutant emissions and operating costs. In particular, by being forced to reroute their routes around the Cape of Good Hope, shipping companies have increased emissions from their vessels by 70 per cent, further exacerbating the carbon footprint at a critical moment in the fight against climate change. That situation directly affects the preservation of the marine environment, despite the fact that maritime transport remains, in relative terms, one of the most environmentally friendly methods of transport.

In recognition of the importance of the service provided by our geographical belt to global maritime transportation, the freedom of navigation and maritime safety as universal rights, the Republic of Panama, as territorial sovereign and administrator of the Panama Canal, solemnly declares that the Canal — as a waterway for international transit — shall be permanently neutral so that, in times both of peace and of war, the Canal will remain safe and open for the peaceful transit of all the vessels of the world, under conditions of complete equality and without discrimination of any kind. During the past 25 years, Panama, with full sovereignty, assumed both the efficient and peaceful administration of the Panama Canal and its total modernization and expansion to make the Canal one of the most competitive and safest inter-oceanic routes for global maritime trade.

Our strong commitment to the development of maritime navigation and the protection of trade routes is faithfully reflected in our firm conviction that the expansion and modernization of the Panama Canal, a work financed entirely by the Republic of Panama and inaugurated in 2016, continues to effectively serve global shipping, allowing the safe and uninterrupted passage of Post-Panamax and Neo-Panamax vessels, linking 188 maritime routes globally, increasing the Canal's operational capacity and boosting the growth and development of international trade. Panama's motto is *pro mundi beneficio* — for the benefit of the world — and that is what we believe the canal is intended for.

As a nation with a close relationship with the sea, we have witnessed the effects that environmental factors can have on the security of our maritime routes and on the functioning of the Panama Canal. In particular, a severe drought exceeding the events the Panama Canal historically experiences, which it has faced and managed, caused water levels to drop, forcing us to implement additional measures to ensure the proper functioning of the Panama Canal. That situation further highlighted the vulnerability of maritime routes to the challenges of climate change.

The Panama Canal Authority has studied various options for the administration, maintenance, use and preservation of water resources in the water basin in order to address that issue. In addition, it is advancing plans to ensure sufficient water sources to supply both the country's people and the continuous and efficient operation of our Canal.

Panama, with a strong maritime tradition and more than 8,800 vessels flying our flag — representing 15 per cent of the international fleet, equivalent to more than 249 million gross registered tonnage — has strengthened the process for analysing vessels before registration. The process now includes not only technical criteria related to the vessel but also detailed information on the history of the owners and operators. Panama, through the Panama Maritime Authority, has redoubled its efforts to review its merchant fleet through a policy of zero tolerance with regard to the misuse of its flag, with the aim of protecting the reputation of a registry with more than a century of service to the international community.

As a founding member of the Registries Information Sharing Compact — a database shared among maritime registries — our country seeks to limit strategic flagging by ships involved in sanctionable activities. We have strengthened legal mechanisms to sanction illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, to adopt measures against the financing of terrorism and to cancel the registration of vessels in violation or linked to illegal activities, in the latter case, through Executive Decree No. 512 of 2024 and the resolution that regulates it.

With those measures, Panama reaffirms its commitment to a transparent and responsible management of the register of ships, in full compliance with international standards and conventions. However, we remain attentive to important challenges in various areas, which demand international attention and cooperation. Those include attacks on ships and their crews, cyberattacks against navigational and operational systems, the abandonment of ships with seafarers on board without pay or assistance, as well as arbitrary arrests of ships and crew for alleged illicit cargoes.

We are concerned in particular about the practice of arbitrary detentions in certain ports, accompanied by disproportionate penalties which, in many cases, resemble extortionate practices rather than legitimate procedures. In that context, we note that, through the Panama Maritime Authority, our country actively participates as a member of the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network, an international network committed to eradicating corruption in the maritime sector. That membership not only reflects our commitment to the highest standards of integrity but also provides us with the opportunity to work closely with key stakeholders to implement ethical practices that strengthen governance in ports and trade lanes.

Panama continues to strengthen strategic partnerships with member States of the International Maritime Organization and other global maritime industry players, actively participating in key initiatives that seek to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea. It also plays a leading role in the development of global standards aimed at strengthening the safety and security of ships.

In the current situation in the Security Council, concerns about global maritime security are increasing, which provides a propitious and necessary forum to reflect on the importance of protecting strategic maritime routes.

Panama, whose national identity is intrinsically linked to its status as an interoceanic country and sovereign administrator of the Panama Canal, clearly understands the geopolitical and economic value of guaranteeing safe navigation, protecting maritime corridors and ensuring the stability of world trade. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation and the promotion of secure and transparent maritime governance in accordance with international law.

We are convinced that only through dialogue and international cooperation can we safeguard the peace and prosperity of our nations.

**Mr. Ruge** (Denmark): I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Travlos and Professor Bueger for their contributions. I would also like to express my gratitude to Greece for organizing today's important meeting and to Prime Minister Mitsotakis for leading today's debate.

The oceans and seas serve as a vital link between the continents and our nations. Maritime security is a cornerstone of the modern interconnected world and of multilateralism itself.

Let me make four points.

First, let me stress that Denmark reaffirms the centrality and universality of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We call on all States to respect UNCLOS as the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out. Maritime territorial conflicts must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. The freedom of navigation is central to international trade and economic development. With one of the world's largest commercial fleets, Denmark is committed to keeping sea lanes open, and ensuring the safety of all seafarers is absolutely paramount. Denmark has a long maritime history, and its focus far transcends its immediate neighbourhood. In recent years, we have responded to complex maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, in the Red Sea, off the Horn of Africa and in the Strait of Hormuz. We have done that through multinational and coordinated efforts in response to piracy and other attacks on civilian commercial vessels to ensure the freedom of navigation and global maritime security. That reflects Denmark's steadfast commitment to supporting its principled approach to international law and maritime security through tangible and meaningful contributions. We urge all countries to shoulder their responsibility to that end.

Secondly, we need to look at maritime security in a holistic way; challenges are often linked to onshore instability in coastal States, including poverty, law enforcement challenges and climate change. The United Nations is the best framework to address those issues in a comprehensive way. For example, the Council's debates on international piracy since 2008 have contributed to various processes, including those related to security, the administration of justice, law enforcement and outreach to civil society. Together, those processes contributed to a sharp reduction in attacks on commercial shipping in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Guinea. Piracy and other attacks on commercial vessels undermine the resilience of interconnected trade networks and threaten global food and energy security. Organized crime groups operating at sea — including drugs and weapons trafficking, people smuggling, sanctions evasion and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing — further weaken often already fragile States. Those activities can deprive coastal States of the resources and revenue they need for economic development and prosperity. Denmark is working with several developing countries, building national and regional ownership and capacity. That includes assisting with maritime domain awareness, improving coordination and ensuring the sustainable use of their maritime resources.

Thirdly, we must address new and complex threats in the maritime domain. Protecting critical maritime infrastructure is vital for the functioning of our interconnected societies. Attacks on such infrastructure are deplorable and must be prevented. Coastal states' capacities to monitor and respond to maritime threats, above and below the surface, need to be enhanced. The increasing reliance on substandard vessels to evade sanctions, including United Nations sanctions, poses a great risk to the environment, seafarers and maritime safety and security. Those

vessels are often old, poorly maintained, insufficiently insured and sail with their transponders turned off. That is a challenge not only in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, but also in the Straits of Malacca and of Singapore, and in the Mediterranean Sea and elsewhere. If we do not act and ensure effective enforcement, it will only be a matter of time before an oil spill destroys a coastline somewhere.

Finally, Denmark hopes that today's high-level open debate will start a discussion on strengthening our collective response to maritime threats to peace and security, economic prosperity, law and order and sustainable development. Denmark firmly supports a strengthened role for the United Nations in tackling critical maritime security challenges. We believe that enhancing cooperation on information-sharing, capacity-building and exchanging best practices would be in our collective interest. Together, we can ensure a safer, more secure maritime domain for all, fostering stability and prosperity across the globe.

**Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan): Let me begin by thanking Greece for its capable leadership of the Security Council this month and for convening this timely debate on maritime security, an issue of paramount importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. Your personal participation, Mr. Prime Minister, underscores your country's commitment to this domain. With a strong history of seafaring and a substantial modern merchant fleet, Greece plays an important role in global maritime affairs. I would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his insightful and thoughtful remarks. We also appreciate the briefings by Ms. Travlos and Professor Bueger.

As a coastal State, strategically located in the northern Arabian Sea at the confluence of critical international sea lanes, Pakistan attaches the highest importance to a safe and secure maritime domain governed by international law. Our national security, economic resilience, regional connectivity and food and energy security are inextricably linked to the sustainability and openness of our seas.

Contemporary maritime threats are multifaceted and transnational, ranging from piracy, terrorism and trafficking in arms and narcotics, to cyber vulnerabilities in port infrastructure, marine pollution and the escalating climate-induced risks to coastal zones. Confronting those challenges necessitates collective and coordinated action, firmly anchored in international law.

The international legal regime governing maritime activities comprises a broad array of global, regional and bilateral instruments, as well as customary international law. Since its adoption, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its affiliated institutions have served as the cornerstone of the international maritime legal order, also promoting the harmonious, equitable and judicious use of ocean resources for all humankind.

Our oceans must be preserved as arenas for cooperation and shared prosperity, not as theatres of strategic rivalry. In our own immediate neighbourhood, however, we have witnessed a troubling pattern of behaviour by one major country — driven by aspirations of unchecked regional hegemony and marked by aggressive naval expansion and efforts seeking to assert dominance over critical waterways. That destabilizing and dangerous naval build-up is accompanied by coercive diplomacy and the systematic exclusion of neighbouring States from regional maritime security frameworks, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association. Such actions undermine the maritime balance and restrict the space for inclusive cooperation.

That same country has also displayed a concerning propensity to usurp and weaponize shared natural resources — including transboundary rivers — in flagrant breach of treaty obligations and the principles of good neighbourliness. Those actions reflect a broader agenda of leveraging geography to disrupt and destabilize long-standing cooperative arrangements, particularly to the detriment of the lower



riparian State, namely Pakistan, and to impose unilateral outcomes in both the riverine and maritime spheres.

As a maritime nation, Pakistan views the Arabian Sea as its fifth neighbour, integral to its economic vision and strategic orientation. Pakistan's unique geographical positioning offers significant potential to serve as a regional trans-shipment hub, enabling trade and connectivity for landlocked Central Asian countries.

Pakistan firmly believes that our oceans must remain zones of peace, stability and inclusive development. We categorically reject any attempt in our region to dominate maritime spaces, undermine established legal frameworks or marginalize the legitimate interests of other coastal States under any guise or pretext.

Despite emerging challenges, Pakistan has remained a committed and responsible partner in international efforts to strengthen maritime security. Our Navy continues to contribute to the Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Forces 150 and 151, conducting operations across the Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea and the Red Sea to counter terrorism, smuggling and piracy. We have also launched our own regional maritime security patrols to ensure a safe and secure environment on the seas.

Our dedication to regional cooperation is also reflected in our engagement with multilateral initiatives such as the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. At the national level, we continue to build capacity in port security, blue economy development, maritime domain awareness and marine conservation.

Pakistan unequivocally condemns attacks on commercial shipping and maritime vessels in the Red Sea, which threaten global trade, destabilize the region and jeopardize global maritime security. We note the Secretary-General's most recent report under resolution 2722 (2024) (S/2025/302), confirming that there have been no recent Houthi attacks on merchant vessels in the Red Sea.

Pakistan also recognizes the urgent need to address the growing climate-related risks facing our maritime and coastal systems. Rising sea levels, acidification and coastal erosion pose serious threats to livelihoods, ecosystems, biodiversity and maritime stability. Any holistic maritime security strategy must incorporate the climate-ocean nexus and ensure equitable access to maritime resources.

Maritime security is inseparable from the broader cause of international peace and stability. We must collectively reject any attempts to instrumentalize maritime spaces for political or strategic leverage. Rather, we must reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism, equity and cooperation as the foundation for a secure and sustainable maritime future. Pakistan stands ready to work with all countries to protect the integrity of the maritime domain, uphold international law and ensure that our oceans remain open, peaceful and beneficial for all humankind.

**Mr. Totangi** (Sierra Leone): I warmly welcome you, Mr. President, the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, to the Security Council. I thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his comprehensive and insightful briefing. I also acknowledge the valuable contributions of Ms. Travlos, President of the Union of Greek Shipowners and Chair of the Neptune Group of Companies, and Professor Bueger of the University of Copenhagen and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

Sierra Leone welcomes this timely and urgent debate on maritime security, an issue of increasing global concern and a persistent threat to international peace and security. From coastal to landlocked nations, all Member States are affected by the far-reaching consequences of maritime insecurity, which disrupts international navigation, trade and supply chains. A coherent and forward-looking response by the Council is therefore imperative. With more than 80 per cent of global trade by



volume and more than 70 per cent by value transported by sea, representing nearly \$14 trillion annually, maritime supply chains remain the backbone of the global economy. However, shifting geopolitical realities, technological transformations and the intensifying impacts of climate change are exposing new and complex vulnerabilities in the maritime domain.

In that context, Sierra Leone wishes to highlight four critical and interconnected dimensions that demand a holistic and cooperative response.

First, maritime security threats are transnational and multifaceted, requiring cooperative responses beyond the capacities of individual States. From piracy and terrorism to transnational organized crime, maritime threats involve a broad array of actors, including armed groups, terrorist organizations and criminal syndicates, which operate within and beyond national waters. Modern-day piracy alone is estimated to cost the global economy \$25 billion annually, threatening shipping routes, endangering civilian lives and sowing instability in coastal communities. Critical areas, such as the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Guinea and the waters off the coast of Venezuela, remain particularly at risk. Transboundary “blue” crimes such as illicit trafficking, including trafficking in arms, narcotics and persons; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and marine pollution also demand collective and sustained responses.

On the African continent, the African Union has taken important steps to strengthen maritime governance and safeguard Africa’s blue economy. The 2016 Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa provides a regional framework for countering maritime crime, promoting cooperation among coastal States and encouraging the ratification of relevant international instruments. In West Africa, collaborative efforts among States, civil society, institutions and United Nations agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), have led to strengthened regulation of trans-shipment, a major driver of IUU fishing. Those measures help protect livelihoods in coastal communities across countries, such as Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal and my country, Sierra Leone.

To address emerging threats, Sierra Leone underscores the need to reinforce cooperation under regional frameworks like the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden and the Yaoundé Architecture. Such frameworks must be supported through clear mandates, sustainable financing and inclusive participation by littoral States. The leadership of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) remains vital in setting technical and normative standards. More than any other factor, climate change has heightened maritime insecurity through rising sea levels, intensified weather events and increased natural disasters, all of which disrupt maritime operations and exacerbate poverty and instability. Those challenges demand integrated, anticipatory responses rooted in risk management, risk mitigation and resilience-building.

Secondly, geopolitical rivalries are compounding maritime insecurity, especially in contested or resource-rich waters. Heightened military presence, competing territorial claims and disputes over maritime rights and boundaries risk escalating tensions. The assertion of maritime claims without regard for international law may aggravate conflict and compromise navigational safety. In such situations, diplomacy, de-escalation and adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) are essential to uphold peace and stability.

Thirdly, effective responses to maritime threats require alignment and coordination across global, regional and national levels. While UNCLOS and resolutions 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008), 2015 (2011) and 2380 (2017) provide important

guidance, they must be coherently implemented alongside regional instruments, national legislation and operational strategies. Greater inter-agency coordination and information-sharing are needed to avoid duplication and close existing operational gaps. Aligning national maritime strategies with global security and development frameworks, including the role of regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, is essential. Sierra Leone calls for enhanced cooperation, including technology transfer, technical assistance and capacity-building through partnerships with the IMO, FAO, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and others. As a concrete example, access to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency information-sharing system could support the development of similar regional platforms.

Leveraging innovation and technology is also key. Tools such as satellite-based monitoring, artificial intelligence-driven vessel tracking, blockchain-secured trade documentation and unmanned systems are revolutionizing maritime domain awareness. However, such technologies must be governed by robust regulatory frameworks, transparency and data protection protocols. Public-private partnerships will be critical, particularly in supporting developing countries' access and implementation.

Fourthly, national authorities must strengthen judicial and law enforcement capacities to tackle the nexus between maritime crime, terrorism and trafficking. That includes the establishment of joint maritime task forces, enhanced prosecutorial cooperation and the development of legal frameworks for maritime crime adjudication. Capacity-building must also focus on coastal surveillance, interoperability among maritime forces and human capital development. Education, training and infrastructure upgrades are vital to sustain long-term resilience.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, which advocates an integrated approach to peace and security, including maritime security, within the broader development framework. We also align ourselves with the commitment in the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), which calls for more effective global governance to address interconnected maritime challenges ranging from sustainable development and trade to climate resilience and transnational crime. The seas are our shared lifeline. Therefore, safety and stability remain our collective responsibility. As we navigate those challenges together, let us reinforce international cooperation that upholds peace, development, environmental stewardship and the rule of law.

**Mr. Yahiaoui** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Algeria, I would like to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to the Greek presidency for organizing this high-level debate on a topic of vital importance that is currently one of a number of pivotal collective security issues. This meeting provides an opportunity to exchange views on the best ways to confront the emerging and mounting threats to maritime security. We would like to thank Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his very substantive presentation. We listened very carefully to the briefings given by Ms. Melina Travlos, President of the Union of Greek Shipowners, and Mr. Christian Bueger, Professor of International Relations at the University of Copenhagen and research fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

As part of this debate, Algeria would like to make the following remarks.

First, in order to tackle the challenges threatening maritime security, including piracy, armed robbery against ships, organized crime, illegal fishing, counter-terrorism and illegal migration, we need a global approach based on strengthened international cooperation, information exchange and strengthened capacity, with due respect for the fundamental principles of international law and effective adherence

to the international legal instruments related to maritime security, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982. That Convention, UNCLOS, is a global legal framework within which all maritime activities must be conducted. Based on the Convention, many other international instruments were adopted by the International Maritime Organization, with a view to addressing dangers and growing threats to navigation security.

Secondly, Algeria would like to reiterate the importance of resolving maritime disputes through peaceful means. We note the growing role played by international judicial mechanisms in that regard, including the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which contributes to the rule of law and the harmonized and comprehensive interpretation of relevant international norms.

Thirdly, Algeria believes that the Security Council must play a pivotal role in tackling the threats to global maritime security. We need complementarity between the efforts of the Council and those of the General Assembly, as the global forum that seeks to forge common understanding and to promote relevant multilateral cooperation.

Fourthly, Algeria believes that all initiatives aimed at enhancing maritime security must be pursued with due respect for the sovereignty of States, without interfering in their internal affairs, and they must settle disputes by peaceful means in line with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We repudiate any selective use of the issue of security in order to impose unilateral measures or illegal conditions in maritime spaces.

Fifthly, we call on the international community to support developing countries' efforts, especially in the African continent, through long-lasting financing for national capacity-building, reinforcing maritime surveillance and making technology and training available, to allow those developing countries to fully control their jurisdictions over their corresponding maritime areas and to combat mounting threats. Against that backdrop, we would like to commend the framework that was established in 2013 by the Yaoundé Architecture and its related mechanisms, which marked a significant step forward on the path to strengthening maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. That was possible thanks to a regional approach founded on coordination, information exchange and capacity-building. It is vital that we harness that excellent model and strengthen it by providing long-lasting international support and equitable partnerships, so that we can effectively counter the threats we face.

Sixthly, we are convinced that the Mediterranean must be a place of peace. Every year, Algeria submits to the General Assembly a draft resolution on the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The most recent version of the resolution (General Assembly resolution 79/76) was adopted on 2 December 2024. It reaffirms the fundamental role played by countries in the Mediterranean to strengthen peace and security, as well as cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The resolution calls on States to pool their efforts to eliminate the root causes of tension in the region, in order to ensure just and lasting, peaceful solutions to persistent problems.

By way of conclusion, Algeria would like to reiterate its commitment to actively participating in all international efforts geared towards guaranteeing maritime security. Indeed, we believe that it is necessary to protect our seas and oceans, which are part and parcel of an international system underpinned by peace, justice and sustainable development for all.

**Ms. Shea** (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Ms. Melina Travlos and Mr. Christian Bueger for their informative briefings.

The United States agrees with Greece that this is an issue of critical importance for international peace and security. For that reason, President Trump directed firm action to safeguard maritime security and economic prosperity against many threats.

Some of those threats come from terrorist groups. For example, the Houthis have terrorized maritime traffic passing through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden for years, affecting 30 per cent of all international container traffic. They have targeted multiple ships, killed innocent sailors and hijacked the *Galaxy Leader*. At President Trump's direction, the United States took punishing action to defend the freedom of navigation against the Houthis. Under pressure, the Houthis have backed down from attacking American ships, but they will face further punishing strikes if they attack United States vessels again. We condemn their continued attacks on Israel and support Israel's right to respond.

Some countries also pose serious threats. They support terrorist groups, bully other countries, or use coercion to disrupt maritime routes and trade. The Houthis were able to threaten Red Sea maritime traffic, owing largely to Iran's defiance of the United Nations arms embargo on the Houthis. The Council must not tolerate that defiance and should impose consequences for sanctions violations.

Tehran does not threaten maritime security only through the support of terrorist groups, however, but it also acts directly. Iran's repeated, unlawful attacks on and seizure of commercial vessels transiting international waters is yet another threat to the freedom of navigation. We call for Iran to release the vessels it still holds, including the *MSC Aries* and *Advantage Sweet*.

Another threat to global maritime security is China. We have seen China's coercion time and again in the South China Sea, and its aggressive actions in the Taiwan Strait. The theme of today's debate refers to international cooperation. The world should look at China's actions — rather than its empty claims — when judging its contributions to international cooperation. Let us remember, China dangerously obstructed a Philippine operation near Scarborough Reef, even as it touted leadership during its Security Council presidency in February. Throughout 2024, China unlawfully blocked the Philippines from accessing and exploiting its exclusive economic zone, undermining high seas freedoms for all countries. The United States stands with the Philippines. Once again, we condemn China's dangerous and unlawful actions in the South China Sea, and we call on China to abide by the 2016 arbitral ruling.

To improve maritime security, we must also ensure that the world's shipping lanes remain open to navigation and free from threats of violence, crime and other illicit activities. As mentioned, the Houthis continue to obtain arms in defiance of the Security Council's resolutions. The United States now sees evidence that the Houthis, in providing support to Al-Shabaab, are acquiring dual-use components and imagery from China. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) can be a critical tool in preventing those arms from reaching the Houthis via maritime routes. In fact, earlier this month, UNVIM successfully interdicted four shipping containers of illicit materials bound for Houthi-controlled ports. That interdiction clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the Mechanism. We must all continue to support its operations. To that point, we urge Member States to donate directly to UNVIM, which needs only \$11 million per year to operate at full capacity.

The United States welcomes the recent collaboration between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Malta-based Global Centre for Maritime Sanctions Monitoring, also known as the Spinola Centre, to provide capacity-building, training, vessel tracking and analysis to Member States. We also strongly support the collaborative efforts of the Registry Information-Sharing Compact. The Compact was founded by the flag registries of Panama, Liberia and the Marshall

Islands to combat the practice of flag hopping by vessels and shipping companies that are suspected of engaging in illicit practices, including United Nations sanctions violations. The Compact currently includes 15 shipping registries, representing more than 20 per cent of the world's flagged vessels and nearly 50 per cent of global gross tonnage. We urge registries that are not currently members of the Compact to join this important initiative — one that is quickly setting the global standard for compliance with international maritime law.

Once again, the United States thanks Greece for this initiative and looks forward to continued engagement on international efforts to counter maritime security threats.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I appreciate Greece's initiative in organizing this meeting and welcome your presence in New York, Mr. President, to preside over today's open debate. I thank Secretary-General Guterres and the other briefers for their presentations.

Oceans and seas nurture life, connect the world and promote development. They are the common home of all humankind. Taking care of our common home, maintaining maritime security and strengthening global ocean governance are of great significance to the promotion of world peace, stability, development and prosperity and a common responsibility of all countries.

We must uphold the concept of a maritime community with a shared future. This blue planet that we share does not consist of isolated islands separated by oceans but is one community with a shared future and connected by oceans. The peace and tranquillity of the oceans are matters of concern for the safety and interests of all countries in the world. We must uphold the spirit of achieving shared growth through consultation and collaboration and jointly safeguard maritime security, promote maritime development and discuss ocean governance, so that the oceans can truly become a bond for us to promote exchanges and win-win cooperation, rather than an abyss that separates and disconnects us from each other.

We must maintain a just and reasonable maritime order. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) established a basic legal framework for the modern order of the oceans and has played an important role in promoting global ocean governance. Together with other sea-related treaties and customary international law, the Convention provides legal norms for the determination of maritime zones and the conduct of maritime activities. All countries must safeguard the maritime order underpinned by international law. UNCLOS should be interpreted and applied accurately, comprehensively and in its entirety. Selectivity and double standards must be rejected.

We must work together to maintain maritime security and stability. At present, pirate attacks, drugs and arms smuggling and human trafficking at sea and other criminal activities are rampant, jeopardizing maritime security and exacerbating regional instability. The international community must work together to prevent and combat those problems in accordance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We should pay attention to the legitimate maritime security concerns of all countries, insist on resolving disputes and conflicts through dialogue and consultation, continuously improve the crisis communication mechanism and strengthen maritime security cooperation. Specific disputes involving territorial and maritime rights and interests should be resolved peacefully through friendly consultations among the parties directly involved. It is not in anyone's interest to stir up confrontation between maritime camps or to engage in a zero-sum game.

We must join hands to strengthen global ocean governance. The sustainable development of humankind is closely related to a healthy marine environment. We must take care of the ocean and protect it, as we do with our lives. At present, issues such as maritime environmental protection, climate change, sea level rise and



emerging maritime activities are of common interest to the international community. We should follow the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a guideline, expand practical cooperation at sea, explore the potential of oceans and jointly promote the development and utilization of oceans to serve economic and social development, so as to realize the harmonious coexistence of humans and the oceans.

As a major maritime nation, China is committed to the common guardianship of maritime homeland and the maintenance of common maritime security. We will always be a builder of global ocean governance, a promoter of sustainable development of oceans and seas and a defender of global maritime security and stability. We stand ready to work with the international community to make unremitting efforts to promote the building of an ocean order of peace, tranquillity and win-win cooperation and to build together a maritime community with a shared future.

The Security Council is not an appropriate place to discuss the South China Sea issue. Just now, in her statement, the representative of the United States mentioned the South China Sea issue. China firmly opposes that, and we would like to respond as follows.

First, under the banner of the freedom of navigation, the United States has sent its military vessels to the South China Sea to flex its muscles and stir up confrontation. The United States itself is the biggest threat to the peace and stability of the South China Sea.

Secondly, China is committed to working with the countries concerned to appropriately address our sea-related differences through dialogue and consultation on the basis of respect for historical facts and international law. The so-called award in the South China Sea arbitration is illegal and invalid, and China does not accept or recognize it.

Thirdly, with the joint efforts of China and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the current situation in the South China Sea remains generally stable. We are confident that we are able to make the South China Sea a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation.

Fourthly, we hope that the United States will honour its commitments regarding the one-China principle.

Lastly, I wish to remind my United States colleagues that I do not know if she realized that her speech is in stark contrast to other colleagues' statements. The statements made by the Secretary-General and by other colleagues all revolve around how we can carry out international cooperation to safeguard maritime security, while the United States takes advantage of the opportunity to brazenly attack, smear and suppress other countries. We hope that the United States can play a constructive role, together with other countries, in maintaining maritime security.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome your personal participation, Mr. President and Prime Minister, in today's open debate. We thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their briefings.

We consider the topic proposed by the Greek presidency to be pressing. Maritime security issues occupy an important place in the global stability and security architecture and undoubtedly deserve the attention of responsible members of the international community. Nevertheless, we should underscore that most of the issues raised in today's debate — transnational organized crime, the illicit arms trade, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and the illegal exploitation of marine resources — are not part of the Security Council's remit. Rather, they fall within the purview of other bodies of the United Nations system, primarily the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Without a doubt, all of those challenges are very



serious, but they should be addressed in the relevant forums that possess the relevant expertise. Therefore, as far as maritime security issues are concerned, the Security Council should focus on those aspects that pose a direct threat to international peace and stability.

What does fall within that category, by the way, is the risk of global supply chain disruption, which was mentioned in the concept note that was prepared for today's event (see S/2025/300). We note that, of late, we have observed more frequent actions aimed at creating artificial impediments and threats to maritime trade. The stability of that trade is important for all countries, but for small-island States and for coastal developing States in particular, it is a matter of survival. The actions that I mentioned build upon so-called unilateral coercive measures. Such measures are Western countries' — especially European Union (EU) member States' — favourite way of imposing on others their own political paradigms and preferences, which at times are rather exotic.

Unilateral coercive measures are a priori illegal, and their use contravenes international law. Therefore, the attempts by Western countries to justify their illegal actions at sea by referring to the unilateral coercive measures that they themselves introduced are at odds with a maxim that dates back to the times of Roman law, according to which no party can take advantage of its own wrongdoing. References to supposed attempts to circumvent unilateral coercive measures are used to label some vessels as belonging to the so-called "shadow fleet". That term is not internationally recognized, and neither is there any transparent international mechanism underpinning it.

Actions against civilian vessels at sea are flagrant and unprecedented. They are comparable perhaps only to piracy, the only difference being that it is NATO countries that are trying on the role of "pirates of the Baltic Sea" for size. The Internet was recently awash with images of Estonian patrol vessels trying to forcibly seize a tanker sailing in international waters. The captain of the vessel was given an ultimatum: change course and sail into Estonian territorial waters. Two attempts were made by an assault team to board the tanker from a helicopter. When they failed to do so, an Estonian naval craft literally tried to ram the tanker. All of that was done under the pretext — a pretext that is underpinned by no international legal grounds — of combating the shadow fleet. That is not the first such instance — there were plenty of others as well.

Even in territorial waters, such actions would constitute a flagrant violation of the right of peaceful passage. In international waters, they are nothing but an infringement of the freedom of navigation. Those are the fundamental norms of customary international law codified in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The inviolability of those norms and of the principle of the flag State's exclusive jurisdiction over the ship has ensured the stable and predictable functioning of the international maritime trade system. That is why the Convention includes a closed and rather limited list of situations in which a vessel flying a foreign flag may be stopped for inspection. Neither in that list nor in the Convention as a whole can a single mention of the so-called shadow fleet be found.

In that connection, we would like to remind the newly minted "Baltic pirates" and their EU "cheerleaders" that stopping a vessel on any other grounds not mentioned in the Convention is, by definition, a grave attack on the freedom of navigation and on the right of peaceful passage or transit passage. Therefore, the unacceptable behaviour of EU countries sets a very dangerous precedent. Were other States to follow suit, global supply chains would be disrupted and maritime trade would simply grind to a halt. That habit of using NATO naval capabilities to carry out such illicit actions will do nothing but at once pave the way for military escalation and pose very serious threats to maritime security.

Another example of actions taken by Western States to undermine maritime security is the terrorist attack on two Nord Stream gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea in September 2022. That crime was committed in the exclusive economic zones of Denmark and Sweden and outside any armed conflict zone, and it had dire consequences in terms of the environment, energy and the safety of navigation.

Despite the fact that almost three years have elapsed since the terrorist attack on the Nord Stream pipelines, those who organized and perpetrated the attacks have neither been identified nor held accountable. The Russian Federation has repeatedly raised that issue in the Security Council and proposed crafting a product that would send an unambiguous message about the need to conduct a comprehensive investigation into what happened with the participation of all interested parties. However, all our initiatives were invariably blocked by Western members of the Security Council, with Germany, Denmark and Sweden deliberately cutting our country off from the investigation. And the profound conclusion drawn by the so-called investigators is that the pipelines were, as it happens, indeed blown up. That is the real cost of today's statements by Western delegations regarding their alleged concern about maritime security. We believe that it is their actions that pose a direct threat to maritime security, as does their inaction in combating impunity when it comes to specific crimes targeting cross-border undersea infrastructure.

**Mr. Osman** (Somalia): Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to the Greek presidency for convening this important and timely discussion. We also extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and thank him for his comprehensive briefing. We also want to thank Ms. Travlos and Professor Bueger for their briefings.

For Somalia and for Africa as a whole, the security and sustainable management of our maritime domain are matters of deep significance. Our waters are essential not only for the economic well-being of our peoples, but also for regional integration and the maintenance of international peace and security. Yet, as coastal States, we continue to face an evolving array of risks, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. IUU fishing not only depletes our marine resources, but it also causes severe degradation and lasting, sometimes irreversible, damage to vital ocean ecosystems. Those threats are transnational in nature and therefore demand coordinated, cooperative responses, with the affected nations at the centre of the solution.

Allow me to highlight four key priorities.

First, there is a need for capacity-building and technology transfer. It is widely recognized that efforts to address maritime threats are most effective when States possess the necessary capabilities. Many countries, particularly in Africa, continue to require sustained support to strengthen maritime law enforcement, surveillance and judicial processes. We underscore the importance of tailored training, access to advanced technologies and investment in human and institutional resources. The African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa clearly articulate such priorities, serving as important road maps for national and regional resilience. We call upon the international community to build stronger partnerships and targeted support to help develop the capacity of coastal States in eradicating maritime threats.

Secondly, we must deepen regional and international cooperation. No single State can address these challenges in isolation. My delegation has benefited from the support and partnership of regional neighbours, international organizations and naval coalitions. African Union mechanisms and the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden are notable examples of frameworks designed to

facilitate information-sharing, joint operations and harmonized legal approaches. It is essential that such cooperation continue to be strengthened while fully respecting the sovereignty and leadership of coastal States every step of the way.

Thirdly, we believe that effective maritime security requires a coordinated approach that addresses the root causes. It is important to recognize that maritime security is closely linked to sustainable development on land. Poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunity often drive individuals towards criminal activities at sea.

A holistic approach that addresses the root causes must acknowledge the disproportionate impact of maritime crimes on vulnerable coastal communities in developing nations and help them address the systemic issues that allow them to persist, including eradicating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The African Union's Blue Economy initiatives, which aim to foster sustainable livelihoods and responsible stewardship of marine resources, represent a critical avenue for addressing the underlying drivers of maritime insecurity. We encourage greater international support for those initiatives, which are vital for ensuring long-term stability.

Fourthly, we must uphold international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other relevant instruments provide the legal foundation for the peaceful and cooperative use of our oceans. Respect for those obligations and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of coastal States are essential for building trust and ensuring effective cooperation. Somalia attaches great importance to the full and effective implementation of those frameworks and encourages continued international assistance for littoral States working to develop and align national legislation accordingly.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to working constructively with Council members and the wider international community to realize the vision of seas that are safe, secure and prosperous and governed by law for all.

**Mr. Dharmadhikari** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Greece for its initiative in organizing this meeting on maritime safety and welcome the presence of the Greek Prime Minister, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gerapetritis. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement, and Ms. Travlos and Mr. Bueger for their briefings.

First, the security of maritime areas depends, first and foremost, on respect for international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea defines the legal framework for all maritime activities. France reiterates its commitment to the freedom of navigation, while respecting its international obligations. Without respect for common standards, the seas and oceans would become a theatre of permanent confrontation. The Security Council has a responsibility to ensure respect for the Convention on the Law of the Sea and to work towards the peaceful settlement of disputes, within the framework of Article 36 of the Charter of the United Nations.

France reiterates its support for the International Maritime Organization, which plays an essential role in setting high common standards for maritime safety and for preventing and combating marine pollution. France recalls its European commitment to uphold the implementation of international law and the above-mentioned standards and to promote an appreciation of autonomous maritime situations as part of the European Union's maritime safety strategy, adopted during the Greek presidency in 2014.

Secondly, maritime space is the scene of transnational threats to which we need to provide a collective and coordinated response. Obstacles to the freedom of navigation are a major security threat. Off the coast of Yemen, the Iranian-backed Houthis must cease their destabilizing attacks and their violations of the arms

embargo. In resolution 2722 (2024), the Council recalled the right of Member States, in accordance with international law, to defend their vessels against such attacks. Criminal groups feed on maritime insecurity to engage in other forms of trafficking, in particular migrant smuggling, as we are seeing in the Mediterranean, and drug trafficking, notably between Latin America and Europe.

Illicit transshipments are used to circumvent the sanctions regimes put in place by the Council to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Security Council must remain vigilant in the face of those violations of its resolutions, and States must step up their efforts to monitor maritime traffic in response to that threat and to the threat of shadow fleets.

Thirdly, France is committed to combating maritime insecurity in many regions. In the Gulf of Guinea, France supports and cooperates with its African partners in promoting an appreciation of maritime situations, in their maritime security activities and in the fight against illicit activities within the framework of the Yaoundé Architecture. France supports the region through European initiatives, in particular the coordinated maritime presence in the Gulf of Guinea and is involved at the national level through Operation Corymbe.

We are also working to protect the seas in the north-western Indian Ocean. France is pursuing its strictly defensive commitment within the framework of the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy operations, such as the European Union Naval Force or Operation Aspides, to ensure the freedom of navigation off the coast of Yemen, and the European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta to combat piracy and trafficking in the Gulf of Aden. In the Mediterranean, the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI implements the arms embargo off the coast of Libya and contributes to the fight against trafficking of all kinds.

Respect for the freedom of navigation is essential in all seas and oceans. In the Black Sea, it is essential for food security and global supply chains. Since the outbreak of Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, France has supported efforts to guarantee the protection of civilian vessels and grain exports in the Black Sea. In Asia, France remains concerned about the situation in the South China Sea, where the freedoms of the high seas must not be called into question. It is opposed to any use of force or coercion and calls for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Fourthly, maritime safety is also inseparable from the protection of the marine environment, the fight against pollution and climate change. France has taken on the responsibility of protecting the ocean and managing its resources sustainably. It was in this spirit that France and Costa Rica decided to host the third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice in June. In Nice, significant advances are expected in the decarbonization of maritime transport, as well as in the fight against plastic pollution. France calls on all States that have not yet done so to promptly sign and ratify the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.

France is concerned by recent requests for the issuance, outside the framework of the International Seabed Authority, of operating licences for the extraction of mineral resources on the high seas. That would constitute a violation of international law, in particular the principle that those resources belong to the common heritage of humankind.

Confronted with those challenges, we need collective, resolute and coherent action to strengthen maritime security and protect our maritime spaces.

**Mr. Žbogar** (Slovenia): I would like to thank Greece for organizing today's debate. Your presence here today, Mr. Prime Minister, demonstrates the commitment

of Greece, not only to maritime security, but to the United Nations and to the role of the Security Council. I also thank the Secretary-General, and Ms. Travlos and Mr. Bueger, for presenting their perspectives on this important topic that directly or indirectly touches all States.

Throughout history, oceans, covering 75 per cent of the Earth's surface, have been the backbone of human activity to sustain not only livelihoods, trade and development, but also military action. Currently, maritime transport represents 80 per cent of the volume of global trade in goods, making it a critical factor in the development and prosperity of States. All briefers today reminded us of recent cases that prove that point. International trade depends on a stable and secure environment. That makes maritime security our common interest and concern.

While we may name the seas and oceans differently, they are all one body of water, making cooperation among States crucial. In that context, I would like to make three points.

First, we fully concur with the Secretary-General's emphasis on the need to respect international law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides the main legal framework for that cooperation. States are obliged to implement their responsibilities in good faith, and to take all necessary measures to prevent potential abuses. In cases in which violations occur, accountability must be ensured. States must also ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions, including on maritime sanctions, and prevent possible evasion, especially through flag-hopping, automatic-identification-system spoofing and similar measures.

Secondly, concerning the maintenance of maritime security, be it off the coast of Somalia or in the Gulf of Guinea, or Houthi attacks on shipping lanes in the Red Sea, we must find a way to comprehensively tackle smuggling, illegal trafficking, piracy and terrorism. When addressing the prevention of maritime smuggling and illegal trafficking, we should also address the prevention of illicit maritime transfers of weapons of mass destruction and dual-use goods, in line with international law. Slovenia remains committed to contributing to maritime security, including through the European Union's three naval operations, just mentioned by my French colleague — IRINI, which through inspections, assists in the implementation of the arms embargo off the coast of Libya; ATALANTA, which helps to fight piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia; and ASPIDES, with a defensive mandate in the Red Sea. We firmly believe that regional arrangements and activities can play an important role in the wider framework of international security engagements, including on maritime security. Most concerns regarding the physical insecurity of shipping lanes relate to its impact on global supply chains and international maritime trade. Slovenia is, however, also extremely concerned about other broader impacts, especially environmental disasters from oil spills, cargo incidents or other toxic discharges. Maritime security must address climate resilience, as rising sea levels, extreme weather events and marine biodiversity loss threaten coastal communities and global stability.

Thirdly, regarding the use of new technologies, it is necessary to invest in equipment and capacity-building to ensure the safety and security of port infrastructure and maritime domain awareness. Only in that way can States address and counter maritime security threats, such as terrorism, piracy and armed robbery; the smuggling and trafficking of goods, persons and drugs; and irregular migration. In most cases, those threats are enhanced by technological innovations and advanced equipment. We need to be ready to face evolving maritime security challenges. The use of new technologies, combined with the development of digital skills and cybersecurity, can substantially contribute to the ability and capacity of littoral States to ensure safety and security, and manage risk in maritime and coastal areas.



In conclusion, oceans and waterways are our shared planetary resource, infrastructure and vital environment. They are also our shared responsibility. In order to utilize them fully and sustainably, they have to be managed properly, by protecting them from environmental degradation and destruction, and by ensuring maritime security for all stakeholders.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): Your Excellency Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Guyana welcomes Greece's leadership and your participation in today's high-level meeting on strengthening maritime security through international cooperation for global stability, a topic of great importance for Guyana, as it is for the rest of the global community. We also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his insightful remarks, and Ms. Melina Travlos and Professor Christian Bueger for their briefings.

Global cooperation is not just a desirable option but a necessity when it comes to maritime security. Just using one metric — the fact that over 80 per cent of the volume of all global trade in goods is carried by sea — makes such cooperation indispensable for global stability.

Together, the global community must be able to adequately respond to traditional and evolving challenges in the maritime domain. Those challenges include piracy; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; cybersecurity threats; threats against offshore installations; violations of established maritime boundaries; transboundary crimes; the protection and preservation of the marine environment; and the impacts of climate change.

Protecting ports and related infrastructure is also a critical part of a holistic approach to maritime security, one that will guarantee the level of protection needed to secure vital global supply chains.

Recent threats to maritime navigation have exposed the vulnerabilities of maritime global trade routes and caused widespread disruption to global trade and supply chains. The implications for national security were also acutely felt in many countries, thereby underscoring the urgent need for enhanced maritime security. From attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea to the conflict in Ukraine and its impact on shipping routes in the Black Sea, the disruption to global shipping in the past three years has had far-reaching consequences, including on global food and energy security. For example, the attacks in the Red Sea resulted in increased transit times and shipping costs as shipping lines rerouted trade around the Cape of Good Hope. In addition to financial implications, the extended routes contributed to higher greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating environmental concerns.

Guyana commends the proactive and collaborative efforts that led to the Black Sea Grain Initiative in 2022, and the diplomatic efforts that led to the recent cessation of attacks against vessels in the Red Sea. We hope that these will reinvigorate collaboration on maritime safety and security.

Guyana would like to emphasize the following four points.

First, Member States must uphold the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is the primary international framework for maritime governance.

Secondly, Guyana acknowledges the work of the International Maritime Organization in promoting safe and secure shipping while ensuring the freedom of navigation. We commend the 2024 updated technical cooperation profile through its all-hands-on-deck strategy and is of the view that the menu of strategic proposals, including capacity-building, investment in new systems, maritime infrastructure and technology projects, is relevant to the discourse.

Thirdly, in several parts of the world, geopolitical friction and conflicts are shaping how States and non-State actors utilize maritime spaces for power projection



and influence. That underscores the need for a higher premium to be placed on international cooperation through dialogue, rather than competition, as the eventual fallout is usually felt by all — irrespective of geography and physical distance.

Finally, the threats to maritime navigation and operations continue to evolve, as the effects of climate change compound traditional challenges. Warming in the Arctic Ocean for instance, with ice melting at an increasing rate will have far-reaching consequences, including rising sea levels. Investments in early warning systems must go hand in hand with the application of affordable technologies to address existing vulnerabilities, including the impacts of climate change on maritime navigation. We also call for international cooperation in areas of technology transfer, information-sharing and governance, including on the use of artificial intelligence.

Maritime security requires a strong collaborative approach from the local to the global levels. We must use all available tools to foster such an approach if we are to tackle maritime security in a holistic manner.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Prime Minister Mitsotakis for convening this important meeting and for the Greek presidency's leadership on this issue. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres, Ms. Travlos and Mr. Beuger for briefing us today.

The United Kingdom, like Greece, has a long maritime history and is deeply committed to global maritime security. And global action is needed to tackle the growing threats we now face to our seas, our peoples and our shared prosperity. That is why the United Kingdom is strongly committed to our partnerships within NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force, and with wider friends and partners, as a means to contribute to our collective security. That includes working together with States across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean to address threats wherever they occur. Our carrier strike group's deployment to the Indo-Pacific is a sign of our commitment to work with our partners in a region of fundamental importance to global peace and prosperity.

In the Black Sea, we are supporting the protection of Ukraine's maritime Black Sea corridor, along with our partners. We are also leading the Maritime Capability Coalition alongside Norway, supporting Ukraine's defence of its sovereign waters. That is alongside efforts to confront the so-called shadow fleet operation.

In the Middle East, we have acted to prevent Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping, including through Operation Prosperity Guardian, with the United States and others. Our European colleagues have joined those efforts through European Union Naval Operation Aspides. We thank Greece for its leading role, including hosting the command from Larissa.

We also call for collective efforts to ensure that the arms embargo, as set out in resolution 2216 (2015), is upheld and to support the Yemen coast guard. We equally need to ensure the implementation of the arms embargo off the coast of Libya, and we call for the renewal of the mandate this month for the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI.

More broadly, our partnership with Greece is an example of how cooperation can protect our countries from maritime threats, including illegal migration and drug smuggling. Alongside that, we are delivering legal changes at home to tackle people-smuggling rings and starve them of income. And the United Kingdom also remains strongly committed to upholding the freedom of navigation and the primacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In the face of such diverse threats, we must redouble our shared efforts, including by broadening collaboration on strategic challenges within the International Maritime Organization, which the United Kingdom is proud to host. And as we look to the

future, we must strengthen our work together — both in the Council and through our bilateral partnerships — to secure our seas for future generations.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I thank the Greek presidency for convening this important meeting on maritime security, and I thank the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing. My appreciation also goes to Ms. Travlos and Mr. Beuger for their briefings.

As a peninsula nation with a profound interest in maritime security, the Republic of Korea welcomes this timely open debate. From attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea to enduring piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and off the coast of Somalia, maritime threats call for a more coordinated response. Central to such a response is the consistent upholding of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides a rules-based governance.

Underscoring the critical need to defend its core principles, including the freedom of navigation, let me highlight the following three key areas where the Security Council's role is essential.

First, we must enhance collective responses to transnational maritime crimes. From the Caribbean, where maritime borders are exploited for drug and arms trafficking, to the Mediterranean, where criminal networks persist in using coastal routes for smuggling and exploitation, transnational maritime crimes pose serious threats to regional stability and security, which no single State can address alone. For our part, Korea has actively engaged in a range of initiatives aimed at countering such crimes, including the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. We call upon all Member States to contribute their capabilities and resources to those crucial collective efforts.

Secondly, the duty to protect civilian vessels and seafarers must be met at all times. As clearly demonstrated by recent Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea, merchant ships remain vulnerable to a range of threats. These include armed conflict, cyberinterference — such as Global Positioning System jamming — and unlawful seizures. And with shipping traffic in the Red Sea reportedly down by 50 per cent since 2023, it is evident that such assaults jeopardize not only the lives of seafarers, but global trade and economic security as well. Likewise, North Korea's missile launches, conducted without prior notice or sufficient navigational warnings, endanger the safety of civilian vessels in the region. To address such immediate threats and safeguard critical sea lanes, it is vital to enhance information-sharing and ensure a coordinated naval presence in high-risk waters. For instance, we have been actively participating in the Combined Maritime Forces in the Middle East and have been deploying naval units to the Gulf of Aden.

Thirdly, the Council must act in a more decisive manner when maritime space is exploited to facilitate the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We remain deeply concerned about the persistent illicit maritime activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Its evasion tactics for trading prohibited items range from ship-to-ship transfers and flag concealment to false registration and the manipulation of the Automatic Identification System. These evolving activities continue to fund the country's unlawful nuclear and missile programmes. Yet the enforcement of maritime sanctions is often undermined by jurisdictional gaps, limited capacity and a lack of political will. Moreover, the disbandment of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) by one permanent member of the Security Council has further weakened monitoring and compliance.

Security Council resolutions regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stipulate that Member States are obligated to seize, inspect and freeze any

vessel within their ports if there are reasonable grounds to believe the vessel is involved in activities prohibited by the resolutions and that they could take these measures in their territorial waters as well. In addition, resolution 2375 (2017) calls upon Member States to inspect vessels on the high seas that are reasonably suspected of carrying prohibited cargo, with the consent of flag State.

In that regard, the Republic of Korea will continue working closely with its partners to share information and coordinate actions — both at sea and in the air — to deter and disrupt the maritime violations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are also committed to supporting the maritime enforcement capacities of developing countries and key flag States.

In conclusion, we hope that today's debate serves as a necessary step forward to maintain the stability of the sea, the global commons on which we all depend.

**The President:** The representative of Denmark has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Ruge (Denmark):** I would have preferred to not ask for the floor again, but I need to respond to the comments made by a Council member on the Nord Stream sabotage.

Denmark is very concerned about attacks against critical infrastructure. We take the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines seriously and, together with Germany and Sweden, we have kept the Security Council fully informed throughout the investigation process. We have done so both orally and through numerous notes throughout 2022, 2023 and 2024.

We note that there is an ongoing, robust and credible criminal investigation being undertaken in Germany, and we have full confidence that this investigation is being conducted in an impartial and comprehensive manner in line with all relevant rules and procedures. It is important that we let this ongoing investigation run its course. Denmark has had close cooperation with relevant foreign authorities, especially concerning the technical aspects of the investigations. The Russian authorities have been continually informed of the progress of our investigations.

**The President:** I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

**Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt):** I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Badr Abdelatty, Egypt's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates, who wished to participate in this meeting but could not attend due to prior commitments.

I congratulate the presidency for convening this important debate on maritime security. I also thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their insightful updates.

Today's debate comes at a time of unprecedented strains on the global maritime domain — strains that underscore the extent to which maritime security has become inseparable from regional crises, geopolitical tensions and unresolved conflicts. It is a reminder that oceans and sea lanes that bind our world together are also susceptible to divisions that afflict us on land.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the Red Sea, which has, in recent months, become a theatre for threats against the freedom of navigation and commerce. This escalation, manifesting in repeated, unlawful attacks on commercial shipping,

cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader regional context. It is, regrettably, a direct outgrowth of the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and, in particular, the ongoing and inhumane Israeli war on the Gaza Strip.

Egypt cannot but express its profound concern and condemnation for the continued Israeli war on Gaza, which has inflicted massive human suffering and led to destabilizing an already volatile region. The protracted hostilities and the humanitarian crisis unfolding on the ground have created ripple effects that extend far beyond the immediate vicinity of the conflict. Indeed, they are reverberating across maritime domains, most acutely in the Red Sea. The ensuing regional polarization, coupled with the exploitation of maritime routes by non-State actors, has disrupted supply chains and compromised the freedom of navigation.

In that regard, there can be no lasting maritime security in the region without addressing the underlying drivers of instability, first and foremost, the situation in Gaza, in addition to the escalating tensions in Yemen. The road to restoring safe navigation through the Red Sea and other strategic waterways starts with serious de-escalatory steps paving the way for lasting political solutions.

In that regard, Egypt welcomes the ceasefire agreement reached between the United States and the Houthis, after the commendable efforts of the Sultanate of Oman. It is a step towards regional de-escalation, and it is our hope that it will pave the way for a broader resolution that ensures the freedom of maritime navigation.

The impact of the regional escalation on Egypt has been significant. As the custodian of the Suez Canal, Egypt faced immense repercussions from the deteriorating security environment. In 2024, Egypt witnessed a revenue loss of \$7 billion due to the decrease in navigation through the Red Sea. Despite those challenges, Egypt spared no effort in sustaining the Canal's pivotal role in global trade and supply chain networks. We adopted a forward-looking strategy to ensure that the Suez Canal remains a reliable and secure transit route.

Egypt accelerated investment in the Suez Canal Economic Zone, transforming it into a globally competitive hub for logistics, advanced manufacturing and green industries. We remain committed to maintaining the security and efficiency of the Canal, and we take positive note of the international support aimed at safeguarding this vital passage. We also reaffirm that any initiatives related to maritime security and development in the Red Sea must be designed in close consultation with the Red Sea littoral States, who are best positioned to understand the dynamics of the region.

We are equally concerned about reports of growing cooperation between armed non-State actors in the region, including with regard to the smuggling of arms, which further undermines maritime security. These illicit networks must be addressed through enhanced regional cooperation and monitoring mechanisms and upholding the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Egypt underscores the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to maritime security — one that embraces cooperation, capacity-building and institutional resilience. We encourage cooperation among States, the development of early warning mechanisms and collaboration between the public and private sectors in the maritime domain. We call upon the Security Council to remain seized of evolving threats to maritime security, including cyberattacks, the proliferation of advanced weaponry and the risks posed by non-State actors. The international legal framework, particularly United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, remains very relevant to alleviating tensions.

In conclusion, Egypt reaffirms its commitment to upholding maritime security as an essential pillar of international peace. We will continue playing our part, as the guardian of the Suez Canal and as a responsible member of the international

community, in promoting cooperation, stability and safe passage in our region and beyond.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

**Mr. Chaivaivid** (Thailand): My delegation would like to commend Greece for convening this very timely and important debate and to express our thanks to the Secretary-General Guterres for his insights.

Maritime security is not only a matter of strategic interests, but a matter of shared responsibility for humankind. Today Thailand wishes to highlight the following key points.

First, to enhance maritime security and stability, we must respect international law, including, of course, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which serves as the legal framework governing all activities in the oceans and seas. A secure, predictable and rule-based maritime order grounded in international law is vital for global peace and shared prosperity.

Secondly, concerted efforts among Member States are essential to ensure effective and timely responses to evolving and transboundary maritime security challenges. Maritime domain awareness, including through information-sharing, joint exercises and capacity-building, is critical to countering maritime threats and safeguarding a peaceful maritime domain.

Thirdly, we must speed up our collective actions towards a sustainable and equitable use of maritime resources. In that regard, Thailand remains determined to intensify efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. We are working towards maritime spatial planning as part of Thailand's blue economy and the ratification of the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.

Maritime security is a core pillar of Thailand's comprehensive security strategy. We actively engage within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its platforms, as well as under multilateral frameworks such as the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in fostering substantive cooperation to address shared maritime security threats. And we are now looking forward to the deliberations at the third United Nations Ocean Conference next month in France.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that a global commitment to international maritime cooperation is vital, not only for national defence, but also for advancing sustainable development, economic prosperity and connectivity. We must ensure that our oceans remain open, peaceful and sustainable for present and future generations.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

**Mr. Feruță** (Romania): Romania commends the Greek presidency for organizing this high-level open debate.

In addition to the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union, I would like to add a few points.

Maritime security is a cross-cutting topic facing unprecedented threats, as we heard from the briefers today. The international community needs to first, ensure that international law is upheld and respected on all oceans and seas, and secondly, to reaffirm the role of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the legal framework for all activities in oceans and seas. It is imperative that the freedoms and obligations established under UNCLOS, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, are respected. The Security Council plays an important role in that regard.



All seas should remain free, stable and safe. We all benefit from that. The Black Sea is of strategic importance for global resilience. Maritime security in the Black Sea is therefore vital. The freedom of navigation for commercial shipping must be upheld, and any attempt to restrict that freedom or to expand maritime jurisdiction by force must be rejected.

The security environment in the Black Sea and the region's critical role in the resilience of global supply chains — East-West and North-South — are being undermined by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The consequences extend well beyond the region, especially with regard to food and energy security. Floating mines and incidents such as the one in September 2024, when a missile hit a merchant vessel under a third-country flag carrying grain from Ukraine, underscore the magnitude of the threat in the Black Sea, as the Russian aggression against Ukraine continues.

We underline the importance of a full ceasefire in Ukraine, including in the maritime area. Romania supports all steps towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. That will also remove existing threats to navigation in the Black Sea. Romania is ready to contribute to the implementation of a maritime ceasefire.

Romania addressed existing challenges in the Black Sea in a responsible manner, in line with international law and in a spirit of solidarity. We recall our steady engagement to ensure the continuity of supply chains for grain from Ukraine to global markets. Our joint work with riparian countries, including Türkiye and Bulgaria, on demining in the Black Sea also supports that effort.

Like Greece, Romania is a country with seafarers on various international shipping lanes. We pay particular attention to the safety and security of merchant and commercial vessels and their crews. We are concerned about the increasing number of incidents and attacks to international shipping, such as those committed by the Houthis in the Red Sea. We call for an end to any such attacks on all oceans and seas.

Romania welcomes the release of the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, including a Romanian citizen, after more than a year of unlawful detention by the Houthis. We wish to thank again all those involved in this complex effort.

We appreciate the efforts of the Security Council and all countries that have engaged in efforts to restore the freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. We welcome the ceasefire agreement reached between the United States and the Houthis. We recall the contribution of European Union Naval Force Operation Aspides to protect the freedom of navigation and maritime security in the Red Sea. We appreciate the Operation's leadership, and we reiterate our full cooperation.

Abiding by the United Nations Charter, international law and the fundamental principles and rules of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is the prerequisite for strengthening maritime security and addressing existing challenges.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

**Mr. Vasconcelos** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico congratulates Greece on its initiative to convene this open debate in its capacity as President of the Security Council. We recognize the value of creating spaces for dialogue on how to strengthen international cooperation to combat threats to maritime security, an essential component of international peace and stability.

From time immemorial, through the age of maritime empires, security on the seas has been a source of acute conflicts, as well as of deep reflection on this historical issue.



The increasing frequency and seriousness of threats to maritime security, piracy and terrorist acts, including attacks on civilian vessels on the high seas and the commission of other crimes and illicit activities, such as arms and drug trafficking, require a coordinated multilateral response and cooperation among States and international and regional organizations. Mexico recognizes the relevance of the Security Council resolutions that reflect the concern about the situation in Yemen and the Red Sea and emphasize the need to protect the safety of navigation and international trade.

From Mexico's perspective, I would like to propose three priorities to strengthen maritime security.

First, priority should be given to technical and operational cooperation, the timely exchange of information and the strengthening of regional rapid response mechanisms in order to mitigate emerging threats to navigation, international trade and the stability of supply chains, particularly in vulnerable or conflict regions, where the lack of coordination and institutional capabilities exacerbate threats to maritime security.

Secondly, we reaffirm the calls for compliance with, and the implementation of, the arms embargoes imposed by the Council.

Thirdly, we express our concern about the growing use of the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations as justification for the pre-emptive use of force without the consent of States, particularly when it comes to non-State actors. Mexico has already spoken out about that dangerous reinterpretation of international law, which undermines the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations and puts the collective security system of the United Nations at risk. In any case, the difficulties faced in certain regions in maintaining security do not justify or call for the unilateral use of force by another State, but rather it is precisely in that context that the international community must act collectively.

We agree that maintaining maritime security is essential to ensuring the stability of global supply chains and global economic development. However, we underscore that any action taken in that regard must fully respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and will of coastal States and strictly adhere to international law.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

**Mr. Gómez Hernández** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain thanks the Greek presidency for organizing this open debate, which allows us to reflect on the relevance of international cooperation to strengthening maritime security.

The maritime domain is an essential global space for our present and our future. More than 80 per cent of international trade is conducted by sea, and 99 per cent of the world's digital traffic passes through submarine cables. The sea connects societies, sustains economies and regulates the global climate. The oceans, coasts and seabeds are home to valuable natural resources and act as large ecosystems. But the maritime domain also provides strategic versatility that makes it a key space for international security. Neither is this environment immune to global changes. The rise of strategic competition between Powers, the growth of maritime trade, the development of technologies such as artificial intelligence or uncrewed ships and the emergence of complex hybrid threats make it difficult to attribute responsibility and require new forms of vigilance and cooperation.

Spain is a country with a profoundly maritime identity. It is in charge of a rescue area of 1.5 million square kilometres. Ninety per cent of our imports and 60 per cent of our exports come and go by sea. More than 100,000 ships pass through the Strait of Gibraltar every year. In addition, strategic cables, gas and oil pipelines run along our seabed, the protection of which requires constant vigilance and

international collaboration. Spain is committed to maritime security. In November 2024, we approved a new national maritime security strategy, with three objectives: to protect our maritime interests at sea and from the sea, enhance our capabilities and contribute to a safer ocean. At the European level, we are helping to develop the action plan for the revised European Union maritime security strategy. We are actively participating in missions such as Operation Atalanta in the Indian Ocean and maintaining a presence in the Gulf of Guinea through the European Coordinated Maritime Presences mechanism.

Spain steadfastly supports a comprehensive approach that addresses maritime threats from a perspective of security, sustainable development, the rule of law and the protection of the marine environment. The existing multilateral framework must be strengthened, in particular the role of the United Nations and cooperation with relevant organizations, in particular the International Maritime Organization (IMO). We must protect international shipping lanes and strategic ports as key points for global economic stability. Joint efforts are required to minimize disruptions caused by unlawful acts or sabotage. We support strengthened IMO control over offending ships, we are working to hold flag States accountable and we promote global legal reflection on how to better address hybrid threats at sea.

A safe maritime environment is key to peace, the economy and the sustainability of the planet. Spain is, and will continue to be, fully committed to international cooperation as an essential instrument for strengthening maritime security.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan commends Greece for convening this important debate on strengthening maritime security — a critical pillar of global stability, economic resilience and sustainable development. We are also thankful to the briefers for their substantive statements.

We align ourselves with the collective efforts to address multifaceted threats to maritime security, including piracy, transnational organized crime and emerging risks posed by new technologies. As a landlocked country, Kazakhstan recognizes the vital role of secure maritime routes and the stability of supply chains for global trade and energy security. Our nation actively contributes to multilateral security and environmental cooperation in that domain.

To advance our shared agenda, Kazakhstan stands firmly for expanding international and regional cooperation to align maritime security strategies, including the establishment of maritime surveillance and early-warning mechanisms. Kazakhstan supports the use of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and satellite monitoring, to enhance maritime domain awareness and enable real-time threat analysis. We emphasize the need for technical assistance for developing States to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to those tools.

Climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate maritime threats. Kazakhstan calls for the integration of climate resilience into maritime security strategies, including the protection of critical infrastructure and marine ecosystems from unlawful activities. Kazakhstan supports the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the high seas, which reflects customary international law, along with other relevant international instruments. We emphasize the importance of strengthening legal and institutional frameworks in all countries.

Kazakhstan remains committed to multilateral solutions and stands ready to contribute to collective efforts that ensure open, safe and secure seas for all. We call for a holistic, inclusive approach to maritime security, ensuring that no nation is left behind in that collective endeavour.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

**Mr. Cappon (Israel):** The Red Sea is bleeding. It bleeds as a result of the constant attacks by terrorists who aim to destabilize our region and the global supply chain. It bleeds as a result of the silence of the international community, which watches as shipping lanes are turned into hunting grounds. It bleeds as a result of the increasing reality that no vessel, sailor or flag is safe.

The Houthi terrorist organization in Yemen is carrying out a systematic campaign of maritime terrorism. They do not discriminate between civilian, military or commercial ships — they are all targets. Allow me to provide just a few examples. On 19 November 2023, they hijacked the *MV Galaxy Leader* — a Bahamas-flagged vessel sailing from Türkiye to India with cars from South Korea. On board were 25 innocent civilians, who were then held hostage by terrorists. Soon after, they seized the *MV Central Park*, flying the Liberian flag. Its crew was rescued by the *USS Mason* just before two ballistic missiles were fired at both ships. On 3 December 2023, three ships — the *Unity Explorer*, the *Number 9* and the *AOM Sophie II* — were all attacked. That is three ships in one day. Then, the *MT Strinda*, a Norwegian tanker, was struck. Two days later, a Marshall Islands-flagged was hit by Houthi missiles. Their goal is the disruption of trade, supply chains and global stability.

Thirty per cent of world trade moves through the Suez Canal. It is one of the most critical routes for the global economy. Right now, that route is blocked. Ships are being forced to reroute around Africa, adding weeks to delivery times. Companies are scrambling to find new vessels, routes and insurance policies. The price of single containers is already rising by hundreds of dollars. In some cases, the containers never arrive. That is affecting oil, gas, medicine, food — any commodities one can think of. It is affecting Europe, Asia, Africa — it is a global emergency. Yet we all know exactly who is pulling the strings — the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran trains the Houthis, funds them and supplies them with weapons, intelligence and targeting systems. The Houthis do not manufacture ballistic missiles. They do not build drones with advanced guiding systems. They do not develop sea-based targeting capabilities on their own. They are armed by Tehran, coached by Tehran and sent into the sea as Tehran's enforcers. Iran is blatantly standing before us all, giving orders to their terrorist proxies and watching the chaos unfold. Of course, Iran is behind it. After all, it is the same regime that is attempting to rearm Hizbullah to once again attack Israeli cities, the same regime that equipped Hamas with the weapons and means to massacre more than 1,200 people on 7 October 2023 and the same regime that is now trying to choke the Red Sea. Iran does not care about maritime security. It does not care about global trade or international law. It cares about domination through terror, proxies and chaos.

While the Houthis fire at ships in the Red Sea, they are also launching ballistic missiles directly at Israel. They are targeting our cities, our airports and our civilians. The Houthis have repeatedly fired long-range missiles and drones at Israeli territory. Some have been intercepted, and some have landed, but all were intended to kill. But we have no illusions about that threat — it is Iran that is using the Houthis as another front in its war against Israel. Iran is working day and night to destabilize every front surrounding its enemies and to degrade the region. They dare the world to respond, but so far there has barely been a whisper from most countries. This is State-backed terrorism, orchestrated with clear intent, but the Security Council remains cautious, even as oil prices rise, supply chains buckle and more civilian crews are forced to flee incoming fire.

How many more missile launches must there be? How many more hijackings must there be? How many more warnings must there be before actions? Israel will continue to defend its civilians against the Houthis' missiles and the Iranian aggression. We will continue to work with our allies to safeguard the freedom of

navigation. But the Red Sea is bleeding, and it is time the world stopped pretending that it does not see the blood.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

**Mr. Lambrinidis:** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Greek presidency of the Security Council for convening this important meeting and the Secretary-General and the briefers for their insights.

In tribute to the Greek presidency, let me recall that the word “oceans” itself comes from the Greek word *Okeanos*. In the Iliad — one of the first pieces of European literature — Homer refers to the ocean as “the river where all things are born”. For centuries, oceans have been vital not only for life itself, but also for global economic development. With the world’s second-largest coastal territory, Europe relies heavily on seaborne trade and maritime industries for its prosperity. In that context, we welcome the final text of the political declaration of the third United Nations Ocean Conference, which the President of the General Assembly has sent to the co-hosts, and we look forward to its adoption in Nice, France, in a few weeks.

The European Union is deeply committed to ensuring maritime security worldwide. To enhance maritime domain awareness and response capabilities, the EU, alongside its member States, is advancing technological initiatives, such as uncrewed platforms, sensors and drones. In October 2023, the EU adopted a revised maritime security strategy with an accompanying action plan to address various maritime security challenges, including hybrid and cyberthreats. The overall aim is to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders across all sectors — civilian and military — both within the EU and globally.

International law, with the Charter of the United Nations at its core, must be upheld on land and at sea. The EU and its member States remain strongly committed to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the universal and unified legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. Its provisions reflect customary international law and are therefore binding on all States, irrespective of whether they have acceded to the Convention or not. A recent example of the importance of the freedom of navigation followed on the heels of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, blockading the Black Sea — one of the world’s vital shipping corridors for food. In response, the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports facilitated the safe export of nearly 33 million tons of grain and other foodstuffs from Ukraine, more than half of which went to lower- and middle-income countries — an exceptional example of the United Nations in action.

International cooperation is key to the EU’s maritime security efforts. The EU has therefore built strong partnerships, including through its support for regional maritime security architectures in Africa. One example is the Yaoundé Architecture, which has been instrumental in improving maritime security in accordance with resolution 2634 (2022). The EU currently conducts three naval operations. Operation Atalanta contributes to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Western Indian Ocean. Operation IRINI implements the arms embargo on Libya in accordance with resolution 2292 (2016). And in the Red Sea region, where Houthi attacks have targeted international merchant and commercial vessels since October 2023, Operation Aspides protects shipping in line with resolution 2722 (2024).

The EU also helps to enhance maritime security through capacity-building, including the EU Safe Seas Africa programme, EU capacity-building missions and other initiatives. The EU also engages in capacity-building for maritime domain awareness, which also highlights the first point that the Greek Prime Minister raised as important in his statement this morning. One example is the EU-funded Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific project, which provides an information-sharing platform to help coastal countries to enhance maritime domain awareness across the region. Recent incidents of damage to submarine cables have shown the importance of protecting critical maritime infrastructure. Such infrastructure is vital for the functioning of our societies and appropriate preventive action must be taken in accordance with UNCLOS. In February, the European Commission and the High Representative presented an EU action plan on cable security to improve the protection of submarine cables.

In conclusion, the EU looks forward to working with international partners on the protection of critical maritime infrastructure and in the wider field of maritime security. If oceans are indeed the river where all things are born, then we must protect them together.

**The President:** There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.*