



Report:

GULF OF GUINEA MARITIME INSTITUTE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY WORKING GROUP (IMSWG) FORUM & LAUNCH OF THE GULF SPECTRUM JOURNAL

**Theme: A Decade of the
Yaoundé Code of Conduct;
A New Dawn or Business
As Usual**

I. INTRODUCTION

The International Maritime Security Working Group, a knowledge exchange and research network of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute (GoGMI), convened its eighth open virtual forum on August 22, 2023, with a focus on stimulating dialogue and policy innovation to address maritime security and safety concerns in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) region. This event brought together approximately 60 maritime stakeholders, including decision-makers, researchers, business representatives, security practitioners from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the international community. The primary goal was to exchange ideas and leverage collective insights regarding the sustainability challenges in fully operationalizing the “Code of Conduct Concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa”, popularly referred to as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCoC). This meeting was convened to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct.

Additionally, the forum served as a platform for the official launching of GoGMI’s inaugural edition of the Gulf Spectrum Journal. Authors of the journal were invited to share their research insights and perspectives based on the papers submitted for publication, which spurred discussions among the participants.

II. FIRST SESSION

1. Official Opening of the Forum

The forum commenced with a welcome address by Ms. Stephanie Schandorf, who welcomed all participants on behalf of the Institute and explained the purpose for the forum. This was followed by a keynote address delivered by Rear Admiral Agada. His speech centred on key aspects of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, including its historical background, purpose, and the structural framework for its implementation. Rear Admiral Agada acknowledged the Gulf of Guinea region’s unique combination of cooperative efforts and shared resources, emphasising the necessity for scalability and innovation. He stressed the importance of investing in technology and nurturing the younger generation to meet these evolving needs.



Keynote Speech delivered by Rear Admiral Solomon Agada

Furthermore, his keynote address highlighted several critical issues, including challenges associated with the Code of Conduct, such as long-term funding and local ownership; the pivotal role of strategic communication; the significance of educational initiatives to combat maritime “sea blindness”; and measures to foster trust among security agencies operating in the Gulf of Guinea region.

2. Presentations on Summary of the Gulf Spectrum Journal Articles

The event featured presentations delivered by contributing authors, focusing on the chapters they provided for the inaugural edition of the Gulf Spectrum Journal. During the plenary proceeding the presentations, participants widely concurred on the necessity of promoting local ownership of the YCoC. They also reached a consensus on the significance of ongoing capacity development and the need to collaboratively address cooperation bottlenecks. The presentations covered the following topics:

a. The Evolutionary Path of Maritime Security Initiatives in the Gulf of Guinea – The Role of External Actors by Pa Modou Mboob and Edrissa E. Jallow

Pa Modou noted that their paper aimed to understand the reasoning behind the international community's engagement in maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) and analyse how their various initiatives in the region have evolved. He discussed the significance of the GoG, including its natural resources such as oil, gas, and fisheries, and its strategic location for commerce. He then delved into the rationale for US and EU maritime security initiatives in the GoG, citing various policy documents and strategies. Pa Modou also outlined the evolutionary trajectory of the United States (US) and European Union (EU) initiatives in the region, including consultation meetings, naval presence, training cruises, and various programs and exercises, aimed at improving regional cooperation and wider coverage. Their paper concluded that both the US and EU have taken an African-led approach in addressing the problem of maritime crime in the GoG, and their efforts have complemented the strengthening of the Yaoundé Architecture framework. He thus recommended that international partners should continue to channel their assistance in one direction to further improve maritime security in the region.



b. Local Content Development Programme as an Alternative Approach to Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Region by David Nanor

This paper discussed the issue of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) region, as a concern for all due to the repercussions of piracy, ship hijacking, use of the sea for terrorist activities, smuggling of illicit drugs, and human trafficking. The paper identified youth unemployment as the root cause of piracy and suggested the Local Content Development Programme as an alternative approach to resolving this menace. The paper argued that providing alternative livelihoods to individuals who consistently remain



poor without alternative options could reduce the number of potential piracy recruits. The Local Content Development Programme is an initiative in the extractive industry to promote capacity building and indigenous participation. Through training and capacity-building programmes, local communities are empowered to engage meaningfully in the industry and contribute to its growth. In his conclusion, David Nanor recommended that policymakers should find a lasting intervention that positively engages the youth in the region, since local content development programmes offer a viable approach to enhancing maritime security in the GoG. These youth centred approaches include youth interventions, youth engagement, youth amnesty and reinvigoration programmes.

c. Maritime Security Capacity Building Challenges in West Africa by Elsie A. Tachie-Menson, Katja Lindskov Jacobsen, Anna Naa Adochoo Mensah, and Ransford E.V. Gyampo

On behalf of the authors, Elsie Tachie-Menson presented this paper. The paper discussed the challenges of capacity-building initiatives for



enhancing maritime security in West Africa. The paper emphasised the need to address under-prioritised maritime crimes and delves into the intricate dynamics of regional priorities and challenges, highlighting their pivotal role in shaping effective capacity-building strategies. The paper also discussed the issue of prioritisation and its impact on capacity-building, including the far-reaching consequences of such prioritisation on the outcomes of capacity-building endeavours. Elsie shed light on the phenomenon of ‘unintended consequences’ arising from capacity-building mismatches, including ‘no use’ consequences, prevented use consequences, and unintended capacity use. She also highlighted the need for equitable attention to diverse maritime crimes, using the example of IUU fishing crimes, and stressed the significance of aligning capacity-building interventions with the realities of host states’ security challenges and objectives. She concluded by summarising the central arguments of the paper and underlining the imperative of harmonising capacity-building strategies with regional priorities to foster comprehensive maritime security solutions.

d. Tackling the Impact of Maritime Insecurity within the Gulf of Guinea along with Promising Expansion of Trade in Coastal West Africa by Anthony Djaba-Sackey

Anthony Djaba-Sackey’s paper was a review of the problems of maritime insecurity in West



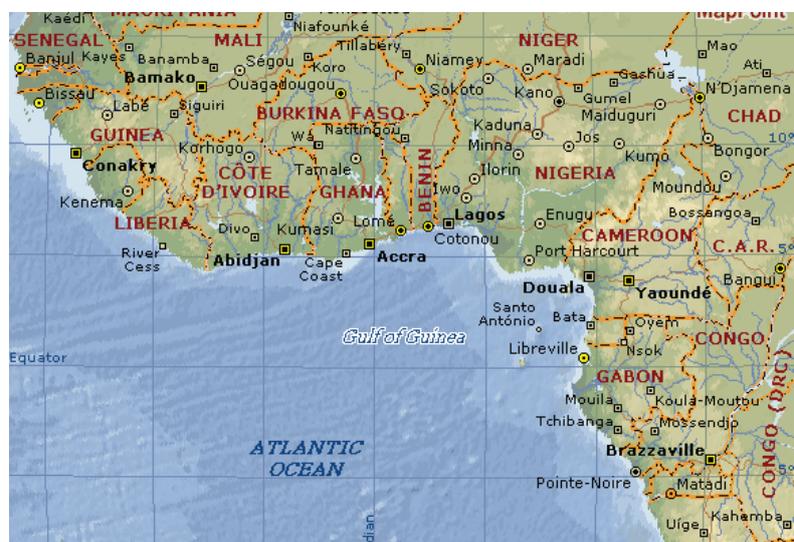
Africa amid and post Covid-19 pandemic. The paper was the first of a two-part study that aims to identify the most appropriate recommendations with an integrated approach to tackling piracy. The main issues he included: the economic outlook of Africa with investments; the rising marine traffic associated with the growing demand for shipping within the Gulf of Guinea; the role of maritime transport amidst continental integration; and the current trends in traditional maritime crimes. He also highlighted the importance of maritime security to developing economies

and trade and the current practices and regulations against maritime insecurity. Anthony recommended that the challenges of Africa's maritime transport sector should be addressed in light of innovation and technology, infrastructure quality, regulation and governance, human capital, and skills. He also suggests the need for effective collaboration in the region and the importance of verifying the accuracy of reporting before broadcasting incidents.

e. Obligatory Regionalism by Elizabeth Chinenyenwa Nwarueze

Presenting the paper titled "Obligatory Regionalism", Elizabeth discussed the enhancement of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea through regional cooperation.

She argued that a two-step approach of solving national security concerns and enhancing regional cooperation on trade can serve as a catalyst for boosting maritime security within the region. She suggests that the inability of African countries to implement regional agreements successfully, like the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), gives impetus to individualism that enhances insecurity in the region. Therefore, the paper recommends that African countries should first solve their national security concerns before enhancing regional cooperation on trade.

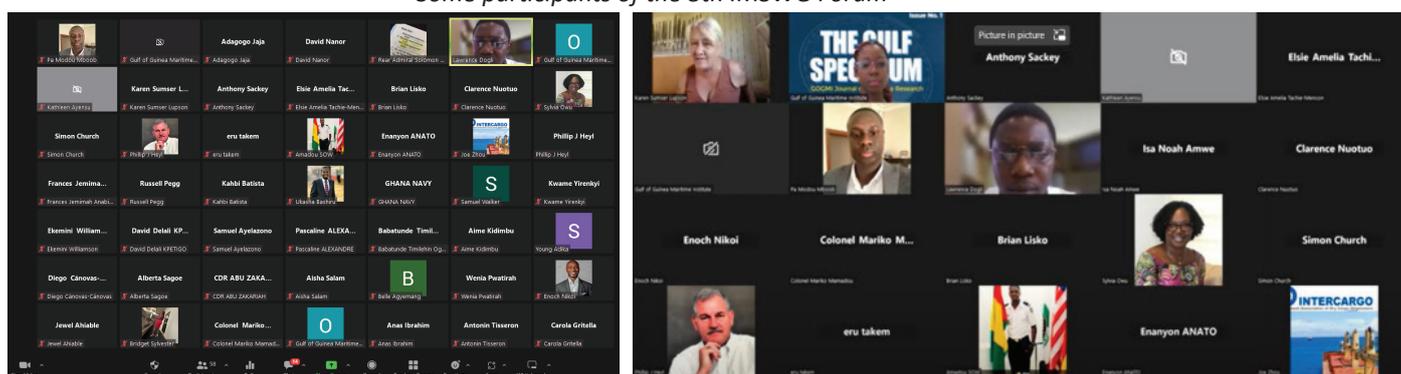


The recommendations made in the paper included:

- i. Addressing internal security challenges to avoid their spill-over effects to international waters.
- ii. Promoting regional cooperation in related aspects of the regional economy that can influence maritime areas in the region.
- iii. Enhancing regional mechanisms for managing illegal fishing, pollution, piracy, and rescue operations.
- iv. Ensuring equal security mechanisms across all regions to avoid disparities in State and regional action towards maritime security.

Overall, her paper highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and global collaboration in addressing maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea and provided recommendations for enhancing maritime security in the region.

Some participants of the 8th IMSWG Forum



3. Discussions and Recommendations

Following the presentations delivered by the various authors, participants of the meeting were invited to comment on the articles in a plenary. The following issues and recommendations were raised:

a. Prioritise Investment in Blue Economy:

To fully leverage the blue economy in Gulf of Guinea (GoG) countries, adopt a holistic approach by prioritising strategic investments in key sectors like fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, renewable energy, and infrastructure, fostering collaborative partnerships between governments, private enterprises, and international organisations to attract sustainable investments. Simultaneously, diversify ocean activities through feasibility studies for offshore wind farms, gas exploration, and deep-sea mining, all while adhering to stringent environmental regulations. Promote diversified coastal activities such as eco-tourism and marine conservation to maximise both economic and environmental benefits. This comprehensive strategy ensures responsible and environmentally friendly practices, unlocking the blue economy's vast potential for long-term sustainable growth.

b. Address Funding and Diplomacy for MPAs:

To successfully establish and manage marine protected areas (MPAs), it is imperative to address both funding and diplomatic aspects. Engaging in diplomatic discussions with neighbouring countries and international stakeholders is vital to equitably share the financial burden required for MPA operations. This can include exploring innovative financing mechanisms like public-private partnerships and dedicated funds. Additionally, a well-considered strategy for generating revenue through sustainable use of marine resources within MPAs can help offset operational costs and ensure long-term sustainability. Diplomatic efforts should also prioritise clear guidelines for MPA establishment and governance in shared international waters, advocating for consensus on funding mechanisms and equitable distribution of costs among nations involved in MPA protection.

c. Adopt a Holistic Maritime Security Framework:

Develop a comprehensive maritime security strategy to address the potential rise in criminal activities tied to the growing blue economy. This involves creating a dedicated maritime security task force, fostering collaboration with international organisations and neighbouring nations for intelligence sharing and coordinated responses, and strengthening legal frameworks and penalties for maritime crimes as a deterrent. Additionally, adopt a multifaceted approach, considering governance improvements, law enforcement enhancements, stronger international cooperation, and infrastructure investments to address maritime insecurity comprehensively and ensure long-term security for sustainable growth.

d. Comprehensive Approach to Maritime Security:

To effectively address maritime insecurity, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea, a holistic approach is essential. This approach should prioritise youth inclusion and employment programs as a

fundamental strategy for tackling root causes like youth unemployment, thereby reducing susceptibility to criminal activities. Simultaneously, it is crucial to promote capacity building among security forces, law enforcement agencies, and relevant institutions. Capacity-building efforts should encompass training, technology adoption, and the development of robust legal frameworks to enable proactive responses to maritime threats. This dual approach empowers both the youth, through skill development and employment opportunities, and security forces, enhancing their capabilities in combating maritime crimes for a more secure maritime environment.

III. THIRD SESSION

Launch of the Gulf Spectrum Journal

The second session featured the launch of the inaugural edition of GoGMI's [Gulf Spectrum Journal](#), themed, "Maritime Security Interventions in the Gulf of Guinea". This edition comprises a compilation of research on the complexity of maritime security interventions in the Gulf of Guinea, with the ultimate goal of shedding light on viable pathways for harmonising collective efforts to enhance shared objectives.

The chosen theme juxtaposes various maritime security interventions that have emerged in response to the unique challenges faced by the Gulf of Guinea Region. It also considers their potential evolution in response to changing dynamics over time.

Papers featured in this edition addressed the following sub-themes:

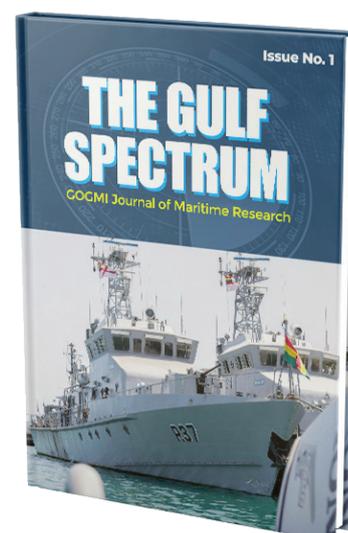
- a. Evolution of maritime security initiatives
- b. Range of existing initiatives
- c. Actor responses and relations

This inaugural edition of the journal was reviewed and edited by the following professionals:

- a. Captain Stephan King - Canadian Coast Guard, Government of Canada
- b. Dr. Axel Klein - Project Lead, Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security (SWAIMS)
- c. Captain António Alexandre - Research and Development Centre of the Portuguese Military University Institute
- d. Dr. Alberta Sagoe - Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute
- e. Ms. Stephanie Schandorf - Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute

Rear Admiral Solomon Agada delivered a symbolic speech, marking the inauguration of the Gulf Spectrum Journal. This was followed by the journal's unveiling by Mr. Lawrence Dogli. Participants were then encouraged to make purchases of the journal with the impetus of supporting the financing of the Institute's activities.

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GL-108-0038



INFO@GOGMI.ORG.GH



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