



Shipping industry welcomes Nigeria's creation of "Deep Blue" to stamp out piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Thursday 10 June 2021: The Round Table of Shipowner Associations and OCIMF have expressed their full support for the launch of Nigeria's Deep Blue Project.

Nigeria has today announced a significant investment in military and law enforcement infrastructure to secure its maritime domain as part of a stepping up of actions to address the ongoing piracy issue in the Gulf of Guinea. Managed by the Nigerian Maritime Safety Agency (NIMASA), the multi-agency project will significantly increase maritime security in the region, an area blighted by piracy, armed robbery, and other maritime crimes.

A central command and control centre based in Lagos will oversee a network of integrated assets including two special mission vessels, two special mission long-range aircraft, 17 fast-response vessels capable of speeds of 50 knots, three helicopters, and four airborne drones, providing 24/7 cover for the region. These complement the Yaounde ICC structure offering real capability to both Nigeria and the region.

It is the hope of the industry organisations that Deep Blue, coordinated with other navies and programmes through the mechanism of the GOG - Maritime Collaboration Forum/SHADE, will seriously impact on the ability of pirate groups to prey on merchant shipping.

Guy Platten, ICS Secretary General said, "The Deep Blue Project can be a game-changer in the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and we congratulate Nigeria in launching the project despite the significant difficulties presented by COVID."

"We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with NIMASA and the Nigerian Navy to realise our shared vision of a region free from the threat of piracy and armed robbery."

David Loosley, BIMCO Secretary General, said "Deep Blue becoming operational represents a significant opportunity to expand law and order at sea in cooperation with international forces in the area. We look forward to seeing Nigeria make the best of these assets to the benefit of Nigeria, its citizens and economy, and of course the seafarers from all over the world going about their daily business in the Gulf of Guinea."

Katharina Stanzel, Managing Director of INTERTANKO, said: "INTERTANKO believes that the launch of the Deep Blue Project is a tangible demonstration that the tide has turned against the scourge of piracy. This project has the potential to greatly contribute to seafarers being once again able to carry out their duties without fear for their safety."

"We thank the Nigerian authorities for recognising the issue and putting these measures in place – all within the constraints of the ongoing Covid-19 situation."

Kostas Gkonis, Secretary General of INTERCARGO, said "Along with our sincere congratulations to the Nigerian authorities on the launch of this important initiative, on behalf of the dry bulk shipping sector, we very much anticipate that the Deep Blue Project will make

a significant impact in reducing piracy and armed robbery, protecting seafarers, ships, and the essential trade that serves the peoples of countries in the region.”

Robert Drysdale, Managing Director of OCIMF, said “the launch of the Deep Blue Project marks a milestone of delivering state of the art, multi-faceted, maritime capability. It presents a great opportunity to protect seafarers and the maritime domain. The collaborative approach by all stakeholders to deliver Deep Blue is commendable and proves what can be achieved when all work together. OCIMF congratulates Nigerian authorities and welcomes this historical moment, Deep Blue will benefit, Nigeria, the region and all those who trade in the Gulf of Guinea waters.

Media enquiries

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Notes to Editors

About ICS

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal international trade association for merchant shipowners and operators, representing all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world merchant fleet.

www.ics-shipping.org

About BIMCO

BIMCO is the world's largest international shipping association, with around 1,900 members in more than 120 countries, representing 59% of the world's tonnage. Our global membership includes shipowners, operators, managers, brokers and agents. BIMCO is a non-profit organisation.

www.bimco.org

About INTERTANKO

INTERTANKO is the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, a forum where the industry meets, policies are discussed and best practices developed. INTERTANKO has been the voice of independent tanker owners since 1970, ensuring that the liquid energy that keeps the world turning is shipped safely, responsibly and competitively.

www.intertanko.com

About INTERCARGO

The International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO) unites and promotes quality dry bulk shipping, bringing together some 220 forward thinking companies from 30 countries and representing close to 25% by deadweight of the global dry bulk fleet.

www.intercargo.org

About OCIMF

The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) is a voluntary association of oil companies with an interest in the shipment and terminalling of crude oil, oil products, petrochemicals and gas. OCIMF focuses exclusively on preventing harm to people and the environment by promoting best practice

www.ocimf.org