

G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Maritime Security
April 11, 2016 Hiroshima, Japan

Free, open and stable seas are a cornerstone for peace, stability and prosperity of the international community. Recognizing the importance of the oceans, we, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and High Representative of the European Union, reaffirm our commitment to further international cooperation on maritime security and safety.

We reaffirm the importance of maintaining a maritime order based upon the universally recognized principles of international law, including those reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The legal order for the seas and oceans facilitates international communication, promotes the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans and the sustainable use of marine resources, and supports economic order and security in the international community.

We reiterate our commitment to the freedoms of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the high seas and the exclusive economic zones as well as to the related rights and freedoms in other maritime zones, including the rights of innocent passage, transit passage and archipelagic sea lanes passage consistent with international law.

We call on all states to pursue the peaceful management and settlement of maritime disputes in good faith and in accordance with international law, including through applicable internationally recognized legal dispute settlement mechanisms, including arbitration, recognizing that the use of such mechanisms is consistent with the maintenance and enhancement of the international order based upon the rule of law, and to fully implement any decisions rendered by the relevant courts and tribunals which are binding on them, including as provided under UNCLOS.

We are concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas, and emphasize the fundamental importance of peaceful management and settlement of disputes. We express our strong opposition to any intimidating, coercive or provocative unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions, and urge all states to refrain from such actions as land reclamations including large scale

ones, building of outposts, as well as their use for military purposes and to act in accordance with international law including the principles of freedoms of navigation and overflight. In areas pending final delimitation, we underline the importance of coastal states refraining from unilateral actions that cause permanent physical change to the marine environment insofar as such actions jeopardize or hamper the reaching of the final agreement, as well as the importance of making every effort to enter into provisional arrangements of a practical nature, in those areas. We encourage further engagement in confidence building measures such as dialogue which seek to build trust and security in the region. We call for the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and the early establishment of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

We firmly condemn piracy and armed robbery at sea, transnational organized crime and terrorism in the maritime domain, trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and other maritime activities that threaten global stability, security and prosperity, and express our continued commitment to pursue international cooperation to combat these threats. We particularly underline the importance of stepping up efforts to ensure the implementation of measures and regulations aimed at preventing IUU fishing and welcome the IUU-related recommendations submitted to us by the G7 High-level Meeting on Maritime Security hosted by Germany in December.

We reaffirm the importance of regional ownership and responsibility in fighting piracy and armed robbery at sea, and other illegal maritime activities. We commend the work to develop and support regional maritime security capability, increase capacity to pursue the land-based criminal enterprises that support illicit maritime activity and prosecute them through frameworks like the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), G7++Friends of the Gulf of Guinea and Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). We commend the UN and its specialized bodies, the NATO's Operations Ocean Shield and Active Endeavour, and the EU's CSDP missions, notably EU's Naval Force Operations Atalanta and Sophia in close collaboration with the Combined Maritime Force and national contributors. We welcome the EU Maritime Security Strategy including the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) and national strategies outlined by G7 countries.

We share the determination to target the causes of illegal maritime activities and cooperate through capacity building assistance for maritime security and safety in such areas as maritime governance, coast guard, disaster relief, maritime search and rescue, and maritime information sharing and integration, as well as legislative, judicial, prosecutorial and correctional assistance in order to help coastal states to deal with their own vulnerabilities. We therefore welcome the African Union Summit on maritime security and safety and development in Africa to be held in October in Togo.

We welcome and encourage research activities aimed at providing scientific and technological support to enhance maritime security. We further seek to build cooperation regarding the development of a future legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. We also call for leadership to foster the information sharing and collaboration necessary for effective global Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) which is so fundamentally related to most maritime domain challenges.

We encourage efforts to promote understanding of international law including law of the sea such as organizing symposiums and seminars on the topic. In this regard, we welcome the continued focus on maritime security expressed, last year, in the G7 Declaration on Maritime Security in Lübeck in April, the Our Oceans Conference hosted by Chile in October, the G7 High-level Meeting on Maritime Security as well as the 2nd International Symposium on the Law of the Sea hosted by Japan in February this year, and past and upcoming Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) workshops on law and best practices in maritime boundary delimitation. Recognizing the importance of maintaining the sea as governed by the rule of law, which is indispensable for the peace and prosperity of the international community, we, as G7, are committed to further action on maritime security.