



REMARKS

BY

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SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
FEDERATION,**

AT THE

SECURED MARITIME CONFERENCE

HOLDING AT THE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA

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Protocol

I feel honoured to be called upon to make a brief remark on this occasion of the Secured Maritime Conference with the theme “**Together for Maritime Security in Nigeria**”.

2. I am particularly glad that stakeholders in the Maritime Sector have recognized the threats posed by the different dimensions of security issues to the growth of the sector and consequently, deemed it appropriate to institute a framework to identify, analyse and proffer solution to these challenges experienced on our waterways.

3. Dear Participants, Government has long before now, recognized the threats to the maritime sector by the different security challenges hampering the different subcategories of businesses in the sector. That is why the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GoGC) was established by a treaty signed in Libreville, Garbon on 3rd July, 2001 by five Heads of State of Angola, Congo, Gabon, Nigeria as well as Sao Tome and Principe. Equatorial Guinea joined in 2006 while Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo joined in 2008. It constituted an institutional framework for cooperation among the countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea in

order to defend their common interests and promote peace and socio-economic developments, which remains the basis for continued dialogue, consensus, ties of friendship, solidarity, fraternity and integration.

4. Consistent, with the above, Nigeria hosted the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Gulf of Guinea Commission in November, 2017 in Abuja where President Muhammadu Buhari, was elected the current Chairman of the Commission. The Summit was convened to address the future prospects of the GoGC and proffer solutions to resolve the issues bordering on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea region. These include; degradation and pollution of the environment; illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; arms and drugs trafficking; illegal migration; illegal oil bunkering; and of course, piracy which have caused serious challenges to international trade and maritime transportation.

5. At the Summit, five (5) Committees of Experts were constituted with the aim of finding lasting solutions to curb crime in the region. The Peace and Security Committee, chaired by Nigeria, is to address issues related to drug trafficking, arms trafficking, maritime piracy, human trafficking, development of security architecture for the maritime space, illegal bunkering, money laundering and other financial crimes, among others.

6. Similarly, the Federal Government has collaborated with other countries in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) and various partners for an Integrated National Security Strategy (INSS) that will ensure comprehensive maritime strategies for the Nigerian maritime sector. This is a step aimed to stemming the tide of insecurity in the region's territorial waters. In addition, the Federal Government has established a Command and Control Centre for enhanced situation awareness, response capability, law enforcement regional cooperation amongst others, to enhance the fight against piracy and other forms of criminality in the region.

7. Your Excellencies, Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, consequent upon the foregoing, it is difficult for any State of the region to handle the security challenges in the region which is about 600km long. This, therefore, underscores the need to address the challenges confronting the region by creating awareness and involving all stakeholders to finding possible ways of curtailing them. All these measures are geared towards an enhanced water security, socio-economic development and security of the nation at large.

8. At this juncture, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, let me leverage on this opportunity to commend the organizers of the conference for providing a very useful platform that would bring about the envisaged solutions not only to the security challenges in the maritime sector but to the country as a whole.

9. I, therefore, urge all stakeholders to take ownership and assume responsibility of the security of their maritime domain while also proffering solutions and steps to enhance more collaboration among the GoG member States for future prospects of the region.

10. I wish you a successful Conference and journey mercies back to your respective destinations.

11. Thank you for your attention and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.