

Mr. Lambertini (Italy):

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) and adds the following remarks in its national capacity.

We thank China, Angola and Senegal for bringing this issue back to the Security Council after the debates in 2011 and 2012 and the adoption of resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012) and presidential statement S/PRST/2013/13 in August 2013. We also welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Togo, Mr. Robert Dussey, who represents one of the countries most affected by this crisis.

Maritime piracy is a deadly threat to the lives of all men and women working at sea. It is a threat to the maritime industry and international trade. It has links with organized and transnational crimes. It fuels conflicts. Piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea in particular undermine the consolidation of peace in Western Africa and the economic development of the region to the benefit of its people. Italy therefore remains concerned about the continuing pirate and armed attacks in the Gulf of Guinea and notes with concern their most recent rise in number, violence and geographic extension. It is particularly worrisome that these attacks occur both in international and national waters, undermining freedom and the security of navigation, which are essential to trade and economic development. Italy reiterates its commitment to halting this trend through a multidimensional approach based on prevention, diplomacy, training, security and addressing the root causes. Let me share with the Council some concrete examples beyond our active participation in the EU strategy for the Gulf of Guinea in support of the Yaoundé process.

First of all, my country is an active member of the Group of Seven Plus Friends of the Gulf of Guinea aimed at facilitating the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions and of the Yaoundé Summit declarations on maritime security and safety in the Gulf of Guinea. We look forward to the upcoming meeting under the Portuguese presidency. Italy will be attending and working to advance the implementation of the decision to establish, by 2016, a full-fledged maritime security and safety architecture and to promote police and judicial cooperation in the region.

In the same spirit of international engagement and cooperation, my country officially supported Angola in convening last November in Luanda the International Conference on Maritime and Energy Security. Our Deputy Minister for Defence attended the meeting, which ended with the adoption of the Luanda Declaration on information-sharing and raising maritime situational awareness. On this basis, the Italian and the Angolan navies are negotiating a technical follow-up arrangement.

Secondly, local ownership and national leadership are essential to complement international support and direct it where it is most needed and effective. In this regard, I stress the important role played by regional and subregional organizations. The Yaoundé Code of Conduct has chosen three regional organizations to steer the process — the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Gulf Cooperation Council — and we look forward to cooperating with them. We welcome in particular the high-level meeting held in February and underscore the importance of the Interregional Coordination Centre on Maritime Safety and Security for Central and West Africa, based in Cameroon, which we are actively supporting through a grant. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel can also play a facilitating role as part of its overall action in the region.

Thirdly, training and capacity-building are crucial and we have been focusing on this. During the circumnavigation of Africa in the first half of 2014, the Italian navy carried out specific training activities on maritime security and the fight against piracy on our flagship, the Nave Cavour. Over 20

African countries and 21 ports were touched during this campaign, including those in the Gulf of Guinea, and maritime capacity-building initiatives were carried out very successfully. In the same spirit, Italy is currently supporting the maritime programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which promotes capacity-building to address and eradicate crimes committed at sea, including acts of piracy, armed robbery and illicit trafficking.

This is part of our comprehensive effort to help West Africa and Sahel countries enhance their overall capacities in tackling illicit flows of arms, natural resources, goods and persons. The Italian navy has bilateral training programmes with its counterparts in the Gulf of Guinea and beyond. Through our Carabinieri and Guardia di Finanza, Italy has developed a wide range of cooperation activities with the region's countries in this field. Let me name three examples: border and custom management programmes; investigative techniques and counter-terrorism training courses; and information sharing.

My last point is that, in order to tackle the phenomenon effectively, we must go beyond piracy and armed robbery and address their root causes on land. Socioeconomic development; job opportunities; inequalities; education; youth engagement; and women's empowerment must all be factored into our decision-making on this issue. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 will play a pivotal role to this end. The African Union summit on maritime security and safety and development in Africa, to be held in Lomé on 15 October, will offer an excellent opportunity to advance the agenda regarding the Gulf of Guinea and we look forward to its outcome and concrete deliverables. We will further discuss the way to strengthen our joint efforts with African partners on security and development issues in the Italy-Africa ministerial conference to be held in Rome on 18 May.

Finally, allow me to make a very short personal remark. I was born 200 metres from the Mediterranean Sea in a house that still proudly stands on the shore of one of the most ancient maritime cities in the world, Naples. Generations of my family have lived and prospered with the sea. The sea brings one food, money, culture and an open-minded future. That is one of the reasons why we are so active in the Mediterranean to the point of risking our lives, because we know that the sea can bring a better life for everyone in the future. We are really committed to ensuring the pacific use of the sea in the Gulf of Guinea and in all of the open seas and oceans in every corner of the world.

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