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NIGERIA ADVOCATES SHARED REGIONAL MARITIME PICTURE AND PREDICTABLE FINANCING FOR REGIONAL MARITIME OPERATIONS

Nigeria has called for the development of shared regional maritime picture and predictable financing for regional maritime operations as essential measures for the strengthening of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

The call was made by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed, PhD., while delivering Nigeria's statement at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) High-Level Open Debate on Maintenance of International Peace and Security, held on 29 October 2026, at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, under the theme: "Emerging Technologies and Maritime Security: Implications for Peace and Security".

In his statement, Ambassador Ahmed acknowledged the growing influence of emerging technologies on the maritime security landscape, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. He noted that organised criminal networks increasingly exploited technologies, including satellite communications, for piracy, kidnapping for ransom, and other maritime crimes. However, he observed that the effective deployment of similar technologies by States had contributed significantly to strengthening surveillance and reducing these crimes.

Highlighting Nigeria's efforts to enhance maritime security, the Permanent Secretary cited the Deep Blue Project, which integrates unmanned aerial vehicles, maritime domain awareness systems and an advanced central command and control centre, to strengthen surveillance, improve response capabilities and combat maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea. He further underscored the importance of robust legal frameworks for prosecuting offenders, citing Nigeria's enactment of the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences Act, 2019.

Ambassador Ahmed stressed that the full benefits of emerging technologies could only be realised through effective information-sharing, regional cooperation and sustained capacity-building. Against this background, he advanced two recommendations aimed at strengthening technological infrastructure, improving data reliability and enhancing the capacity of personnel to deploy innovation effectively in addressing maritime security.

First, he called for the development of a shared regional maritime picture, urging the Security Council to encourage international partners, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and other relevant international bodies to build on UNSC Resolution 2634 (2022), by supporting the deployment of appropriate technology and capacity-building initiatives through the Yaoundé Architecture.

He explained that such support would enable national surveillance systems to contribute to an interoperable regional maritime picture, underpinned by regional ownership and appropriate human oversight. He further emphasised that developing coastal States must enjoy equitable access to these technologies on fair and affordable terms, to ensure that technological innovation narrows rather than widen existing capacity gaps.

Second, the Permanent Secretary advocated predictable and sustainable financing for regional maritime operations, drawing on the framework established under UNSC Resolution 2719 (2023), which provides adequate, sustainable and predictable financing for African Union-led peace support operations. In this regard, he encouraged the Security Council to align its financial framework with proposed operationalisation of the Combined Maritime Task Force for the Gulf of Guinea, recommended to be headquartered in Nigeria, as endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council in April 2025.

In conclusion, Ambassador Ahmed reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to working closely with the Gulf of Guinea States, relevant Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Union and the United Nations Security Council, to ensure that emerging technologies become instruments of collective security. He stressed the importance of concerted regional and international action in making Africa's maritime domain safer for seafarers, coastal communities and international shipping.

Signed:
Oluwafemi Adeniyi
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

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