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EXTERNAL RELATIONS

(a) Relations with the United Nations and the specialized agencies

Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia

Submitted by the Republic of Korea

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document reports on the recent hijacking of the Korean fishing vessel Dongwon No. 628 in waters off the coast of Somalia and proposes a seminar and workshop on capacity building to combat piracy to be held in the East Africa region
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 11
<i>Related documents:</i>	Resolution A.979(24), MSC 81/19/1, C 96/14(a)/1/Add.2 and C 96/14(a)/1/Add.3

1 Piracy and armed robbery against ships in various parts of the world remains a serious threat to international trade, commercial shipping and fisheries in modern times, which requires all interested parties such as Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the industry to make all possible efforts to tackle the problem and reduce the risk to seafarers, ships and international trade.

2 Recently, piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of the Somalia has increased sharply and has become a growing concern around the globe. The twenty-fourth session of the IMO Assembly, held in November 2005, noting with great concern the increasing number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships which had occurred in waters off the coast of Somalia, unanimously adopted resolution A.979(24).

3 Resolution A.979(24) urges Governments to increase their efforts to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships irrespective of where such acts occur and to co-operate with other Governments and international organizations, in the interests of safety of life at sea and environmental protection, in relation to acts occurring or likely to occur in the waters off the coast of Somalia.

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4 Also, the President of the United Nation Security Council, taking note of IMO resolution A.979(24), issued a Statement dated 15 March 2006, which encouraged Member States whose naval vessels and military aircraft operate in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant to any incident of piracy therein and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping, in particular, the transportation of humanitarian aid, against any such acts, in line with relevant international law.

5 Despite such efforts, on 4 April 2006, a Korean fishing vessel, **Dongwon No. 628**, was attacked by pirates on board two speedboats 55 miles off Somalia's eastern coast, while conducting legal fishing operations. The United States' and the Netherlands' naval vessels tried to intervene but gave up their chase when they saw that the crew members were threatened with guns and the fishing vessel entered Somali waters. The ship was hijacked and a total of 25 crew members, consisting of 8 Korean, 9 Indonesian, 5 Vietnamese and 3 Chinese nationals, are being kept captive on board the ship as of 19 May 2006. **Dongwon No. 628** was legitimately issued with a fishing licence by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia on 12 March 2006, which permitted the vessel to catch tuna up to 500 tons in the area of the Somali EEZ from 12 March until 10 May 2006.

6 After the vessel was hijacked, the Government of the Republic of Korea contacted the Foreign Ministers of Somalia and neighbouring countries asking for their help and has been making every effort to help secure the crew's release. The Government of the Republic of Korea and the shipowners, with the assistance of littoral States and the States of the crews' nationality, have also negotiated with the pirates in vain.

7 To this end, the Republic of Korea is very grateful to countries such as Kenya, the United Arab Emirates, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and also to the United States and the Netherlands for their efforts and assistance with regard to the safety and rescue of the crews. The Republic of Korea's gratitude also goes to the Secretary General of IMO, Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, for sending a letter to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia seeking a rapid and successful resolution with the release of crews.

8 The Republic of Korea believes that urgent attention should be given to the necessity of promoting, adopting and implementing co-operation agreements, in particular, at the regional level in high-risk areas, such as the Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia (RECAAP).

9 The recent decrease in the number of acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore is believed to be due largely to the establishment of regional co-operation, especially among the three littoral States. In regions where co-operation to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships has not been established, however, we can see an increase in the number of acts of piracy and armed robbery.

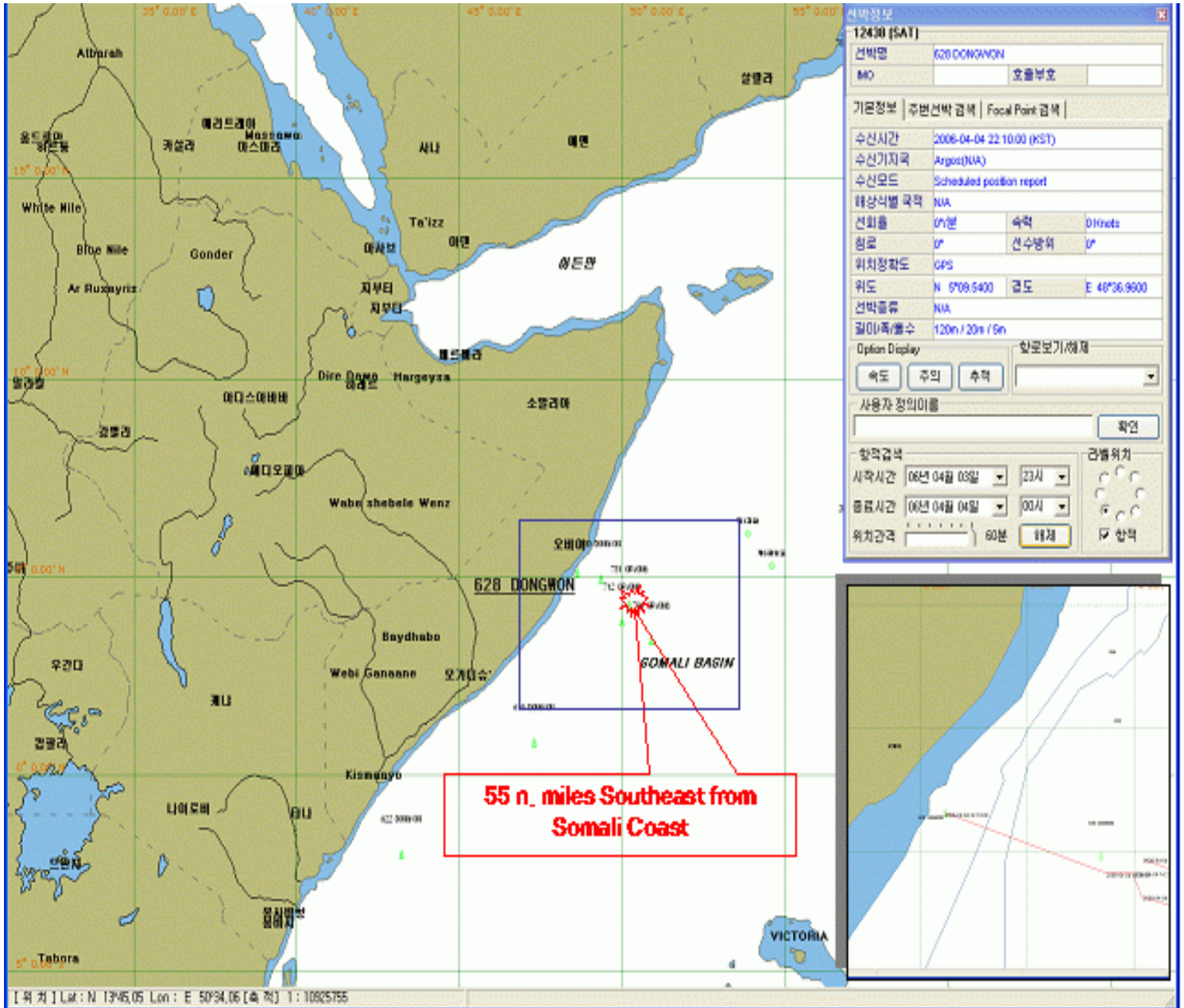
10 Having the strong intention to eagerly participate in international and regional efforts to enhance maritime security and to reduce the incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the waters of East Africa, the Republic of Korea would like to suggest a seminar and a workshop on capacity building to combat piracy to be held in this region to promote regional co-operation aimed at preventing piracy and armed robbery at sea. The Republic of Korea will willingly provide financial assistance for the seminar and workshop.

Action requested of the Council

11 The Council is invited to note the above information and take action as appropriate.

ANNEX 1

POSITION OF THE INCIDENT



ANNEX 2

TRACK OF DONGWON NO.628 BEFORE AND AFTER THE HIJACKING

