

## **G7 FOREIGN MINISTERS' DECLARATION ON MARITIME SECURITY AND PROSPERITY**

**March 14, 2025 – Charlevoix, Quebec – Global Affairs Canada**

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, reaffirm the G7's steadfast commitment to contribute towards a free, open, and secure maritime domain based on the rule of law that strengthens international security, fosters economic prosperity, and ensures the sustainable use of marine resources.

2. Maritime security and prosperity are fundamental to global stability, economic resilience, and the well-being of all nations, and the conservation and sustainable use of ocean ecosystems is essential to all life on Earth. Over 80% of global trade is transported by sea, and 97% of global data flows through submarine cables. Disruptions to maritime routes pose a direct threat to international food security, critical minerals, energy security, global supply chains, and economic stability. We express deep concern over the growing risks to maritime security, including strategic contestation, threats to freedom of navigation and overflight, and illicit shipping activities. State behaviour in these areas has increased the risk of conflict and environmental damage, and imperils all nations' prosperity and living standards, especially for the world's poorest.

3. We recognize the role of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the legal framework for governing all activities in the oceans and the seas.

4. We recall the G7 Statements on Maritime Security adopted in Lübeck (2015) and Hiroshima (2016). We welcome related work presently underway through other G7 ministerial tracks and working groups, on a range of issues including securing undersea cable networks and combating abandoned fishing gear. We welcome, as well, G7 work relating to transnational organized crime and terrorism that touches on the maritime domain, including in relation to piracy and armed robbery at sea, trafficking in persons, and strengthening the maritime law enforcement capabilities of coastal states. We acknowledge the importance of regional maritime security frameworks, to support coastal states to address collectively threats to their maritime security. We welcome existing initiatives, such as the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FoGG, that Canada chairs this year), which has been the primary forum for dialogue among G7 members and partners on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

## Emerging Threat on Safe Seas and Freedom of Navigation and Overflight

5. *Enhancing Stability:* We underscore the importance of freedom 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, as provided for under international law. We share a growing concern at recent, unjustifiable efforts to restrict such freedom and to expand jurisdiction through use of force and other forms of coercion, including across the Taiwan Strait, and the South China Sea, the Red Sea, and the Black Sea. We condemn China's illicit, provocative, coercive and dangerous actions that seek unilaterally to alter the status quo in such a way as to risk undermining the stability of regions, including through land reclamations, and building of outposts, as well as their use for military purpose. 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 condemn, as well, dangerous vessel maneuvers, the indiscriminate attacks against commercial vessels and other maritime actions that undermine maritime order based on the rule of law and international law. We reiterate that the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal on 12 July 2016 is a significant milestone, which is legally binding upon the parties to those proceedings and a useful basis for peacefully resolving disputes between the parties. We reaffirm that our basic policies on Taiwan remain unchanged and emphasize the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as indispensable to international security and prosperity. We welcome the resumption of exports from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Freedom of navigation for commercial shipping in the Black Sea must be upheld.

6. *Attempts to Change the Status Quo by Force:* We oppose unilateral attempts to change the status quo, in particular by force or coercion including in the East and South China Seas. We undertake to implement means through which to track systematically and report on attempts to change the status quo by force and by the establishment of new geographical facts, including through coercive and dangerous actions on the oceans and seas that might threaten regional and international peace and security.

7. *Protecting Critical Maritime and Undersea Infrastructure:* We are seized of the fact that vital energy and telecommunications infrastructure under the oceans and seas connects our economies and is vital to our prosperity. We recall the G7 Joint Statement on Cable Connectivity for Secure and Resilient Digital Communications Networks (2024) and the New York Joint Statement on the Security and Resilience of Undersea Cables in a Globally Digitalized World (2024). We share a growing concern that undersea communications cables, subsea interconnectors and other critical undersea infrastructure have been subject to critical damage through sabotage, poor seamanship or irresponsible behaviour which have resulted in potential internet or energy disruption in affected regions, delays in global data transmission, or compromised sensitive communications. We will enhance our cooperation with industry to mitigate risks, reduce bottlenecks to operational tasks while strengthening repair capacities in order to improve the overall resilience of critical undersea and maritime infrastructure. In this

respect, we welcome the EU Action Plan on Cable Security adopted in February 2025 by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

8. *Maritime Crime*: Maritime crime, including piracy, armed robbery at sea, maritime arms trafficking and sanctions evasion, human trafficking, illegal drug trafficking and Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) fishing, continues to impede maritime security, freedom of navigation, and our economy and prosperity. We have been working together to tackle these maritime crimes, but maritime illegal activities have extended into new areas, to become an urgent issue to be addressed. We welcome the G7 Action Plan to combat migrant smuggling adopted under Italy's 2024 G7 Presidency.

9. *Protecting Freedom of Trade*: In the past year, indiscriminate Houthi attacks in the Red Sea have endangered maritime security of vessels and their crews, disturbed international trade, and exposed neighboring countries to environmental hazards. Enabled by Iran's military, financial, and intelligence support, these illegal attacks have also contributed to increased tension in the Middle East and Yemen, with severe repercussions on the intra-Yemeni peace process. The vessel "Galaxy Leader" seized by the Houthis must be released immediately. We appreciate the efforts of all those countries that have engaged to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, protecting crucial shipping lanes and helping to restore regular flows of trade through the Suez Canal connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In this regard, we commend the efforts of EU's maritime operation "Aspides" and U.S.-led operation "Prosperity Guardian".

### Safe Shipping and Supply Chain Security

10. *Curtailing Unsafe and Illicit Shipping Practices*: The rise of unsafe and illicit shipping practices, including fraudulent registration and registries, poses a significant threat to global trade and environmental sustainability. We are concerned that unsafe and illicit shipping imposes heavy costs on industry, governments and citizens. Russia's ability to earn revenue has been sustained through its extensive effort to circumvent the G7+ oil price cap policy through its shadow fleet of often older, underinsured, and poorly maintained ships that routinely disable their automatic identification systems or engage in "spoofing" to avoid detection and circumvent international safety, environmental, and liability rules and standards. North Korea continues to pursue its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and evade sanctions, particularly through its illicit maritime activities, including prohibited ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum and other UN-banned commodities. Through G7 coordination, we have exposed North Korea uses of "dark" vessels – those that engage in illicit activity – to circumvent United Nations Security Council mandated sanctions. Russia and North Korea are strengthening their economic relations including through maritime routes, such as the reported transfer of petroleum products from Russia to North Korea. Unregulated, "dark" vessels undertake IUU fishing, destroying marine habitats and depleting fish stocks, with negative impacts for biodiversity and food security. Unregulated, inadequately insured "dark" vessels also pose a high risk of maritime accidents, including in fragile ecosystems such as the Arctic and Antarctic. We commit to strengthening our coordination, amongst the G7 and with

other partners, to prevent the use of unregistered or fraudulently registered, uninsured and substandard vessels engaged in sanctions evasion, arms transfers, illegal fishing and illicit trade. We encourage relevant International Organizations to improve maritime domain awareness by expanding satellite-based vessel tracking and establishing comprehensive data records of the movement of individual ships and of ship-to-ship transfers, as a means of identifying and tracking illicit maritime activities. We are also committed to capacity building of the countries in the region in law enforcement and Maritime Domain Awareness.

*11. Shadow Fleet Task Force:* We invite members of the Nordic-Baltic 8 (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden), and possibly others, to join participating G7 members in a Shadow Fleet Task Force to enhance monitoring and detection and to otherwise constrain the use of shadow fleets engaged in illegal, unsafe or environmentally perilous activities, building on the work of others active in this area. The Task Force will constitute a response by the participating States to the call by the International Maritime Organization in its Resolution A.1192(33) of 6 December 2023 for Members States and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by shadow fleets and their flag states, including illegal operations for the purposes of circumventing sanctions, evading compliance with safety or environmental regulations, avoiding insurance costs, or engaging in other illegal activities.

*12. Enhancing Maritime Supply Chain Resilience and Energy and Food Security:* Maritime supply chains will continue to underpin the global economy, but these face a variety of threats, both present and future, stemming from both geopolitical tensions and environmental factors. Maritime disruptions raise consumer costs, increase transit times, and can reduce demand in importing countries, which in turn means lower revenues and diminished competitiveness for producers in exporting countries. Such vulnerabilities in maritime transport can undermine energy and food security, particularly for developing nations reliant on stable shipping routes, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). We welcome maritime initiatives involving and supported by G7 partners intended to promote energy and food security, such as the Grain from Ukraine scheme, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. We invite cooperation with the African Union (pursuant to Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050) and other relevant International Organizations to identify best practices for enhancing maritime supply chain resilience and for safeguarding energy and food security, including in times of geopolitical crisis.

*13. Promoting Safe and Resilient Ports and Strategic Waterways:* Port ownership and operational control matter to national security, as foreign control or influence over critical port infrastructure can create vulnerabilities in trade, in defence and security, and in economic stability. Port resilience is also crucial to economic stability and global trade and yet ports face growing risks from environmental degradation, extreme weather events and geopolitical conflicts. Strengthening port security and modernizing infrastructure are essential to maintaining safe and efficient maritime trade. Ensuring that the ownership and management of strategic waterways and key maritime choke points are not vulnerable to undue influence by potential adversaries is also essential to national security. We underscore the importance of scrutiny of ownership structures and port management and resilience within our own national jurisdictions, including

with regard to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems, to ensure that adversaries do not gain leverage over supply chains, military operations, or the flow of strategic resources. We will work with partners and with relevant International Organizations to encourage robust cybersecurity standards for port ICT infrastructure, to increase resilience against malicious cyber incidents on maritime logistical networks, to reduce monopolistic power over key supply chain nodes, to promote secure and transparent port ownership, to limit unsolicited or undue foreign influence over critical infrastructures and strategic waterways, and to otherwise encourage greater focus on such potential vulnerabilities.

14. Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) at sea poses a significant hazard to the marine environment, to the safety of fishermen and other users of the maritime space, and to various marine economic activities. We commit to enhancing diplomatic efforts and to exchanging best practices among national authorities, relevant international and regional organizations, and relevant industry sectors to accelerate the clean-up of UXO from the seas and ocean.

### **Sustainable Stewardship of Maritime Resources**

15. *Strengthen Enforcement Against IUU Fishing:* IUU fishing is a major contributor to declining fish stocks and to marine habitat destruction. It may account for a third of all fishing activity worldwide, at a cost to the global economy of more than US\$23 billion per year and with negative consequences for fisheries as an enduring economic asset, including for developing countries. We welcome the Canadian-led Dark Vessel Detection System in Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, the Philippines, and members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and would see value in replicating the model to support other partners whose fisheries are under threat from IUU fishing. We recognize that data sharing and transparency play a key role in this fight by exposing bad actors and that technological advances can support a robust Monitoring, Control and Surveillance and enforcement landscape. We encourage further progress in addressing IUU fishing, working with and through relevant International Organizations to establish and strengthen rules to sustainably manage fish stocks on the high seas and to improve the enforcement of these measures, including through the further development of detection technologies, aircraft patrols and high seas boarding and inspection of vessels, building upon the 2022 G7 Ocean Deal.

16. We welcome the Third UN Ocean Conference, in Nice, France, from 9 to 13 June 2025.

### **Partnerships**

17. This G7 Maritime Security and Prosperity Declaration provides a framework for cooperation with non-G7 partners, including countries hosting major ports, large merchant fleets, or extensive flag registries as well as relevant regional and International Organizations, such as the International Maritime Organization and ASEAN. We would welcome robust cooperation with

partners to take forward the goals set out in this Declaration, consistent with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, under the efforts of the G7 countries, including a free, open, prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific region, to build a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law, and of commitment to the sustainable development of the world's maritime spaces.

18. We welcome the cooperation on Coast Guard Functions, including the Global Coast Guard Forum hosted by Italy in 2025, as well as the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, which could also support the objectives of this Declaration.

[14] March 2025

Charlevoix, Canada