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UN and Kenya to hold International Conference on Piracy off Somalia

Nairobi, 8 December 2008 – An International Conference on Piracy around Somalia is being convened by the United Nations and hosted by the Kenyan Government on 10 and 11 December in Nairobi.

A meeting of technical experts on 10 December will be followed by a day-long conference at Ministerial level which will be addressed by President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya. The Ministerial Conference will be co-chaired by Kenya's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Moses Wetangula and the UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah and attended by 140 representatives from some 40 countries, regional and international organizations.

Mr Ould-Abdallah, said the meeting was extremely significant and timely in the light of the growing menace of piracy in the waters around Somalia which continues to threaten the freedom and safety of maritime trade routes.

“It is clear that the problem of piracy is linked to the need for peace and stability in Somalia itself,” said Mr Ould-Abdallah. “We hope that this high level Conference will lead to greater international attention and cooperation between countries, regional and international organizations.”

He welcomed the fact that the Conference comes the same week as the first naval operation carried out by the European Union, known as Operation Atalanta, an anti-piracy task force aimed at protecting merchant ships from pirate attacks off the Somali coast.

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