

**CLOSING SPEECH BY THE FLAG OFFICER COMMANDING
WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND, COMMODORE GODSON ZOWONOO,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 2015
AFRICA MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP ON 24
FEBRUARY 2015**

Rear Admiral Reck

Director, Maritime Partnership Programme
C6F VCOM US Sixth Fleet

Command Operations Officer

Commander Flemming

CO JHSV SPEARHEAD

Rep, Marine Police

Rep, Fisheries

Media

GOOD AFTERNOON

1. I deem it an honour to be present this afternoon for the closing ceremony of the 2015 African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership. Let me first acknowledge the presence of the invited guests especially our friends from US and other foreign partners, who have joined us here to witness the successful conclusion of this year's event. Your presence shows the interest you have in the success of this program. It also symbolizes your desire to strengthen the co-operation between our countries.

2. The Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership is an international security cooperation exercise that is conducted by US Naval Forces Africa in collaboration with the Ghana Navy, Marine Police and Fisheries Commission among others. The objective of this initiative is to improve maritime safety and security.

3. The exercise was conducted within Ghana's Economic Exclusive Zone and it involved the detection and response to illegal transnational maritime activities, such as fisheries offenses, illicit drug trafficking and illegal migration. The focus of this year's exercise was on Vessel Boarding, Search and Seizure and Communications familiarization between Maritime Operation Centers and the ships at sea.

4. The rich resources in our waters create numerous important economic activities, and directly affect majority of our population. In the interest of preserving these resources, the international community has put in place a legal and regulatory framework which permits States to take advantage of the resources in a rational and judicious manner.

The actual implementation of this framework is both costly and difficult when taking into consideration the enormous size of maritime space of each state. It is therefore challenging to police the borderless seas by a single state. That is why there is the need for states to collaborate and co-operate to protect the resources in the ocean.

5. For the past four weeks or so one US ship JHSV SPEARHEAD in collaboration with other Ghana Navy ships and personnel patrolled our Exclusive Economic Zone. I must admit that, this collaboration has improved the capability of the personnel of the Ghana Navy and Fisheries Enforcement Unit in the area of boarding, Search and Seizures of vessels whose activities contravenes the national laws.

6. During the exercise period,..... . ships were arrested as a result of the swift reaction of the team. The arrested vessels have been handed over to the appropriate state agencies for prosecution. It is worth noting that, the collective effort of the Ghana Navy, Marine Police and Fisheries Commission with the support of our foreign partners on this exercise is a clear

indication of importance of co-operation among stakeholders. I therefore encourage other stakeholders in the maritime industry to come onboard to make working in the country's waters safe.

7. Now that the exercise is over, I urge our American friends to explore Ghana and discover it. We have beautiful tourists sites which I am sure you will enjoy. Notable among them are the Castles and Forts in Central and Western Regions, and the Kakum National Park in Central Region.

8. On that note, I would like to express my appreciation to the Ambassador of the United State to Ghana for ensuring that this year's exercise was a success. My thanks also go to the Commanding officer and the ships company of JHSV SPEARHEAD. Without them, the exercise wouldn't have come on. I wish to also thank our friends from the media for their unique support. To all participants I say well done, I hope the knowledge gained will be put to effective use for the common good of mother Ghana.

Thank you.