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## **Shipping Industry, Hit by Somali Pirates, Meets in London to Boost Jobs in Somalia**

**LONDON, UK:** 21st January, 2014: Per Gullestrup, whose Danish-operated ship was hijacked by Somali pirates for several weeks, is to be joined this Thursday 23rd January at a meeting in London, by other shippers and government representatives, to discuss expanding coordination across job-creating projects in coastal regions of Somalia, including a fishing project he leads on the north Somali coast.

Per Gullestrup is a Partner of the Clipper Group, whose cargo ship CEC Future and 13 crew was hijacked for 72 days by Somali pirates in 2008. He personally negotiated with the pirates over several weeks to gain release of the vessel and crew. The tense drama became the basis of a Danish film called “A Hijacking”.

In a notable turn of events, Per Gullestrup is now chairman of a Somali-Danish project called Somali Fair Fishing (SFF), ([www.fairfishing.org](http://www.fairfishing.org)), which is building a sustainable fishing sector at the Somali port city of Berbera. Several shipping companies and other organizations have donated fishing and storage equipment as well as other services and funds which have helped SFF to build a fisheries station in Berbera, complete with ice machines, cold-storage rooms and processing facilities. “Our small project aims to build up a viable alternative to criminal coastal activities like piracy,” says Per Gullestrup. “The solution to piracy lies onshore.” By the end of last month, SFF-sponsored fishermen were landing and processing a ton of fish per day.

Other shipping companies have also recognized the importance of supporting long-term solutions ashore, aimed at combating piracy at sea. In 2012, seven international shipping corporations – BP, Maersk, Shell, Stena, and the Japanese shipping companies NYK, MOL and “K”Line – jointly committed to supporting alternative livelihoods and training programmes in Somalia.

The initiatives also support the goals of a maritime capacity strategy, developed by Somali authorities in 2013. In his report to the UN Security Council on the issue of piracy in October 2013, UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, stated “I commend the development of the Somali Maritime Resources and Security Strategy, which provides greater opportunities for increased economic growth and stability throughout the region”.

At the meeting in London this Thursday 23rd January, a group of shipping companies, international organizations and government representatives, along with Somali Fair Fishing and other not-for-profit bodies involved on the ground in Somalia, will come together to discuss innovative strategies for enhancing public/private investments for Somali coastal development in partnership with the Somali people.

*OBP has developed a pamphlet, highlighting the Joint Industry Contribution to Support Community Projects in Somalia, Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children, Somali Fair Fishing, and the SOS Kinderdörfer Weltweit projects, as some of the major efforts of the shipping industry within Somalia. The pamphlet can be viewed [here](#).*