



## PRESS RELEASE

29 September 2026

### **The memorandum of understanding on Port State Control for West and Central African Region (Abuja MoU) Concludes its Sixteenth Port State Control Committee (PSCC16) and Sixth Ministerial Conference Themed "Future-Ready Port State Control Regime".**

The **16<sup>th</sup> Port State Control Committee Meeting (PSCC16)** was held in Libreville, Gabon, from 21-24 September 2026, followed by the **6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on 25 September 2026**.

Ministers adopted the resolutions and recommendations of PSCC16 and approved amendments to the Abuja MoU texts. The decisions advanced risk-based inspections, regional training, stronger data systems, readiness for fishing-vessel inspection and harmonised regional inspection regime and implementation of decisions.

The Conference endorsed the Honourable Minister of the Ministry of Transport / Directorate General of Merchant Marine of Gabon as the next Chairperson of the Abuja MoU Bureau and adopted the Abuja MoU 2025-2029 Action Plan.

The Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control for the West and Central African Region (Abuja MoU) has successfully concluded its 16<sup>th</sup> Port State Control Committee Meeting and 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Libreville, Gabon, under the theme: "**Powering a Resilient and Future-Ready Port State Control Regime.**"

The meetings brought together Member States, partner organisations and observers to review region's Port State Control performance and to deliberate on key issues, including recent decisions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and its sub-committees, cooperation and benchmarking with other regional PSC regimes, and progress reports from sister MoUs. Participants also agreed on practical measures to strengthen maritime safety, marine environmental protection, seafarer welfare and to advance the elimination of substandard shipping in the region.

The Ministerial Conference adopted the Committee's recommendations and resolutions, while reaffirming the need for stronger national implementation, timely financial contributions, active participation in regional programmes and sustained investment in competent Port State Control Officers and effective inspection systems.

### **Major outcomes**

1. **Risk-based and targeted inspections:** The Committee approved improvement to the Abuja MoU New Inspection Regime, including revised weighting of detention and deficiency history, enhanced use of Flag State, Recognised Organisation and company performance data, and future incorporation of environmental factors into ship risk profiling.
2. **Regional PSCO competence:** A harmonised regional training framework was endorsed, together with a regional register of certified PSCOs, expanded Mentor-Mentee scheme from

member states mentorship to inter-MoU arrangements, and development of a Subject Matter Expert database.

3. **Fishing-vessel inspections:** The Committee endorsed the draft roadmap for the progressive commencement of Port State Control inspections on fishing vessels and directed further technical review, national legal alignment and PSCO preparation through capacity building.
4. **Inspection campaigns:** The Committee approved the 2027 Concentrated Inspection Campaign on Enclosed Space and supported regional based Focused Inspection Campaigns conducted based on inspection data and emerging risks within the region.
5. **Data and digital resilience:** Member States were urged to improve the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of AMIS reporting, while the Committee endorsed stronger cybersecurity, user-access controls and data-governance measures.
6. **Emerging maritime risks:** The Committee addressed alternative fuels, autonomous shipping, remote inspection techniques, recurrent deficiencies, obscured ownership, fraudulent ships, dark/shadow fleet risks, digital evidence, seafarer welfare and geopolitical disruption.
7. **Strategic capacity building:** The Conference welcomed progress under the five-year capacity-building programme supported by Lloyd's Register Foundation and endorsed continued training, mentorship, quality assurance and knowledge-transfer arrangements.
8. **Institutional and governance reform:** Ministers ratified amendments to the Memorandum, including the new index-based Flag State performance methodology, progressive transition from Black/Grey/Whitelists to High/Medium/Low-performance classifications, and incorporation of nine governance policies and procedures as annexures to the Memorandum Text.
9. **Action Plan and leadership:** The Abuja MoU 2025-2029 Action Plan was adopted, and Gabon was endorsed as the next Chairperson of the Bureau following the conclusion of the current Chairperson's tenure.

## **Regional performance and awards**

### **Abuja MoU performance and recognition awards were also presented during the meetings:**

**Gabon** - Abuja MoU Award for the Highest Percentage of Inspection Commitment in the Last Three Years.

**Cameroon** - Abuja MoU Gender Equality Award, recognising progress in advancing women's participation and gender equality in Port State Control.

**Ghana** - Abuja MoU Award for the Highest Percentage of Inspections with Deficiencies in the Last Three Years.

The Abuja MoU Essay Competition 2026, themed "Powering a Resilient and Future-Ready Port State Control Regime," was also recognised as part of the organisation's drive to promote professional knowledge-sharing and practical ideas from Port State Control Officers across the region.

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## Editors' Note

### The Abuja MoU

The Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control for the West and Central African Region (Abuja MoU) was signed on 22 October 1999 in Abuja, Nigeria, and currently has 21 full members: Angola, Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Togo. The Secretariat of the MoU is provided by the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in Lagos, Nigeria. The Abuja MoU Information System (AMIS) is a fully automated database that collects and stores PSC inspection data uploaded by member states, designed to provide information exchange on PSC inspection data within the region.

### Port State Control

Port State Control (PSC) is the inspection of foreign ships in national ports to verify that the condition of the ship and its equipment comply with the requirements of international regulations and that the ship is manned and operated in compliance with these rules. The primary responsibility for ships' standards rests with the flag State - but port State control provides a "safety net" to catch substandard ships.

Memorandum Of Understanding  
on Port State Control For West  
and Central African Region



Mémoire d'Entente sur  
Le Contrôle des Navires Par L'Etat  
de Port dans la Region de L'Afrique  
de l'Ouest et de Centre