

Analyzing Maritime Insecurity in Ghana

End of project popular science description

Introduction

Maritime security continues to be a new field of international security. Many efforts are made to support countries worldwide in their struggle to address insecurities, such as piracy, illegal fishing or maritime smuggling activities. The goal of the AMARIS project was to develop a better understanding of how the complexity that maritime security entails can be better addressed through state practice and international support. Through an intensive research collaboration between partners in Denmark and Ghana, AMARIS has studied the maritime threat landscape and institutional processes in Ghana as well as the efforts of supporting the country through capacity building activities.

Results

The project has shown that one of the key hurdles of addressing maritime insecurity lies with the high number of institutional, private and other actors within the country but also internationally. Coordination and policy integration is difficult to achieve due to competing agendas and institutional rivalries. Strategy making can only partially overcome these challenges. Capacity building often complicates the picture rather than providing a remedy. While training of staff is vital, capacity building risks enhancing competition over resources, and often steers institutional development in divergent directions. Another key problem lies in how to better integrated policies for maritime security, with other ocean policies, such as blue economy and ocean health strategies. The need for building such bridges is often under-appreciated.

Conclusions

Maritime security policies need to be closely integrated with other policies that deal with the marine environment whether that is transport, fisheries or environment. Doing so requires solid coordination between agencies. It is vital that countries learn from each other and exchange lessons from their experience to improve coordination and policy integration. Capacity building can be important to facilitate the transfer of such lessons, but should avoid an attitude in which the providers assume to know better. Instead capacity building needs to carefully adjust to local contexts, and accept the uncertainty and indeterminate character of maritime security. In particular closer dialogues between countries with large oceanic spaces, but little resources is required.

Recommendations

These conclusions imply that more efforts are required in enhancing the transfer of lessons between countries on how coordination and policy integration is best designed. Currently capacity building by international actors does not necessarily facilitate that dialogue so far. While important steps are made, it is important that those programme capacity building take this into consideration.