

*African Ministerial Conference on the Environment***African Ministerial Conference on the Environment****Sixteenth session**

Meeting of the expert group

Libreville, 12–14 June 2017

Governance Mechanisms for Ocean Ecosystem-based Management in Africa using the Regional Seas Programmes***Note by the Secretariat****I. African marine and coastal environment**

1. Africa's marine and coastal environment is endowed with rich biodiversity and seascapes. This is widely due to a number of factors, including the continent's geographical position on the globe, with both temperate and tropical region bordering with different seas and oceans and geology. As such, Africa's coasts host a diversity ecosystems, and habitat types such as estuaries, coral reefs, mangrove forests, wetlands and dunes that host a large variety of species, including productive fisheries. The resources and services drawn from the ecosystems support the livelihoods of coastal communities and contribute to national economies. The combination of the transition between temperate and tropical systems and the enrichment of the waters from upwelling and riverine sources provide the basis for highly productive and biologically diverse ecosystem in the Banguela, Guinea and Canary Current ecosystems.

2. A number of other economic sectors have developed through the centuries on the basis of the coastal and marine resources. For example economic value of ocean-related activities in the Western Indian Ocean, the "gross marine product", is estimated at US\$20.8 billion annually. The ocean sectors include but not limited to aquaculture, transport, navigation and shipping, energy, oil and gas, coastal mining, tourism, ocean survey and research, and industry, among others.

3. Notably, degradation of the marine and coastal ecosystems is happening globally and African continent is not an exception. The degradation of coastal wetlands and unsustainable use of natural resources are impacting on the functioning of the ecosystems, affecting livelihoods of communities that directly and indirectly depend on them (UN Environment, 2016).

4. Fisheries are considered to be a main ocean-related sector in Africa. Fish catch in the Canary Current large marine ecosystem is about 2 to 3.5 million tonnes a year (FAO Fishstat, 2015). Total reported landings for the Guinea Current show a series of peaks and troughs, with an overall trend of a steady increase from 1950 to the early 1990, followed by fluctuations with a peak at just over 900,000 tonnes valued at of over US\$ 1 billion in 2000. Reviews of the status of the LME's fisheries resources indicate that several fish stocks are either overexploited or close to being fully exploited (Ajayi 1994, Mensah & Quaaty 2002). In 2017 WWF reported that Tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean states is worth US\$2.3 billion per year, representing 20-24 per cent of the world market supply of which about 850,000 tonnes valued at over US\$1.3 is caught in the Western Indian Ocean. Many of Africa's fisheries, however, face over-exploitation from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Aquaculture can be a main source of protein supply, but its sustainable operation has not been fully exploited.

5. Mangroves sequester up to 25.5 million tonnes of carbon per year and contribute more than 10% of essential organic carbon to the world's oceans (Dittmar et al., 2006). Africa supports a large percentage of mangroves particularly in major river mouths/deltas (e.g. in Niger, Rufiji Deltas) which

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

are important for carbon storage. However, coastal development degrades or destroys these ecosystems, allowing release of carbon.

6. Africa's real GDP in 2016 was estimated at 3.6%, higher than the 3.1% for the global economy (UNDP 2016). Africa remained the world's second fastest growing economy after East Asia. In 2015, sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) grew faster than the continental average, at 4.2%, with East Africa leading the way at 6.3%. In the West Indian ocean for example, the countries sharing the Northern Mozambique Channel (Mozambique, Tanzania, Madagascar and Comoros), is forecasted to undergo a rapid economic growth, including through off-shore oil and gas exploration and exploitation, at the same time the area is considered to be a biodiversity hot spot.

7. The major threats to sustainable development for most of the coastal states in Africa and marine areas are: (i) over-exploitation of living resources, particularly fisheries resources, (ii) rapid and unplanned coastal development including infrastructure, port facilities and off-shore oil/gas exploitation, (iii) destruction and modification of coastal habitats on which coastal communities livelihoods depend, (iv) lack of national ocean policies or weak institutional arrangements, and (v) limited scientific and technical capacity to inform policy decisions.

8. In relation to item (iv) above, weak governance infrastructure and sustainable management institutional frameworks has led to over exploitation and therefore to degradation and depletion of these resources. Issues of maritime safety and insecurity, illegal and unregulated and unreported fishing and the serious effects of climate change only aggravate the existing state of the coastal and marine environment in Africa. As a result of weak governance structures, national economies are experiencing revenue leaks and losses leading to poverty among the coastal communities that depend on the marine and coastal resources directly or indirectly.

II. Ocean Governance in Africa

9. Ocean governance issues have attracted the attention of most coastal states, especially the small island developing states, and regional bodies such as the African Union. As a consequence, there are several frameworks that are available to underpin oceans governance strategy(ies) in Africa. The Africa Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are complimentary and synergistic on how to use the oceans resources for the benefits of coastal states and communities in Africa.

10. On 6 December 2012, the African Union (AU) second Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Maritime Related Affairs in Addis Ababa adopted the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy. The strategy aims at, among others, increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing a sustainable ocean-based economy (blue economy). The strategy further aims at increased national, regional stability, through collaborative multi-layered efforts to build marine based economic sectors in concert with improved ocean governance. The guiding philosophy is founded on information sharing, communication, collaboration, cooperation, capacity-building and coordination among and within states. The strategy is to be interpreted and implemented along with all relevant African Union, national and international regulatory frameworks.

11. At the fifteenth ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) held in March 2015 in Cairo, Egypt, member states adopted the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication. The member states agreed to develop an ocean governance strategy in Africa in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Regional Seas Conventions as well as the Strategies set by the African Union, namely, AIMS 2050 and Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want. The Cairo Declaration equally reiterates support for the regional seas programmes as regional platforms for the implementation of the Africa Integrated Marine Strategy 2050 and Agenda 2063 on ecosystem-based management approaches for marine resources in the exclusive economic zones and adjacent waters.

12. In October 2016, the AU adopted the Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development. Among other things, the Charter aims to prevent national and transnational crimes, including terrorism, piracy, armed robbery, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and illegal and unregulated fishing.

13. The third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in Addis Ababa, from 17 to 19 May 2017, highlighted the need for trans-boundary approaches to manage shared marine resources and the ocean governance challenges national and regional levels.

14. In May 2016, the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in a resolution on Oceans and Seas (Resolution 2/10), invited member States and regional seas conventions and action plans, in cooperation, as appropriate, with other relevant organizations and fora, such as regional fisheries management organizations, to work towards the implementation of, and reporting on, the different ocean-related sustainable development goals and associated targets, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The resolution further requested the Executive Director, through the United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Seas Programme, to reinforce cooperation and coordination. Further, it encouraged Contracting Parties to existing regional seas conventions to consider the possibility of increasing regional coverage of those instruments in accordance with international law.

15. UN Environment, through the Secretariats of four Regional Seas Programmes/Conventions, namely, (Abidjan Convention, Barcelona Convention, Nairobi Convention and Jeddah Convention) are providing support for development of the oceans governance strategy with the preparation of a governance gap analysis taking into account the AIMS 2050 strategy, Agenda 2063, 2030 Agenda, the Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and other existing frameworks and initiatives for discussion in a regional conference with options to develop an Africa ocean governance strategy.

III. African Regional Seas Programmes

16. The AMCEN Cairo Declaration reiterated its support to the regional seas programmes as the platforms for implementation of the Africa Integrated Marine Strategy 2050 and Agenda 2063 on ecosystem-based management approaches for marine resources in the exclusive economic zones and adjacent waters. In this declaration, the governments in Africa highlighted the need for ecosystem-based management approaches and identified the regional Seas as the appropriate governance framework. This recognition also takes into account the economic opportunities offered by Africa's adjacency to the oceans and seas (Indian, Southern and Atlantic Oceans, Mediterranean and Red Seas).

17. The five regional seas programmes associated with these oceans and seas (namely, Nairobi Convention, Abidjan Convention, Mediterranean Action Plan/Barcelona Convention (MAP), Regional Organisation of the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) and Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) together with the regional fisheries bodies are considered as the main platforms for ecosystem-based ocean governance frameworks in Africa.

18. The regional seas programmes, in respect to implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and within their mandates, have already adopted the ecosystem-based management approaches. For example, in Western Indian Ocean, the Nairobi Convention is in discussion with the Southern Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission to conclude a memorandum of understanding for the application of ecosystem based approaches that includes fisheries. In West Africa, the Abidjan Convention has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Sub-regional Fisheries Commission. The Barcelona Convention under the Mediterranean Action Plan and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean has signed a cooperative memorandum of understanding.

IV. Conclusion and key messages

19. Healthy oceans and coastal ecosystems underpin the economies of Africa's coastal states, and offer huge potential for sustainable development. The oceans, seas and marine resources in Africa, if used sustainably, will contribute to the creation of wealth and poverty alleviation among coastal states and communities. However, the region could suffer severe losses if current pressures on the oceans are not alleviated and impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities that depend directly or indirectly on these resources.

20. The sustained contribution of oceans to the national economies depends on the use of effective governance frameworks and integrated ocean/ecosystem based approaches. The use of ecosystem-based climate resilience with sustainable finance and implementation of national strategies for carbon-neutral development by 2030 will minimize the degradation of the marine and coastal ecosystems including coastal wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs from unsustainable use of fisheries through over-exploitation from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing resources.

21. Application of appropriate ocean policies, legislation and strengthened governance institutions with the ability to internalize environmental values in business practices, provide for more inclusive employment and meet the production and consumption needs of the coastal states will strengthen

national economics and minimize revenue losses leading to wealth and job creation among the coastal communities.

22. Development of ocean based economies or blue economies through the value addition in all ocean based economic sectors (fisheries, coastal tourism, aquaculture, maritime transport, off-shore oil and gas) including innovation and development of new sectors, for example, renewable energy, sea-bed mining and the use of integrated ocean management and marine spatial planning processes at national, sub-regional, sub-national levels.

23. Fostering regional cooperation for the management of common, trans-boundary or shared marine resources including through information sharing, communication, collaboration, cooperation, capacity-building and coordination among and within states will greatly contribute to effective ocean governance.

References and weblinks

African Union 2015 Integrated Maritime Strategy <http://pages.au.int/maritime>

African Union Strategy and Roadmap, available at
http://pages.au.int/sites/default/files/2050%20AIM%20Strategy%20%28Eng%29_0.pdf

African Union Roadmap, available at
<http://pages.au.int/sites/default/files/Annex%20C%2C%20PoA%20%28Eng%29.pdf>

The importance of Africa's coastal and marine ecosystems,
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTENVMAT/Resources/3011340-1238620444756/5980735-1238620476358/11AFR.pdf>

Africa Environment Outlook 2 – Our Environment our wealth, Chapter 5, Coastal and marine environments, http://www.unep.org/DEWA/Africa/docs/en/aeo-2/chapters/aeo-2_ch05_COASTAL_AND_MARINE_ENVIRONMENTS.pdf

AMCEN see <http://web.unep.org/regions/roa/amcen/about>.
<http://web.unep.org/regions/roa/amcen/15th-ordinary-session-amcen>

African Union, Agenda 2063: the Africa we want <http://agenda2063.au.int/en/documents/agenda-2063-africa-we-want-popular-version-final-edition>

UN Environment. 2016. Global Environment Outlook GEO-6 Regional Assessment for Africa

UN Environment. 2017 in press. Moving to Strategy and Action: Regional Seas Outlook for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Reviving the Western Indian Ocean Economy: Actions for a Sustainable Future is the result of an in-depth, joint assessment by The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), CORDIO East Africa and WWF