**UNITED
NATIONS**

EP

**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

**Consultative Meeting on the Development
of an African Strategy for Ocean Governance**
Nairobi, 29-30 November 2018

Chair's summary

1. A Consultative Meeting on the Development of an African Strategy for Ocean Governance was held at the United Nations Offices in Nairobi, 29-30 November 2018 to discuss possible elements to be included in the African Strategy for Ocean Governance. The meeting was organized by United Nations Environment Programme, and was attended by 45 participants from African countries, international organizations, regional seas programmes, regional economic bodies and research institutes.

2. At the fifteenth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in 2015, African ministers of environment agreed to "develop a governance strategy, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and regional seas conventions, on oceans and seas in Africa for the effective management of the region's shared maritime resources and call for a regional conference to address the matter by 2016". At the 7th special session of AMCEN in the Nairobi Declaration in September 2018, member states agreed to "urge African states to promote the growth and development of the regional ocean sector in a sustainable blue economy pathway and support the mainstreaming of aquatic biodiversity in all productive sectors with a view to sustainably harnessing the blue economy." In response to the decisions, United Nations Environment Programme, as the secretariat for AMCEN, carried out background studies and organised this consultative meeting to assist member States in developing the Strategy.

3. The two days discussions resulted in a focus on the following key areas:

(a) Scope of the Strategy

4. Participants were of the view that lakes and rivers should be covered under the strategy. In addition, it was agreed to define the scope of the strategy to cover Exclusive Economic

Zones (EEZ), adjacent Areas Beyond National Jurisdictions (ABNJ), and fresh water bodies that have profound effect on marine and coastal ecosystems.

5. It was agreed that the African Ocean Governance Strategy should be a framework strategy connecting with the other African Union (AU) strategies, such as 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), Agenda 2063-The Africa We Want, Lomé Charter, fisheries policies, etc. Under such a framework, linkages of the strategy with the AU blue economy and with inland water issues would be clarified.

6. Countries identified the need to show flexibility and incorporate new developments into the strategy. Experiences of the regional seas programmes and countries should be shared and reflected in the strategy development processes.

7. Awareness and political will were identified as essential factors in ocean governance. For this purpose, a strategy draft will be submitted to the AU strategic task force on AIMS 2050.

8. The strategy should be people-centred, and the Blue Economy and the Nairobi Statement of Intent from the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference 2018 can be used to steer the development of the strategy.

9. The ecosystems-based approach should be a central principle for the development of the Ocean governance strategy, and this approach will connect the strategy with the other sectoral bodies and governance mechanisms. It was agreed that the African Ocean Governance Strategy should encompass all sectoral activities in the oceans and linkages with all relevant governance mechanisms should be clearly defined.

(b) Institutional and capacity strengthening

10. The countries recognized that gaps exist in current ocean governance structure and capacity at regional and national levels.

11. It was recognised that there is a large gap of implementation of the legal instruments and associated decisions. This may be caused by a lack of compliance and enforcement, financial resources, and weak political will. Following the example of the performance review of the regional fisheries management organizations, performance and effectiveness of the existing regional instruments and governance mechanisms should be evaluated.

12. Coordination and cooperation were identified as major gaps and are key to ocean governance.

13. It was agreed to strengthen existing institutions rather than creating new ones.

14. It was identified that governance tools such as Marine Spatial Planning, and Marine Protected Areas, are not appropriately used. There is a need for capacity building for use of these tools in ocean governance.

15. Although fisheries bodies are reported to have dispute settlement mechanisms, they are generally missing in the current governance structure, and should be developed for ocean governance.

(c) Cross-sectoral cooperation

16. It was agreed that multi-sectoral mechanisms should be considered within the Ocean Governance Strategy. Land-based sectors may also be included in such multi-sector cooperation and coordination.

17. Different national ocean governance models have already been proved successful in Africa, which may be used in other countries of the region.

18. It was agreed that no standard model can be applied to every country. More information on cross-sectoral cooperation and national ocean governance structure was requested by some delegates. The countries will share experiences and the secretariat was requested to compile cases of relevant ocean governance structures at the national and regional levels. UN Environment will provide a template for case studies.

19. At the national level, the Ministry of Environment is mandated to coordinate with other sectoral ministries on environmental issues and that they should play a key role in the ocean governance and national ocean governance structure.

20. At the regional level, the regional seas programmes should be given a mandate to coordinate with the other regional sectoral bodies, so that they can function as the platform for cross-sectoral cooperation dialogues.

(d) Science-Policy interface

21. Participants agreed that although data and information is available, there exist gaps such as lack of appropriate use of data, data with unsatisfactory quality or accessibility and interpretation of data in the region.

22. Participants were of the view that the objectives and needs for data/information generation and sharing should be clearly defined before systems are developed. A Participant shared experiences in the setting up and management of data systems for the purpose of conducting marine spatial planning. Such an objective can clearly chart the direction of data/information management. Objectives for which data systems are developed will be included in the strategy.

23. Mapping of existing databases was suggested. Mapping of data needs may also be conducted to match with the existing databases.

24. A need for information/data management on an African scale was discussed, and in particular, on sharing data/information across Ocean-based sectors and their bodies. There was a suggestion to establish a central African data management system, while strengthening the existing ones and networks. The AU introduced its department of research. A suggestion was made to develop African indicators for ocean sustainable development and blue economy in relation to the Ocean Governance Strategy, so that any governance framework for Africa can be informed of the Africa-wide progress in ocean sustainable development and blue economy.

25. Participants agreed to the inclusion of socio-economic data and information as part of the information management. This means that the governance mechanisms should also include social and economic scientists. Traditional and indigenous knowledge should be part of information/data management associated with the African Ocean governance strategy. A system/model that covers social, economic and environmental aspects of decision-making is needed.

26. In order to avoid loss of data and scientific information upon completion of projects, concessional financing and Strategic/Environmental Impact Assessment are necessary from the beginning to include clauses of data/information submission to permanent data/information management systems connected with the governance framework.

27. Importance of incorporating scientific institutions into governance mechanisms was highlighted. The relationship between the governance mechanisms and the scientific mechanisms should be clearly defined and their communication and reporting should also be clarified in the strategy.

28. A science to policy interface should include a policy to science interface. In this regard, establishing a science and policy partnership/dialogues and platforms was proposed building on experiences from the Nairobi Convention. Preparation of policy briefs and other policy relevant information materials should be done under such a framework. It was considered essential to raise awareness and build capacity of decision-makers on the need of sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources.

29. Participants shared information on their national science and data systems. One participant shared information on an ongoing project to set up a regional maritime information sharing centre. Some countries introduced their projects where data recovered through SEA are shared to the environmental agencies to inform decision-making. Other countries introduced their oceanic institutions that collect data for use by all sectors.

(e) Stakeholder engagement

30. It was agreed that different stakeholders are identified at different levels. In addition to national government/policy makers, other actors including, research institutes, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), civil society, local populations, private sector, multilateral donors, judiciaries, universities, parliamentarians and municipalities/local governments, were identified as stakeholders for ocean governance.

31. A stakeholder analysis for the development and implementation of the African Ocean Governance Strategy was proposed, which should include analysis of their roles in the governance.

32. Mainstreaming of the roles of women and youth was repeatedly highlighted.

33. A bottom-up approach was suggested in the governance framework and governance decisions even at the regional level. However, it was clear that such bottom-up processes should be subject to political acceptance and under the political leadership. At the regional level such political acceptance and leadership emanates from the Heads of States. In this regard, stakeholder consultation is necessary in the development and future implementation of the strategy.

34. National experiences were shared on the national level stakeholder engagement and coordination, such as blue economy roadmap development and thematic task forces and working groups in countries.

35. Communication and awareness raising is key in the engagement of stakeholders. NGOs should play an important role in such communication. A communication strategy on the African Ocean Governance Strategy should be established.

Way Forward

36. With the support of UNEP, a draft African Ocean Governance Strategy will be prepared for review by the member states and onward discussion and use by AMCEN and the African Union Commission.