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Second consultative meeting on the development
of an African strategy for ocean governance
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**Outcome of the first consultative meeting on the
development of an African strategy for ocean governance**

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Chair's summary

I. Introduction

1.   At the fifteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), held in Cairo in 2015, in the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, African ministers for the 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 called for a regional conference to address the matter. At the seventh special session of AMCEN, held in Nairobi in September 2018, in the Nairobi Declaration on Turning Environmental Policies into Action through Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges in Africa, ministers for the environment urged 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. Accordingly, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which serves as the secretariat for AMCEN, carried out background studies and organized a consultative meeting to assist member States of the African Union in developing an African strategy for ocean governance.

2.   The consultative meeting on the development of an African strategy for ocean governance was held at the headquarters of UNEP, in Nairobi, on 29 and 30 November 2018, to discuss possible elements to be included in an African strategy for ocean governance. The meeting was organized by UNEP and was attended by 45 participants from African countries, international organizations, regional seas programmes, regional economic bodies and research institutes.

3.   The main topics discussed at the two-day meeting are outlined in the following section.

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* UNEP/ASOG/WG.2/1.

II.   Elements of the strategy

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 that the scope of the strategy should include exclusive economic zones (EEZ), adjacent Areas Beyond National Jurisdictions (ABNJ) and freshwater bodies having a profound effect on marine and coastal ecosystems.

5.   It was agreed that the African ocean governance strategy should comprise a strategic framework with linkages to the other African Union strategies, such as the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter), and fisheries policies. Under such a framework, the strategy's linkages with Africa's blue economy and inland water issues, among other things, would be clarified.

6.   Participants from African countries identified the need for flexibility to enable the strategy to adapt to new developments over time. The experiences of the regional seas programmes and countries should be shared and reflected in the strategy development process.

7.   Awareness and political will were identified as essential factors in ocean governance. For that reason, it was agreed that the draft strategy would be submitted to the African Union strategic task force for the implementation of the 2050 AIM Strategy for consideration and approval.

8.   Participants said that the strategy should be people centred and its development guided by the blue economy and the Nairobi Statement of Intent on Advancing the Global Sustainable Blue Economy, which emanated from the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, held in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November 2018.

9.   The ecosystems-based approach should be a central principle for the development of the strategy, which would connect the strategy with other sectoral bodies and governance mechanisms. It was agreed that the strategy should encompass all the existing sectoral activities relating to the oceans and that its linkages with all the relevant governance mechanisms should be clearly defined.

B.   Strengthening of institutions and capacity

10.   The participants from African countries recognized that gaps existed in the current ocean governance structure and in capacity at the regional and national levels.

11.   Participants drew attention to the large gap between different countries in terms of the implementation of legal instruments and associated decisions, noting that it could result from a lack of compliance and enforcement, a lack of financial resources and/or weak political will. Following the example of the performance review of the regional fisheries management organizations, they suggested that the performance and effectiveness of the existing relevant regional instruments and governance mechanisms be evaluated.

12.   Cooperation and coordination were identified as key to ocean governance and as currently lacking, representing major gaps in ocean governance.

13.   It was agreed that strengthening existing institutions was preferable to creating new ones.

14.   Participants emphasized that governance tools, such as marine spatial planning and marine protected areas, were not used properly. Capacity-building in the use of such tools in ocean governance was therefore required.

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

C.   Cross-sectoral cooperation

16.   It was agreed that multisectoral mechanisms should be considered in the strategy and that land-based sectors could also be included in multisectoral cooperation and coordination.

17.   Various national ocean governance models had already proved successful in certain African countries and could be used in other countries of the region.

18.   It was agreed that no standard model could be applied to every country. A number of participants asked for more information on cross-sectoral cooperation and national ocean governance

structures. It was agreed that countries would share their experiences, and the secretariat was requested to compile cases of relevant ocean governance structures at the national and regional levels. UNEP would provide a template for case studies.

19.   At the national level, ministries of environment were mandated to coordinate with other sectoral ministries on environmental issues, and they were required to play a key role in ocean governance and the 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 could function as a platform for dialogue on cross-sectoral cooperation.

D.   Science-policy interface

21.   Participants agreed that, although data and information were available in the region, there were related gaps, such as a lack of appropriate use and interpretation of the data, unsatisfactory quality of data and lack of access to data.

22.   Participants were of the view that the objectives of and need for data and information generation and sharing should be clearly defined before the requisite systems were developed. One participant shared experiences in the setting up and management of data systems for the purpose of conducting marine spatial planning. The objective could clearly chart the direction of data and information management. The strategy should include the objectives for which the data systems were to be developed.

23.   The importance of mapping existing databases, as well as mapping data needs to match with those databases, was highlighted.

24.   Participants emphasized the need for the management of information and data on an African scale, in particular the sharing of data and information across ocean-based sectors and relevant bodies. The establishment of a central data management system for Africa and the strengthening of existing systems and networks were suggested.

25.   The representative of the African Union provided an introduction to the Commission's broad work on oceans. One participant suggested developing African indicators in the strategy for sustainable ocean development and the blue economy in order to ensure that any governance framework for Africa remained responsive to Africa-wide progress in that regard.

26.   Participants agreed to the inclusion of socioeconomic data and information as part of the management of information under the strategy, which in turn required the inclusion of social and economic scientists in the governance mechanisms. They also emphasized the importance of including traditional and indigenous knowledge in the strategy's information and data management. A system or model that covered the social, economic and environmental aspects of decision-making was needed.

27.   In order to avoid the loss of data and scientific information upon the completion of projects, concessional financing and strategic or environmental impact assessments were necessary for all projects from the outset, as were clauses requiring data or information submission to permanent data or information management systems connected with the governance framework.

28.   The importance of incorporating scientific institutions into governance mechanisms was highlighted. The strategy should define clearly the relationship between governance mechanisms and scientific mechanisms as well as communication and reporting requirements.

29.   A science-to-policy interface should include a policy-to-science interface. In that regard, the establishment of a science and policy partnership, dialogue and platform was proposed, building on the experiences under the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention). Participants highlighted the importance of preparing policy briefs and other policy-relevant information materials under such a framework. It was considered essential to raise awareness among and build the capacity of decision makers with regard to the need for the sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources.

30.   Participants shared information on their national science and data systems. One participant drew attention to an ongoing project to set up a regional maritime information-sharing centre. A number of country participants introduced national projects in the course of which data recovered through strategic environmental assessments were shared with the environmental agencies to inform decision-making. Other country participants introduced their oceanic institutions, describing how they collected data for use by all sectors.

E. Stakeholder engagement

31.   It was agreed that different stakeholders should be identified at different levels. In addition to national Governments and policymakers, other actors were identified as stakeholders in ocean governance, including research institutions, community-based organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, local communities, the private sector, multilateral donors, the judiciary, universities, parliamentarians, municipalities and local government.

32.   A stakeholder analysis for the development and implementation of the African ocean governance strategy was proposed, including an analysis of stakeholder roles in ocean governance.

33.   The importance of mainstreaming the roles of women and young people in ocean governance was repeatedly highlighted by participants.

34.   A bottom-up approach was suggested for the governance framework and governance decisions, even at the regional level. However, participants made it clear that such bottom-up processes should be subject to political acceptance and to political leadership. At the regional level, such political acceptance and leadership emanated from Heads of State. In that regard, stakeholder consultation was necessary in the development and implementation of the future strategy.

35.   Participants shared their national experiences with regard to national-level stakeholder engagement and coordination, including the blue economy road map development and thematic task forces and working groups in countries.

36.   Communication and awareness-raising were seen as key in the engagement of stakeholders, and participants said that non-governmental organizations should play an important role in that regard. It was noted that a communications strategy on the African ocean governance strategy should be established.

III. Way forward

37.   It was agreed that, with the support of UNEP, a draft African ocean governance strategy would be prepared for review by member States and further consideration by AMCEN and the African Union Commission.

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