

Concept Note: Partnership Meeting with Regional Economic Communities and Commissions in Western Indian Ocean Region

Background

Oceans and seas cover over two-thirds of the earth's surface supporting economic growth, food production and mitigating global climate change. Oceans play a major role in contributing to achieving sustainable development, economic growth, and livelihoods. The oceans/blue economy encompasses a sustainable economy for the ocean-based marine environment, related biodiversity, ecosystems, species and genetic resources, while ensuring their sustainable use and hence, conservation. The value of the global ocean-based economy is estimated between USD 3-6 trillion/year and more than 3 billion people rely on the oceans for their livelihoods. In the last few years, coastal and marine ecosystems have begun to show signs of degradation due to unsustainable utilization of living and non-living resources, infrastructure development, extractive industries and pollution which threatens the livelihoods of many ocean-dependent communities. This calls for effective ocean governance to coordinate various uses of the ocean and protection of the marine environment through globally-agreed international rules and procedures, regional action based on common principles and national legal frameworks and integrated policies. The Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) establishes fundamental legal principles for the governance of the marine environment and its resources.

Ocean Governance in Africa

Africa's Oceans and seas play a key role in supporting socio-economic growth and development across different sectors. Beyond the traditional maritime industries dominated by shipping and fishing, emerging industries such as oil and gas, mariculture and wind and wave energy, are constantly increasing pressures on coastal and marine resource base hence the need for new forms of regional policy and cooperation. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) through the Cairo Declaration of 2015 agreed to support efforts aimed at protecting the marine ecosystems through various initiatives such as the development of Ocean Governance Strategy for Africa, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea through the Regional Seas Conventions for effective management of the region's shared ocean resources. Consequently, the sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held on June 2017 in Libreville, Gabon requested the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariats of the regional seas conventions to enter into cooperative agreements with the regional bodies in order to enhance

application of ecosystem-based approaches in ocean governance in Africa, and to support coastal States in integrating innovation and value-addition approaches into all ocean-based economic sectors. This will support Agenda 2063 aspiration one which aims for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development focusing on exploiting the vast potential of Africa's blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth. In the first 10 years of implementation of the Agenda 2063, African Union Assembly has appointed the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to serve as focal points for the facilitation of the adoption, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development initiatives of members states related to Agenda 2063. One of the prioritizes of Agenda 2063 is on sustainable utilization of marine resources and promote sustainable ports operations and marine transport. RECs charged with African economic integration, development and governance recognize that a clean and healthy environment is a prerequisite for sustainable development and support regional integration to enhance cooperation among countries in the management and utilization of the shared waterways, lake basins as well as oceans and seas. The RECs have supported programmes to promoting blue/ocean economy due to its great promise for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs while preserving the ocean ecosystem.

Ocean Governance in the WIO Region

Ocean Governance in the WIO Region is based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which provides the basis upon which to pursue the protection and sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment and its resources. Marine and coastal resources in the WIO region are managed by different national institutions, organizations, agreements and commissions which have independent and often times overlapping mandate.

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region comprises 10 countries Comoros, France (Réunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania which are contracting parties to the Nairobi Convention. The region has an estimated population of 220 million people, of which over 60 million live within 100km of the shoreline and rely on coastal and marine resources and their ecosystem services. The major coastal and marine features in the region include coastal forests, estuaries, mangrove forests, salt marshes, sea grasses and coral reefs which support an array of biodiversity, economic and cultural activities.

Within the UNEP regional seas programmes, the WIO region is covered by the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine

and Coastal Environment of the WIO region. The Nairobi Convention and its protocols offers a legal framework and coordinates the efforts of the 10 contracting parties in their capacity to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment. It provides a forum to facilitate intergovernmental discussions on the region's environmental problems and how to address them. The convention is keen on promoting ecosystem-based approaches such as marine spatial planning to promote ocean governance for blue economy through cooperation, collaboration and partnerships with RECs, Commissions, regional fisheries management organisations, related intergovernmental organisations and between states. Among the eight RECs charged with African economic integration development and governance, four of them have mandate in the WIO region namely: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Other organisations promoting sustainable utilization and management of marine resources with the WIO region include Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC), Indian Ocean Commission - Commission de l'Océan Indien (IOC - COI), Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA) and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) among others.

The Nairobi convention seeks to establish working relationships with RECs, Commissions, Fisheries bodies and regional scientific bodies in the WIO region to support and facilitate regional economic integration, promote sustainable development and governance in the member states. The Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention appreciate the need for collaboration and cooperation with regional economic communities supported by a number of decisions, some of which are captured hereunder:

1. **Decision CP8/13.2:** To agree to establish additional partnerships, including with regional economic communities, such as the East Africa Community, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Southern Africa Development Community, Indian Ocean Commission
2. **Decision CP9/6.1.** To urge the Contracting Parties to work with regional economic communities, regional fisheries management organizations and other appropriate regional initiatives to implement the Cairo Declaration on Managing Africa's Natural Capital for Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its fifteenth session in 2015, the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy and the

provisions of Agenda 2063 on ecosystem-based management approaches for marine resources in the exclusive economic zones and adjacent waters

3. **Decision CP.9/13.2** To agree to establish additional partnerships, including with regional economic communities, such as the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community and the Indian Ocean Commission

Objectives of the meeting

- Seek opportunities for collaboration with RECs for sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in the WIO region.
- Engage RECs on a road map for establishing a regional collaborative mechanism to promote ocean governance and blue economy in the WIO region

Expected Outputs

- Potential area of collaboration and partnership on ocean governance identified
- Roadmap for development of a regional Ocean Governance Strategy defined

Expected Participants: Policy makers, representative of regional economic communities, representative of regional commissions, representative of Nairobi Convention Secretariat, Active regional projects in the WIO region, intergovernmental organizations, regional fisheries bodies and other key partners.