UNITED NATIONS

EP

UNEP-ABC-WACAF/
1st Bureau Meeting COP14/3.2

Distribution : Restricted
13 July 2026
Original: French

First Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region (Abidjan Convention)

On-line, 30 July 2026

SECRETARIAT OF THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION

Agenda Item 3.2:

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP15) IN 2027

Introduction

1. This document sets forward the preparatory process towards COP15 to be held in Namibia in 2027. It highlights the strategic direction and preparations towards the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15).

2. The Bureau is invited to:
   a. Provide strategic guidance on the vision and overall approach for COP15;
   b. Approve the proposed preparatory process and timeline;
   c. Support early political engagement with Contracting Parties and strategic partners;
   d. Champion resource mobilisation efforts to ensure a successful Conference.

Vision for COP15

3. COP15 will take place at a particularly important moment for regional and global ocean governance. By the time it convenes, implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) will have commenced following its first Conference of the Parties. Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework will be accelerating, negotiations on a global instrument to end plastic pollution are expected to have concluded, and countries will be intensifying efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 14. The Ocean Decade Conference will have concluded, and preparations for the Fourth United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC4) in the Republic of Korea in 2028 will be underway.

4. Against this backdrop, the Secretariat proposes that COP15 be positioned as an implementation-focused Conference of Parties that strengthens regional cooperation, accelerates delivery of existing commitments, and showcases practical solutions for protecting and sustainably managing the marine and coastal environment of the Abidjan Convention region.

5. The Secretariat proposes that COP15 be positioned as the COP to catalyze action. The objectives of the COP will be to:
   a. Strengthen the financial sustainability of the Abidjan Convention;
   b. Accelerate implementation of the Abidjan Convention and its Additional Protocols;
   c. Strengthen regional cooperation on marine biodiversity, pollution prevention, climate resilience and sustainable blue economy;
   d. Support implementation of the BBNJ Agreement at regional level;
   e. Contribute to achieving the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly the 30x30 target;
   f. Mobilise new technical and financial partnerships;
   g. Showcase successful regional initiatives and innovative financing mechanisms;
   h. Strengthen political leadership on ocean governance across the Convention area;
   i. Develop a coordinated regional position and identify priority regional commitments ahead of UNOC4 to be held in the Republic of Korea in 2028.

6. Subject to the decisions of the Contracting Parties, COP15 could consider adopting:
   a. A Ministerial Declaration, reaffirming political commitment to the effective implementation of the Convention and strengthening regional cooperation
   b. Decisions on:
      - the Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium, including measures to strengthen the financial sustainability of the Trust Fund;

- the future development and, if ready for consideration by the Parties, adoption of the Protocol on Marine Protected Areas;
- accelerating ratification and implementation of the Convention's Additional Protocols;
- strengthening regional cooperation and strategic partnerships on marine protected areas, marine spatial planning, BBNJ implementation, marine pollution, climate resilience and the sustainable blue economy.

c. Launch of the *regional State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report*, subject to availability of resources.

Proposed COP structure

7. The Secretariat proposes that COP15 extends beyond the traditional statutory meeting to include dedicated thematic and political events.

Day	Segment	Purpose
Day 1	Multi-Stakeholder Forum	Science, innovation, finance, partnerships and ocean solutions
Day 2	Parliamentarians Forum	Legislation and policy frameworks, BBNJ implementation, Protocol ratification and financing
Day 3	Expert Segment	Statutory negotiations, technical discussions and draft decisions
Day 4	Ministerial Segment	Adoption of decisions, Ministerial Declaration and high-level dialogue, strategic partnerships and donor roundtable

Proposed date of COP 15

8. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Abidjan Convention is proposed to take place in October 2027.

9. As agreed by the Contracting Parties at COP14, and in accordance with the principle of regional rotation, Namibia is expected to host COP15 and assume the Presidency of the Conference of the Parties. This will be subject to formal confirmation by the Government of Namibia of the dates and hosting arrangements.

10. The Secretariat will work with Namibia for an early confirmation, to facilitate timely political, technical and logistical preparations, as well as resource mobilisation and engagement with partners.

Proposed Roadmap to COP15 (September 2026 – December 2027)

11. The Secretariat proposes to organise preparations around six strategic workstreams. Progress under each workstream will be reported regularly to the Bureau, and the roadmap will be updated as necessary to reflect emerging priorities and changes. These proposals largely build on the practices for UNEA.

1. Political leadership (to build strong political ownership of COP15)	
September–December 2026	• Launch preparations with the Government of Namibia. • Confirm proposed dates and venue options. • Establish the Joint Organising Committee comprising the Host Government and the Secretariat. • Negotiate and conclude the Host Country Agreement.

	• Agree on the overall vision, theme and strategic objectives for COP15. • Prepare budget.
January–October2027	• Hold quarterly Bureau meetings to review progress. • Convene meetings of the Joint Organising Committee. • Engage Contracting Parties on key political priorities.
July–September 2027	• Conduct Ministerial outreach to all Contracting Parties. • Confirm ministerial participation. • Final Bureau review of conference preparations.
Expected outputs	1. Host Country Agreement signed, earliest by December 2026, latest by July 2027. 2. Joint Organising Committee operational. 3. Bureau guidance provided throughout preparations. 4. High-level political participation confirmed by July 2027.

2. Substantive and technical preparations	
September–December 2026	• Identify priority themes. • Develop the preliminary agenda. • Prepare documentation plan and timelines.

January–June 2027	• Conduct regional technical consultations to produce technical and information documents on:
	  ○ Marine Protected Areas Protocol;
	  ○ Plastic pollution;
	  ○ BBNJ implementation;
	  ○ Marine Spatial Planning;
	  ○ Ecosystem restoration;
	  ○ Other priority ocean governance issues.
	• Draft COP decisions.
	• Draft technical papers/reports and information documents.
	• Confirm panels and speakers.

July–August 2027	• Complete documentation package. • Translation and publication of documents.
Expected outputs	1. Complete documentation package including draft COP decisions, Ministerial Declaration, technical reports and background papers finalized and shared by August 2027.

3. Partnerships and resource mobilisation	
September–December 2026	• Prepare budget and fundraising plan.
January–September 2027	• Engage strategic development partners, donors, regional organisations, UN agencies, financial institutions and the private sector
October 2027	• Convene the Partners and Donors Roundtable. • Announce new partnerships and initiatives.
Expected outputs	1. COP15 budget approved. 2. Resources mobilised for COP15. 3. New partnerships announced.

4. Conference organisation and logistics	
September–December 2026	• Prepare preliminary budget. • Identify venue requirements.
January–March 2027	• Confirm venue. • Confirm conference facilities.
April-June 2027	• Planning for side events.

July–September 2027	• Registration. • Confirm delegations. • Confirm speakers and side events. • Finalise logistics. • Confirm interpretation, protocol, security and transport arrangements.
Expected outputs	1. Conference successfully organised. 2. Side events delivered. 3. High level participation secured.

5. Communication and outreach	
September–December 2026	• Develop communication strategy. • Develop branding and visual identity. • Launch COP15 webpage.
January–June 2027	• Produce promotional materials. • Engage media partners. • Launch communication campaign.
July–September 2027	• Intensify media outreach. • Social media campaign. • Press briefings. • Daily communications during COP15.
November–December 2027	• Disseminate outcomes. • Publish Conference report.
Expected outputs	1. Increased visibility of the Convention. 2. Strong media coverage. 3. Broad stakeholder engagement.

6. Follow-up post COP15	
October 2027	• Adoption of COP decisions. • Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. • Launch of new partnerships.
November–December 2027	• Publish the official Conference report. • Disseminate decisions to Contracting Parties and partners. • Package key outcomes for presentation at major international meetings, including UNFCCC COP32 and preparations for UNOC4 (2028)
Expected outputs	1. COP15 decisions shared. 2. Ministerial Declaration disseminated.

Proposed COP Structure

Multi-stakeholder Forum (Day 1)	Parliamentarians Forum (Day 2)	Expert Segment (Day 3)	Ministerial Segment (Day 4)
Dedicated thematic days on: • Science and knowledge; • Sustainable Blue Economy; • Marine Spatial Planning and Ocean Governance; • Ocean Financing and Investment; • Innovation and Digital Ocean Solutions.	A dedicated day bringing together parliamentarians from Contracting Parties to discuss: • Ratification and implementation of the Convention and its Protocols; • BBNJ implementation; • National legislation; • Financing for ocean governance.	• Statutory meetings. • Negotiation of COP decisions. • Scientific and technical discussions.	• Adoption of decisions. • High-level political declarations. • Ministerial dialogue on regional ocean governance. **Partners and Donors Roundtable (Day 4 for two hours)** A high-level dialogue to mobilise technical and financial support for implementation of COP15 outcomes with: • Development finance institutions • Bilateral donors • Philanthropic organisations • UN agencies • Regional organisations • Private sector partners (to announce new initiatives; launch partnerships; strengthen implementation)