



Distr.: General
31 July 2025

Original: English
English and French Only

African Ministerial Conference on the Environment Twentieth Session

Ministerial Segment
Nairobi, Kenya 16 and 17 July
2025

Decision AMCEN/20/Dec.2: Advancing sustainable ocean governance in Africa

We, the African ministers of environment,

Having met in Nairobi on 16 and 17 July 2025 at the twentieth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,

Recalling decision AMCEN/15/1 on the development of an African Ocean Governance Strategy, decision AMCEN/16/2 on governance mechanisms for ecosystem-based management of Africa's Ocean space, decision AMCEN/17/1 on taking action to strengthen ecosystem-based and integrated management of oceans in Africa and decision AMCEN/18/4 on progress towards finalisation and implementation of the African Ocean Governance Strategy,

Acknowledging the endorsement by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy Water and Environment, at its second ordinary session held in 2017 on the development of the Africa Ocean governance strategy,

Further acknowledging the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, Water and Environment fifth ordinary session held in November 2023 where the Committee reaffirmed the critical role of Africa's aquatic biodiversity governance, endorsed mechanisms to enhance member State participation in international ocean governance processes, and requested regional economic communities, regional fisheries management organisations and regional seas programmes to deploy these mechanisms in support of Africa's sustainable ocean governance,

Acknowledging the Africa Union Agenda 2063, the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy, the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa, the Africa Blue Economy Strategy and other continental and sub-regional frameworks as key pillars for coherent ocean governance and sustainable blue growth,

Recalling the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the overarching legal framework for ocean governance and obliges States to protect and preserve the marine environment,

Recognising that effective global and regional cooperation provided for under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is essential to ensure the sustainable management of shared marine resources,

Welcoming the adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction under United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,

Welcoming the outcomes of the third United Nations Ocean Conference held in Nice, France from 9 to 13 June

2025, to accelerate action towards achieving goal 14 of the sustainable Development Goals also known as "Life Below Water", which reaffirmed the global commitment to accelerate implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and underscored the need for enhanced support to developing countries, especially Small Island Developing States and African coastal states for the domestication and implementation of ocean governance, including the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction,

Recognising that Africa's exclusive economic zones, high seas and linked estuarine and freshwater systems underpin livelihoods for millions of people on the continent,

Alarmed by critical threats to the oceans including all forms of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change, and more specifically, overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, mangrove depletion, plastic pollution, coral bleaching and seagrass loss, coastal erosion, habitat destruction, sea-level rise; oil spills and other shipping-related pollution, and ocean acidification among others,

Aware of the persistent governance gaps that impede realisation of Africa's "blue dividend" which undermine achievement of the sustainable development goals, African Union's Agenda 2063 and the blue economy frameworks,

Welcoming initiatives by regional seas conventions, regional economic communities, regional fisheries management organisations and regional marine research organisations in aligning their actions on ocean governance,

Convinced that an African Union Africa Ocean Governance Strategy and its Implementation Plan, will offer a unifying framework to harmonise and facilitate continental, regional and national actions on sustainable Ocean Governance, and strengthen Africa's voice in the global ocean agenda and other multilateral fora,

Decide:

1. To adopt the African Union Ocean Governance Strategy and its Implementation Plan, annexed to this decision, as the continent's overarching framework that will facilitate and coordinate efforts, strengthen institutional governance, mobilise financial resources, and foster regional and international cooperation to ensure a resilient and sustainable ocean governance in Africa.
2. To urge member States, Regional Economic Communities, the civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to implement the African Union Ocean Governance Strategy and its Implementation Plan aligning with national frameworks accordingly.
3. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with African Union Development Agency - NEPAD and the United Nations Environment Programme, to host the African ocean conference on a biennial basis, as envisaged in the Africa Ocean Governance Strategy, providing an inclusive forum for member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community and other relevant stakeholders to convene, exchange best practices and strengthen capacities for the sustainable governance of Africa's oceans, and to mobilize the necessary political commitment, technical support and financial resources for the effective implementation of the Africa Ocean Governance Strategy.
4. To agree to collaborate with the African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, Regional Economic Communities, development partners and the private sector to mobilise financial resources including innovative financing mechanisms, for the conservation and sustainable management of ocean resources, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
5. To establish an African Group of Negotiators on Oceans with the objective of coordinating Africa's common positions, representing and negotiating for African interests and priorities in intergovernmental meetings relating to oceans, and to regularly report to the Africa Union Commission and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on developments and outcomes.

6. To request the African Group of Negotiators on Oceans to develop modalities of operations including its terms of reference, governance structure, mechanisms for intersessional coordination and information sharing, arrangements for technical and financial support.
7. To request the African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency – NEPAD, Regional Economic Communities, United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations agencies and development partners to support the work of the African Group of Negotiators on Oceans including technical and financial support.
8. To encourage member States to ratify or accede to the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, and to integrate its provisions, where relevant, into national development policies.
9. To request the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, to develop an African continental vision and roadmap for the implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, so as to guide coherent national and regional actions for conserving and sustainably using marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdictions.
10. To call upon United Nations agencies, the African Development Bank, development partners, and multilateral financial institutions to provide coordinated financial and technical support for capacity building activities related to the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, including support for ratification and effective implementation, scientific research, monitoring, law enforcement, policy development and stakeholder engagement, and to align such technical and financial assistance with the Africa Ocean Governance Strategy and its Implementation Plan.