

Abidjan Convention

The Contracting Parties,

Conscious of the economic, social and health value of the marine environment and coastal areas of the West and Central African Region,
Fully aware of their responsibility to preserve their natural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations,
Recognizing the threat to the marine and coastal environment, its ecological equilibrium, resources and legitimate uses posed by pollution and by the absence of an integration of an environmental dimension into the development process,

Realizing fully the need for co-operation among the Contracting Parties in order to ensure sustainable, environmentally-sound development through a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach,

Realizing also the need for a carefully planned research, monitoring and assessment programme in view of the scarcity of scientific information on marine pollution in the West and Central African Region,

Noting that existing conventions concerning marine pollution do not cover, in spite of the progress achieved, all aspects and sources of marine pollution and do not entirely meet the special requirements of the West and Central African Region,

Have agreed as follows:

International cooperation

Environmental Impact Assessment, Risk assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation, Science

Synergy

Article 1 : GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

This Convention shall cover the marine environment, coastal zones and related inland waters falling within the jurisdiction of the States of the West and Central African Region, from Mauritania to Namibia inclusive, which have become Contracting Parties to this Convention under conditions set forth in article 27 and paragraph 1 of article 28 (hereinafter referred to as the Convention area).

Article 2 : DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Convention:

1. "Pollution" means the introduction by man, directly or indirectly, of substances or energy into the marine environment, coastal zones, and related inland waters resulting in such deleterious effects as harm to living resources, hazards to human health, hindrance to marine activities, including fishing, impairment of quality for use of sea-water and reduction of amenities.
2. "Organization" means the body designated as the secretariat of the Convention and its related protocols according to article 16 of the Convention.

Pollution

Secretariats

Article 3 : GENERAL PROVISIONS

3. The Contracting Parties may enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements, including regional or subregional agreements, for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the West and Central African Region, provided that such agreements are consistent with this

International cooperation

Convention and conform to international law. Copies of such agreements shall be deposited with the Organization and, through the Organization, communicated to all Contracting Parties.

4. Nothing in this Convention or related protocols shall be deemed to affect obligations assumed by a Contracting Party under agreements previously concluded. Synergy, International agreements, Rules of Procedure

5. Nothing in this Convention shall prejudice the codification and development of the law of the sea by the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea convened pursuant to resolution 2750 C (XXV) of the General Assembly of the United Nations, nor the present or future claims and legal views of any Contracting Party concerning the nature and extent of its maritime jurisdiction. Synergy

Article 4 : GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

6. The Contracting Parties shall, individually or jointly as the case may be, take all appropriate measures in accordance with the provisions of this Convention and its protocols in force to which they are parties to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution of the Convention area and to ensure sound environmental management of natural resources, using for this purpose the best practicable means at their disposal, and in accordance with their capabilities. Sound environmental management, Pollution

7. In addition to the Protocol concerning cooperation in combating pollution in cases of emergency opened for signature on the same date as this Convention, the Contracting Parties shall cooperate in the formulation and adoption of other protocols prescribing agreed measures, procedures, and standards to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution from all sources or promoting environmental management in conformity with the objectives of this Convention. Disasters, Sound environmental management

8. The Contracting Parties shall establish national laws and regulations for the effective discharge of the obligations prescribed in this Convention, and shall endeavour to harmonize their national policies in this regard. Implementation, National strategies

9. The Contracting Parties shall co-operate with the competent international, regional and subregional organizations to establish and adopt recommended practices, procedures and measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution from all sources in conformity with the objectives of this Convention and its related protocols, and to assist each other in fulfilling their obligations under this Convention and its related protocols. International cooperation

10. In taking measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution of the Convention area or to promote environmental management, the Contracting Parties shall act so as not to transfer, directly or indirectly, damage or hazards from one area to another or transform one type of pollution into another. Prevention

Article 5 : POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures in conformity with international law to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution in the Convention area caused by normal or accidental discharges from ships, and shall ensure the effective application in the Convention area of the internationally recognized rules and standards relating to the control of this type of pollution. Ship-based marine pollution

Article 6 : POLLUTION CAUSED BY DUMPING FROM SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution in the Convention area caused by dumping from ships and aircraft, and shall ensure the effective application in the Convention area of the internationally recognized rules and standards relating to the control of this type of pollution.

Article 7 : POLLUTION FROM LAND-BASED SOURCES

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution of the Convention area caused by discharges from rivers, estuaries, coastal establishments and outfalls, coastal dumping or emanating from any other sources on their territories.

Article 8 : POLLUTION FROM ACTIVITIES RELATING TO EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE SEA-BED

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution resulting from or in connection with activities relating to the exploration and exploitation of the sea-bed and its subsoil subject to their jurisdiction and from artificial islands, installations and structures under their jurisdiction. Continental shelves, Deep sea, Bioprospecting

Article 9 : POLLUTION FROM OR THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution in the Convention area resulting from or transported through the atmosphere. Pollution

Article 10 : COASTAL EROSION

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control coastal erosion in the Convention area resulting from man's activities, such as land reclamation and coastal engineering. Coastal wetlands

Article 11 : SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS

The Contracting Parties shall, individually or jointly as the case may be, take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve rare or fragile ecosystems as well as the habitat of depleted, threatened or endangered species and other marine life. To this end, the Contracting Parties shall endeavour to establish protected areas, such as parks and reserves, and to prohibit or control any activity likely to have adverse effects on the species, ecosystems or biological processes in such areas. Ecosystem preservation, Marine protected areas, Protected areas

Article 12 : CO-OPERATION IN COMBATING POLLUTION IN CASES OF EMERGENCY

11. The Contracting Parties shall co-operate in taking all necessary measures to deal with pollution emergencies in the Convention area,

whatever the cause of such emergencies, and to reduce or eliminate damage resulting therefrom.

12. Any Contracting Party which becomes aware of a pollution emergency in the Convention area should, without delay, notify the Organization and, either through this Organization or directly, any other Contracting Party likely to be affected by such emergency. Notification obligations

Article 13 : ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13. As part of their environmental management policies, the Contracting Parties shall develop technical and other guidelines to assist the planning of their development projects in such a way as to minimize their harmful impact on the Convention area.

14. Each Contracting Party shall endeavour to include an assessment of the potential environmental effects in any planning activity entailing projects within its territory, particularly in the coastal areas that may cause substantial pollution of, or significant and harmful changes to, the Convention area.

15. The Contracting Parties shall, in consultation with the Organization, develop procedures for the dissemination of information concerning the assessment of the activities referred to in paragraph 2 of this article.

Article 14 : SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CO-OPERATION

16. The Contracting Parties shall co-operate, with the assistance of competent international and regional organizations, in the field of scientific research, monitoring and assessment of pollution in the Convention area, and shall exchange data and other scientific information for the purpose of this Convention and its related protocols.

Environmental Impact Assessment, Risk assessment, Science

17. In addition, the Contracting Parties shall develop and co-ordinate national research and monitoring programmes concerning all types of pollution in the Convention area and shall establish, in co-operation with competent international and regional organizations, a regional network of national research centres and institutions to ensure compatible results. The Contracting Parties shall endeavour to participate in international arrangements for pollution research and monitoring in areas beyond their national jurisdiction.

International cooperation, National strategies

18. The Contracting Parties shall co-operate directly or through competent international or regional organizations, in the development of programmes for technical and other assistance in fields related to marine pollution and sound environmental management of the Convention area.

International cooperation

Article 15 : LIABILITY AND COMPENSATION

The Contracting Parties shall co-operate in the formulation and adoption of appropriate rules and procedures for the determination of liability and the payment of adequate and prompt compensation for damage resulting from pollution of the Convention area.

Article 16 : INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

19. The Contracting Parties designate the United Nations Environment Programme as the secretariat of the Convention to carry out the following functions:

Secretariats

- i. To prepare and convene the meetings of Contracting Parties and conferences provided for in articles 17 and 18;
 - ii. To transmit to the Contracting Parties notifications, reports and other information received in accordance with articles 3, 12, and 22;
 - iii. To perform the functions assigned to it by the protocols to this Convention;
 - iv. To consider enquiries by, and information from, the Contracting Parties and to consult with them on questions relating to this Convention and its related protocols and annexes thereto;
 - v. To co-ordinate the implementation of cooperative activities agreed upon by the meetings of Contracting Parties and conferences provided for in article 17;
 - vi. To enter into such administrative arrangements as may be required for the effective discharge of the secretariat functions.
20. Each Contracting Party shall designate an appropriate national authority National focal points as responsible for the co-ordination of national efforts for implementing this Convention and its related protocols. The appropriate national authority shall serve as the channel of communication between the Contracting Party and the Organization.

Article 17 : MEETINGS OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

21. The Contracting Parties shall hold ordinary meetings once every two years and extraordinary meetings at any other time deemed necessary, upon the request of the Organization or at the request of any Contracting Party, supported by at least three other Contracting Parties.
22. It shall be the function of the meetings of the Contracting Parties to keep under review the implementation of this Convention and its related protocols and, in particular:
- i. To consider reports submitted by the Contracting Parties under article 22; National reports
 - ii. To adopt, review and amend as required annexes to this Convention and to its related protocols, in accordance with the provisions of article 20; Annexes, Amendments
 - iii. To make recommendations regarding the adoption of any additional protocols or amendments to this Convention or its related protocols in accordance with the provisions of articles 18 and 19; Protocols
 - iv. To establish working groups as required to consider any matters concerning this Convention and its related protocols and annexes;
 - v. To review the state of pollution in the Convention area; Monitoring, Evaluation
 - vi. To consider and to adopt decisions concerning co-operative activities to be undertaken within the framework of this Convention and its related protocols, including their financial and institutional implications;
 - vii. To consider and undertake any additional action that may be required for the achievement of the purposes of this Convention and its related protocols.

Article 18 : ADOPTION OF ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

23. The Contracting Parties, at a conference of plenipotentiaries, may adopt additional protocols to this Convention pursuant to paragraph 2 of article 4.
24. A conference of plenipotentiaries shall be convened for the purpose of adopting additional protocols by the Organization at the request of not less than two thirds of the Contracting Parties.
25. Pending the entry into force of this Convention, the Organization may, after consulting with the signatories to this Convention, convene a

conference of plenipotentiaries for the purpose of adopting additional protocols.

Article 19 : AMENDMENT OF THE CONVENTION OR PROTOCOLS

26. Any Contracting Party to this Convention may propose amendments to the Convention or to any of the protocols. The texts of any such draft amendments shall be communicated to the Contracting Parties by the Organization six months before their submission to an ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties for examination.

27. Any amendment shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Parties and shall enter into force twelve months after its approval.

Article 20 : ANNEXES AND AMENDMENTS TO ANNEXES

28. Annexes to this Convention or to any of its protocols shall form an integral part of the Convention or such protocol.

29. Except as may be otherwise provided in any protocol, the procedure foreseen in article 19 shall apply to the adoption and entry into force of any amendments to annexes to this Convention or to any protocol.

30. The adoption and entry into force of a new annex to this Convention or to any protocol shall be subject to the same procedure as the adoption and entry into force of an amendment to an annex in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2 of this article provided that, if any amendment to the Convention or the protocol concerned is involved, the new annex shall not enter into force until such time as the amendment to the Convention or the protocol concerned enters into force.

Article 21 : RULES OF PROCEDURE AND FINANCIAL RULES

31. The Contracting Parties shall adopt rules of procedure for their meetings and conferences envisaged in articles 17 and 18 above.

32. The Contracting Parties shall adopt financial rules, prepared in consultation with the Organization, to determine, in particular, their financial participation.

Article 22 : REPORTS

The Contracting Parties shall transmit to the Organization reports on the measures adopted in the implementation of this Convention and of protocols to which they are Parties, in such form and at such intervals as the meetings of Contracting Parties may determine.

Article 23 : COMPLIANCE CONTROL

The Contracting Parties undertake to co-operate in the development of procedures enabling them to control the application of this Convention and its related protocols.

Article 24 : SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

33. In case of a dispute between Contracting Parties as to the interpretation or application of this Convention or its related protocols, they shall seek a

settlement of the dispute through negotiation or any other peaceful means of their own choice.

34. If the Parties concerned cannot settle their dispute through the means mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the dispute shall be submitted to arbitration under conditions to be adopted by the Contracting Parties in an annex to this Convention.

Article 25 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CONVENTION AND ITS RELATED PROTOCOLS

35. No State may become a Contracting Party to this Convention unless it becomes at the same time a Contracting Party to at least one protocol. No State may become a Contracting Party to a protocol unless it is, or becomes at the same time, a Contracting Party to this Convention.

36. Any protocol to this Convention shall be binding only on the Contracting Parties to the protocol in question.

37. Decisions concerning any protocol pursuant to articles 17, 19 and 20 of this Convention shall be taken only by the Parties to the protocol concerned.

Article 26 : SIGNATURE

This Convention and the Protocol on Cooperation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency shall be in Abidjan from 23 March to 22 June 1981 for signature by any coastal or island State, from Mauritania to Namibia inclusive.

Article 27 : RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVALS

This Convention and any protocol thereto shall be subject to ratification, acceptance, or approval. Instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Government of the Ivory Coast, which will assume the functions of Depositary.

Article 28 : ACCESSION

38. As from 23 June 1981, the present Convention and the Protocol concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency shall be open for accession by the States referred to in article 26.

39. After the entry into force of this Convention and any protocol thereto, any African State not referred to in article 26 may accede to them.

40. This Convention and any protocol thereto shall also remain open after the entry into force for accession by any other State, subject to the prior approval of three quarters of the States referred to in article 26 which have become Contracting Parties.

41. Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Depositary.

Article 29 : ENTRY INTO FORCE

42. This Convention and the first of its protocols shall enter into force on the same date, in accordance with the following paragraph 2.

43. The Convention and any of its protocols shall enter into force on the sixtieth day following the date of deposit of at least six instruments of ratification acceptance or approval of, or accession to, such Convention and protocol by the Parties referred to in article 26.

44. Thereafter, this Convention and any protocol thereto shall enter into force with respect to any State referred to in article 26 on the sixtieth day following the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

Article 30 : WITHDRAWAL

45. At any time after five years from the date of entry into force of this Convention, any Contracting Party may withdraw from this Convention by giving written notification of withdrawal.

46. Except as may be otherwise provided in any protocol to this Convention, any Contracting Party may, at any time after five years from the date of entry into force of such protocol, withdraw from such protocol by giving written notification of withdrawal.

47. Withdrawal shall take effect ninety days after the date on which notification of withdrawal is received by the Depositary.

48. Any Contracting Party which withdraws from this Convention shall be considered as also having withdrawn from any protocol to which it was a Party.

49. Any Contracting Party which, upon its withdrawal from a protocol, is no longer a Party to any protocol to this Convention, shall be considered as also having withdrawn from this Convention.

Article 31 : RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPOSITARY

50. The Depositary shall inform the Contracting Parties, any other Party referred to in article 26, and the Organization:

- i. Of the signature of this Convention and any protocol thereto, and of the deposit of instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession in accordance with articles 26, 27 and 28;
- ii. Of the date on which the Convention and any protocol will come into force in accordance with the provisions of article 29;
- iii. Of notifications of withdrawal made in accordance with article 30;
- iv. Of the amendments adopted with respect to the Convention and to any protocol, their acceptance by the Contracting Parties and the date of entry into force of these amendments in accordance with the provisions of article 19;
- v. Of the adoption of new annexes and of the amendment of any annex in accordance with article 20.

51. The original of this Convention and of any protocol thereto shall be deposited with the Depositary, the Government of the Ivory Coast which shall send certified copies thereof to the Contracting Parties, to the Organization of African Unity, to the Organization, and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration and publication in accordance with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter.