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Fourteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14)
to the Convention on Cooperation for 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)

Nouakchott, Mauritania, 21st to 23rd May 2025

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I. Introduction

1. The Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention) is one of the 18 regional seas conventions and action plans under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Seas Programme.

2. The Abidjan Convention and its Protocol relating to cooperation in emergency pollution responses were adopted in 1981, and entered into force in 1984 after being ratified by 11 contracting parties.

Table 1: List of Parties that ratified the Abidjan Convention

N°	Country	Signature	Ratification
1.	Benin	23 March 1981	17 October 1997
2.	Cameroon	-	1 March 1983
3.	Cabo Verde		25 April 2019
4.	Democratic Republic of the Congo	-	17 June 2014
5.	Congo	23 March 1981	19 December 1987
6.	Côte d'Ivoire	23 March 1981	15 January 1982
7.	Gabon	23 March 1981	13 December 1988
8.	Gambia	13 June 1981	6 December 1984
9.	Ghana	23 March 1981	20 July 1989
10.	Guinea	23 March 1981	4 March 1982
11.	Guinea-Bissau	7 February 2011	12 February 2012
12.	Liberia	22 March 2005	22 October 2005
13.	Mauritania	12 April 2012	18 April 2012
14.	Namibia		22 September 2016
15.	Nigeria	23 March 1981	6 June 1984
16.	Senegal	23 March 1981	10 May 1983
17.	Sierra Leone	-	7 June 2005
18.	South Africa	16 May 2002	16 May 2002
19.	Togo	23 March 1981	16 November 1983
20.	Angola		17 August 2016

Since its adoption, the Convention has seen four additional protocols adopted:

- The Protocol relating to the cooperation in the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the West, Central and Southern African region against pollution from land-based sources and activities, signed on June 22, 2012 in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire and known as the Grand-Bassam Protocol ;
- The Protocol on concerted and sustainable management of the mangrove ecosystem of the south-east Atlantic coast, also known as the Calabar Protocol, signed on July 3, 2019 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire ;
- The Protocol on Environmental Norms and Standards for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration and Exploitation in the South-East Atlantic Area, also known as the Malabo Protocol, signed on July 3, 2019, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire ;
- The Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the South-East Atlantic Area, also known as Pointe-Noire Protocol, signed on July 3, 2019, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The ratification process for these additional protocols is underway.

A fifth additional protocol is currently being drafted on the sustainable management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention received a mandate from the Contracting Parties through Decision CP13/5 of COP13. The draft additional protocol, which will be submitted to COP14 for adoption, has been sent to the Contracting Parties for comments and observations.

3. The Contracting Parties have nominated UNEP to administer the Secretariat of the Convention, in accordance with its Article 16, and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire as Depositary.

4. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties is elected at each meeting of the Contracting Parties. Members of the Bureau, elected at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, are: President: Congo; Vice-Presidents: Mauritania and Sierra Leone; Rapporteurs: Benin, South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire.
5. The Theme of COP13 was : Ocean Governance: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa's Sustainable Development.
6. The Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention performs the administrative functions of the Convention and its Protocols. Its activities are financed by the Trust Fund of the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of West, Central and Southern Africa. Table 2 below shows the status of contributions to the Trust Fund and outstanding pledges from 2010 to 2025.
7. At the first extraordinary meeting of the Abidjan Convention Contracting Parties, held in Johannesburg in June 2008, Parties decided to amend the title of the Convention (to include the term 'management') and its geographical coverage (to include the Southern African region). They also decided (i) to amend the text of the Convention to take into account relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other international conventions; and (ii) to request the Secretariat to submit a revised text of the Convention to the Parties. The amendment process, which is still underway, is covered by this report and will be presented at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention (COP14).
8. Concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of the Convention and noting the significant benefits inherent to a strong and dynamic Regional Seas Programme, the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention adopted in 2007 the Decision CP8/8 on the revitalization of the Convention in order to ensure its effective implementation as well as to review its instruments for the promotion of sustainable development of the region in the global context. This decision was followed by a request to the Executive Director of UNEP to support the revitalization of the Convention by carrying out a number of activities, including studies and consultations to facilitate the revitalization process.
9. Further to this decision, a collaborative programme between UNEP and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has been established to support and coordinate the Abidjan Convention's revitalization activities. One of the first steps taken by UNEP and IUCN as part of their mandate was to engage a group of consultants to draw up a workable roadmap for the Convention's revitalization.
10. The roadmap focused on four points: (i) the relocation of the Secretariat from Nairobi to Abidjan; (ii) funding mechanisms; (iii) the ratification strategy; and (iv) the revision of the initial mandate of the Abidjan Convention.
11. In addition to working with IUCN, the Abidjan Convention Secretariat and UNEP have worked with a range of partners to reinvigorate both the Convention and its Secretariat. The Convention has made significant progress over this period and is now the leading stakeholder in the ocean debate in the Abidjan Convention area.
12. To date, the revitalization process has been successfully implemented, with the effective relocation of the Secretariat from Nairobi to Abidjan in March 2010. The Secretariat has worked with partners and funding agencies to develop and implement a number of projects funded outside the Convention's trust funds. The Convention's mandate was reviewed at COP11 and now includes emerging issues related to the sustainable management of the region's marine and coastal resources.
13. However, the Convention and its activities are seriously compromised by the continuing financial shortfalls of the Trust Funds due to the high rate of outstanding arrears of the Contracting Parties (Table 2). It is urgent and of utmost importance that the Contracting Parties pay their contributions to the Convention promptly.
14. This report provides information on the progress made in implementing the COP13 decisions and proposes a range of recommendations aimed at repositioning the Convention as the leading player in the oceans debate in West, Central and Southern Africa.

II. Progress made implementing the decisions of the thirteenth Conference of the Parties

Decision CP13/1: Implementation of COP12 Decisions

15. The Secretariat, in partnership with PRCM and WAEMU, launched the set-up of a regional platform for consultation and awareness-raising among parliamentarians on issues relating to the sustainable management of marine coastal zones, and the rationale and content of the protocols, in accordance with decision CP12/19 on the establishment and management of the Alliance of Parliamentarians and Locally Elected Officials in favour of the Abidjan Convention - APELCA. The advocacy focused on the benefits of ratifying the protocols and the need to harmonize the legislation governing coastal and marine zone management in West Africa.

Decision CP13/2 on 2022-2024 Work Programme

16. For the period under review, the Abidjan Convention Secretariat implemented a number of activities focusing around five components of the 2022-2024 work programme.

17. The 2022-2024 work programme implementation encountered challenges due to a combination of factors, such as (i) institutional instability with respect to human resources, including in the coordination of the Convention Secretariat; (ii) irregular meetings of the COP13 Bureau to assess its implementation; (iii) delays in the processing of Convention requests by departments at headquarters, etc.

18. However, it should be noted that activities under the 2022-2024 work programme would not have been possible without the financial support of partners such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank, the European Union Commission, the African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), GIZ, CMA-CGM, etc., which have granted the Abidjan Convention resources to carry out various activities, thereby helping to implement the decisions of COP13. which have granted the Abidjan Convention resources to carry out certain activities, thus contributing to the implementation of the COP13 decisions.

19. Furthermore, activities were facilitated by collaboration with technical partners such as SST, PRCM, WAEMU, IUCN, CSE, IOI-SA, WWF, RAMPAO, COMIFAC, GRID ARENDAL, BRS and some Regional Seas Conventions such as Barcelona, Cartagena and Nairobi.

20. The 2025-2027 work programme takes stock of the previous planning cycle. It assesses achievements in implementing the five components.

Decision CP13/3 on financial matters

Table 2: Outstanding contributions of $5,173,848.82 to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund for the period: 2010 to 2025 (US Dollars)

N°	Parties	TOTAL UNPAID as of 31 December 2024	PLEDGE for the Year 2025 Contributions	TOTAL UNPAID, as of 30 April 2025
1	Angola	$US 528,440.00	$US 66,055.00	$US 594,495.00
2	Benin		$US 23,694.00	$US 23,694.00
3	Cameroon	$US 524,143.17	$US 43,079.00	$US 567,222.17
4	Republic of Congo	$US 102,122.80	$US 23,694.00	$US 125,816.80
5	Democratic Republic of Congo	$US 473,869.00	$US 43,079.00	$US 516,948.00
6	Cote d'Ivoire	$US 24,119.83	$US 43,079.00	$US 67,198.83
7	Gabon	$US 561,350.92	$US 43,079.00	$US 604,429.92
8	Gambia	$US 295,438.79	$US 16,394.00	$US 311,832.79
9	Ghana	$US 226,163.00	$US 32,309.00	$US 258,472.00

10	Guinea	$US 253,935.00	**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 277,629.00**
11	Guinea-Bissau	$US 253,935.00	**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 277,629.00**
12	Liberia	$US 270,403.00	**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 294,097.00**
13	Mauritania	$US 26,780.05	**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 50,474.05**
14	Namibia		**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 23,694.00**
15	Nigeria	$US 524,282.72	**$US 66,055.00**	**$US 590,337.72**
16	Senegal	$US 61,425.54	**$US 32,309.00**	**$US 93,734.54**
17	Sierra Leone	$US 94,776.00	**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 118,470.00**
18	South Africa		**$US 66,055.00**	**$US 66,055.00**
19	Togo	$US 264,231.00	**$US 23,694.00**	**$US 287,925.00**
20	*CABO VERDE*		$US 23,694.00	$US 23,694.00
	TOTAL	**$US 4,485,415.83**	**$US 688,433.00**	**$US 5,173,848.82**

21. As at COP13, **the 13th Conference of the Parties noted the critical and worrying level of outstanding arrears** and expressly requested the Contracting Parties that are not up to date to pay their outstanding arrears as a matter of urgency in order to ensure the financial viability of the Secretariat of the Convention.

22. Despite the urgent need to pay the contributions, the accumulated arrears as of **December 31, 2024, amount to US$ 4,485,415.83**, to which must be added **the year 2025 annual contributions of US$ 688,433.00**. The overall total of contribution arrears at the date of this COP14 is **US$ 5,173,848.82**.

Table 3: Statement of received contributions of $2,894,962 to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund for the period: 2010 to 2025 (US Dollars)

MEMBER COUNTRIES	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL Received
	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	Received	
ANGOLA						-	-	-	-	-		-
BENIN					175,957	53,877	24,239	95,258	-	14,220		363,551
CAMEROUN	16,733	16,912		(34,970)	-	-	-	-	-	-		(1,325)
CABO VERDE										-		-
CONGO						-	50,976	47,640	-	-		98,616
COTE D'IVOIRE	35,724		43,079		88,544	181,286	-	-	-	50,866	-	399,499
GABON						-	-	-	-	-		-
GAMBIA	23,694	5,680				23,694	-	-	-	-	7,300	60,368
GHANA	50,000	100,000	73,329	32,309		-	-	-	-	-		255,638
GUINEA						-	-	-	-	-		-
GUINEA-BISSAU						-	-	-	-	-		-
LIBERIA						-	-	-	-	-		-
MAURITANIA						194,331	-	62,998	20,811	-		278,140
NAMIBIA					47,388	47,388	23,694	23,694	23,694	23,694	-	189,552
NIGERIA					136,267	-	-	-	-	-		136,267
SENEGAL	67,335					-	-	-	-	284,409		351,744
SIERRA LEONE	13,362	36		23,222	23,714	23,694	-	-	-	-		84,028
SOUTH AFRICA		66,055	66,055	66,055	66,055	66,055	66,055	66,055	66,055	66,055		594,495
TOGO		43,700		40,689		-	-	-	-	-		84,389
RD CONGO						-	-	-	-	-		-
TOTAL RECEIVED	206,848	232,383	182,463	127,305	537,925	590,325	164,964	295,645	110,560	439,244	7,300	2,894,962

23. For the period from 2015 to 2025, the cumulative contributions paid by the Contracting Parties amounts to **US$ 2,894,962.00, including the total of US$ 852,749, received in respect of the period from 2022 to 2025**. Despite these efforts, the level of contribution arrears is still very high and totals **US$ 5,173,848.82 (Table 2),** which the Secretariat should urgently recover from the Contracting Parties.

*Table 1: Received contributions of **US$ 852,749** to the Convention Trust Fund for the period: 2022 to 2025 (US Dollars)*

COUNTRIES	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL Received
	Received	Received	Received	Received	
BENIN	95,258	-	14,220		109,478
CONGO	47,640	-	-		47,640
COTE D'IVOIRE	-	-	50,866	-	50,866
GAMBIA	-	-	-	7,300	7,300
MAURITANIA	62,998	20,811	-		83,809
NAMIBIA	23,694	23,694	23,694	-	71,082
SENEGAL	-	-	284,409		284,409
SOUTH AFRICA	66,055	66,055	66,055		198,165
TOTAL RECEIVED	295,645	110,560	439,244	7,300	852,749

24. Since COP13, out of 20 Contracting Parties, only eight (08) have made a cumulative payment of **$US 845,449** from 2022 to 2024 and **$US 7,300 for 2025**, bringing the total payment received to **$US 852,749**.

25. The cumulative expenses for the period from 2022 to 2024 are **$1,235,754.31** compared to **$845,449** in terms of contribution received for the same periods, with the observation of a cash deficit as of December 31, 2024. The expenses are mainly made up of personnel costs (80 to 87%).

26. On April 22, 2025, the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention convened a Virtual Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting, co-chaired by Côte d'Ivoire and Congo, to discuss (i) unpaid contributions to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund, and (ii) the payment of Member States' arrears of contributions, totalling **$US 5,173,848.82**. This ministerial meeting enabled some Contracting Parties to renew their commitments by promising immediate settlement of the total amount of **$US 204,275.28**, representing the 2025 dues for the countries as listed below:

- ✓ **Cote D'Ivoire** **$US 67,198.83 (100%)**
- ✓ **Benin** **$US 23,694.00 (100%)**
- ✓ **Congo** **$US 62,908.40 (50%)**
- ✓ **Mauritania** **$US 50,474.05 (100%)**
- ✓ **Togo** **$US non defined**

27. The Secretariat shall continue its efforts to recover the arrears of **$US 5,173,848.82**. To this end, it shall explore recovery mechanisms in conjunction with the Contracting Parties to facilitate the payment of their arrears. This may involve individual discussions with each Contracting Party for an agreed payment plan.

28. The financial viability, visibility and functioning of the Convention depend on the ability of the Contracting Parties to honour their financial commitment to the Secretariat, on the regularity of their contributions to support the Trust Fund and the various work programmes. More efforts will therefore be required to collect unpaid pledges and outstanding amounts.

Decision CP13/4 on amendments to the Abidjan Convention texts

29. At its twelfth meeting, the COP congratulated the Secretariat on the successful organisation of the national and regional consultations on the amendment of the text of the Abidjan Convention. It also validated the final version of the amended text, as set out in Annex I of the COP working documents, and encouraged governments to request the Secretariat to convene, as soon as possible, a meeting of plenipotentiaries for the adoption and signature of the said text. The COVID-19 situation at the time and the current disastrous situation of the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund prevented this meeting from being organised. It is proposed that

Decision CP13/4 be extended to COP14 so that the meeting of plenipotentiaries can be convened as soon as financial resources permit.

Decision CP13/5 on the drafting of an additional protocol on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

30. The Secretariat is delighted to announce that a Draft Additional Protocol on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is now available. This draft was shared with the Contracting Parties in November 2024 for their comments and observations.

31. This draft Additional Protocol on MPAs was the result of a long process led by the ACP MEAs III Programme, funded by the European Union Commission, in collaboration with a number of partners such as the CSE, PRCM, IUCN, RAMPAO, COMIFAC and the WACA Programme. At the launch of the ACP MEAs III programme in March 2021, a working group tasked with drafting the Additional Protocol on MPAs was set up to advise and monitor progress. The working group met three (03) times (Saly, Senegal 14-16 February 2022; Somone, Senegal 24-25 July 2023; Dakar, Senegal 24-25 October 2024).

32. Before the last workshop, the draft Additional Protocol was referred to sister Regional Seas Conventions of Nairobi and Cartagena for review. At the October 2024 workshop in Dakar, Senegal, the draft Additional Protocol was endorsed by the Working Group and a final version was finalized.

33. The draft Additional Protocol on MPAs was forwarded to the Contracting Parties in November 2024 with a view to organising internal consultations and returning opinions and comments to the Abidjan Convention Secretariat for consolidation.

34. The next steps include a regional workshop before COP14 which will bring together stakeholders to consolidate the contributions from the Internal Consultations so that a final version can be presented for adoption at COP14. This will be followed by the plenipotentiaries for signature and, finally, ratification by the Contracting Parties.

35. The ACP MEAs III project also organised several side events at international forums to present the Additional Protocol, the progress made and the next steps of the roadmap.

36. The Secretariat's abilities and progress achieved have been recognised by development partners. This led to i) the finalisation of the report on the state of the transboundary marine and coastal environment between Benin and Togo, ii) participation to the regional consultative meeting of experts to develop the vision and roadmap for the creation, implementation and management of a trans-boundary marine protected area (TMPA) between the Republics of Congo and Gabon organised by the African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Natural Resources and the COREP from 23 to 24 July 2024 in Brazzaville, Congo.

37. The ACP MEA III programme is currently engaged in drawing MPA management plans for Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal.

38. The Abidjan Convention successfully mobilised GEF resources through the project ‘Strengthening the sustainable and inclusive management of the Grand-Bereby Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Côte d'Ivoire, recognised as particularly important for the conservation of the country's biodiversity’. The Convention Secretariat led the entire process, from field missions to the Project Preparation Grants (PPG) till obtaining the financing. The aim of the project is to set up institutional regulatory frameworks and technical capacities for MPA management, propose alternative livelihoods to support MPA management and build the capacity stakeholders capacities to manage and monitor the Grand-Bereby MPA.

39. Through the ACP MEAs III Programme and the Mami Wata project, the Convention has supported the creation of the ‘’Baie de l'Etoile‘’ Nature Reserve (Nouadhibou, Mauritania, July 2024) and the ‘’Donaten and Bouche du Roy‘’ MPAs (Benin, January 2022) respectively.

Decision CP13/6 on SDG14 implementation in Abidjan Convention Parties

40. The Secretariat is pleased to announce that this decision has been implemented through Decisions CP13/5, CP13/8, CP13/9, CP13/10, CP13/15 and CP13/16. These decisions aim to provide sustainable solutions to challenges in the marine and coastal zone, in particular integrated management of the marine and coastal zone, loss of biodiversity, pollution, climate change, etc.

41. Collaboration with WAEMU, which has adopted Community regulations, has made it possible to provide five (05) Contracting Parties with legal instruments for the sustainable management of their marine and coastal zones. The promotion of regional cooperation instruments continues with the ACP MEAs III and WACA projects and partners such as the PRCM.

Decision CP13/7 on Ocean Acidification

42. In view of difficulties encountered, the Secretariat has not been able to implement this decision significantly. However, mangrove reforestation activities have been carried out in Sierra Leone and Senegal by the ACP MEAs III programme. The Contracting Parties must continue their efforts until this decision is effectively implemented.

Decision CP13/8 on marine and coastal zone governance in the Abidjan Convention area

43. The implementation of this decision is consistent with that of decisions CP13/5, CP13/10 and CP13/14.

44. Pursuant to this decision, the Secretariat awarded grants to five countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Senegal, São Tome and Príncipe and Sierra Leone to implement Integrated Marine and Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) projects.

45. Similarly, these countries have benefited from capacity building from the "Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE)'' and ''International Ocean Institute of South Africa (IOI-SA)" which are centres of expertise mandated by the ACP MEAs III project to support their ICZM project implementation.

46. In the framework of the WACA project, the Secretariat organised a workshop from June 14 to 15, 2023 in Grand Bassam, with the objective of providing technical tools and strengthening the leadership of the Focal Points in the coordination of the efforts of the Contracting Parties, on the ratification of the protocols and COP decisions implementation.

47. Under the WACA programme, driven by UEMOA, the Convention Secretariat has contributed to the development of the Regional Strategic Investment Action Plan to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities and areas in West Africa. A regional resource mobilization strategy is under way.

48. Leaflets promoting these instruments have been produced by the ACP MEAs III and WACA projects.

Decision CP13/9 for the adoption of a regulation or a Community law implementing regulation for the transposition of the Additional Protocols into national law

49. The third ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) adopted five community legislation in environmental matters for the implementation of the WACA programme (West African Coastal Areas Program) financed by the World Bank. These legislations concern:
    - the Regulation on the protection and enhancement of the marine and coastal environment against pollution from land-based sources and activities, which has the general objective of preventing, reducing, combating and controlling pollution, including that spread by air, from land-based sources or activities located on Community territory, to protect and conserve the marine and coastal environment in the Union;
    - the Regulation on environmental norms and standards applicable to offshore oil and gas exploration and exploitation, with the aim of preventing, reducing or eliminating any pollution or damage to the coastal zone and the marine environment resulting from offshore oil and gas exploration or exploitation;
    - the Regulation on the sustainable management of mangroves, which sets out the principles and procedures for managing mangrove ecosystem resources;
    - the Regulation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, which aims to provide WAEMU Member States with a regional legal instrument to promote integrated planning and coordinated development of coastal zones and the marine environment;
    - the Regulation on common rules for the governance of coastal and marine areas, which defines the principles and rules for the governance of activities related to the protection and enhancement of the marine environment and coastal areas in the Union.

50. These regulations are based on the additional protocols to the Abidjan Convention, to which all WAEMU coastal States are parties.

51. These regulations aim to ensure the diligent implementation of the provisions of the said additional protocols, at WAEMU level, with regard to the challenges of preserving marine and coastal areas.
52. Several meetings with the focal points of the Abidjan Convention and the national institutions in charge of the marine and coastal environment have made it possible to adopt a framework for monitoring and reporting on these regulations, thereby contributing to the Abidjan Convention's reporting mechanism.

Decision CP13/10 on the drafting of a State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report for the Abidjan Convention Area

53. Continuing the Mami Wata project activities, the Report on the State of the Trans-boundary Marine and Coastal Environment (REEMT) between Benin and Togo has been validated by the Governments of both countries through a partnership between the ACP MEAs III programme of the Abidjan Convention and AU-IBAR. It would be desirable for this momentum to be maintained in order to cover the entire Abidjan Convention area.

Decision CP13/11 on collaboration with other Regional Seas Conventions

54. The Secretariat is pleased to announce the implementation of this decision through several collaborations with Nairobi and Cartagena Conventions. These two regional seas conventions have reviewed the Additional Protocol of the Abidjan Convention on Marine Protected Areas.
55. The Abidjan Convention issued a joint declaration with SST, WWF and the Nairobi Convention on Plastic Pollution at AMCEN in 2022.
56. The Nairobi Convention has asked the Abidjan Convention to take part, in April 2025 in Dar-Es-Salaam, to the validation workshop of the African Union's ocean governance strategy and to a capacity building session on the International Treaty on the High Seas.
57. In March 2025, the Convention was invited by the Cartagena Convention to present its experience on sargassum management at the joint meeting of the working groups on monitoring and assessment in Trinidad and Tobago.

Decision CP13/12 on Blue Economy in the Context of Poverty Reduction in Africa

58. The Secretariat, through the ACP MEAs III Programme, initiated a study with IOI-SA entitled ‘Overview of the status of the blue economy in the Abidjan Convention region’.
59. The Secretariat participated in the process of developing Côte d'Ivoire's national blue economy strategy.

Decision CP13/13 on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

60. In the Abidjan Convention region, Mauritania adopted a decree for the ratification of the High Seas Agreement (BBNJ), which aims to avert a biodiversity crisis in the high seas.
61. The Secretariat also participated in capacity-building meetings and panels for the ratification of the BBNJ Agreement. Awareness-raising efforts on the BBNJ among the parties continue. Efforts to raise awareness among the parties about the BBNJ are continuing and are focusing on the benefits of the treaty and the GEF financial support available for the ratification process.
62. A capacity-building workshop for the Parties on the content of the BBNJ agreement is scheduled for May 20, 2025, with the support of DOALOS.

Decision CP13/14 on the creation of an excellence prize of the Abidjan Convention on sustainable management of the marine and coastal zone

63. The decision has not been implemented due to a lack of financial resources.

Decision CP13/15 on Marine Spatiale Planning (MSP)

64. The Secretariat is pleased to announce that it carried out activities on MSP through the ACP MEAs III Programme through funding agreements signed with Contracting Parties (Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Senegal, São Tome and Príncipe and Sierra Leone) and centres of expertise "Centre de Suivi Ecologique" (CSE) and the

"International Ocean Institute of South Africa" (IOI-SA). The Secretariat also participated to international forums and formed partnerships to promote MSP.

65. The Convention, through an institutional collaboration with the African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and the WACA ResIP project teams in Benin and Togo, has continued the work initiated by the Mami Wata project (which ended in December 2021) on trans-boundary MSP between Benin and Togo. The report on the State of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Benin-Togo trans-boundary zone (REEM-T) was validated during a workshop held in Grand Popo (Benin) in January 2024. At the end of this validation, Ministers of Environment of Benin and Togo co-signed the preface of the REEM-T to endorse it as a governance document for the trans-boundary marine and coastal zone.

66. In September 2023, the Convention took part in the launching of the Global MSP 2.0 project implemented by IOC-UNESCO. This launch was an opportunity to showcase the Abidjan Convention's experiences and ongoing MSP activities. Similarly, the Convention, through the ACP MEAs III project, participated in the 2nd "MSPforum for AFRICA" in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in November 2023, where a presentation was made on the Convention's MSP achievements.

67. The Secretariat will organise a capacity-building workshop. One of the expected results is the setting up of a working group on MSP with IOC-UNESCO and IRWLearn; the Secretariat has a kit for partners training on MSP.

68. Also in November 2023, the ACP MEAs III Programme Coordinator participated in the "Marine Regional Forum" held in parallel to the "MSPforum for AFRICA" on the theme "Articulating marine spatial planning initiatives for the co-creation of regional visions".

Decision CP13/16 on marine plastic waste

69. The Secretariat is pleased to report that it developed plastics waste management policy toolkit, facilitated side events and mobilised Contracting Parties around the activities of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee tasked with developing a legally binding international agreement on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

70. In this context, the ACP MEAs III programme worked with several partners to implement Decision CP13/16 of the Abidjan Convention:

- Collaboration with SST has led to the drafting of regional and national plastics management policies:
  - ✓ a regional framework for the prevention and management of marine litter and plastic pollution;
  - ✓ the declination of the regional guidelines into National Action Plan on marine waste with a particular focus on plastic waste for three pilot countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mauritania.
- With PRCM, the ACP MEAs III programme participated in its Forums in 2022 and 2024 in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau respectively to :
  - ✓ present the Secretariat's activities, including plastics management policies at regional and national level;
  - ✓ initiating pilot experiments in selective waste sorting with a particular focus on plastic waste with schoolchildren in Senegal and Mauritania.
- Collaboration with WWF concerned calls for Member States to develop and implement national and regional measures and action plans to reduce plastic debris and microplastics (Resolution UNEP/EA.1/Res.6, paragraph 11). In this context, a joint declaration on the global plastics treaty was adopted at the 18th session of AMCEN4 18.2 in Dakar, Senegal.

71. The Abidjan Convention, with the support of the GIZ, financed the participation of few contracting parties in the 2022 AMCEN in Senegal.

72. As part of a partnership between GIZ, SST and the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, a training course on plastic waste management in the Convention countries is schedule for September 2025.

73. The ACP MEA III project has also hosted several side events at international forums to present the progress made in the fight against plastic waste:

- seventh International Marine Debris Conference in September 2022 in Busan (South Korea);

- sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Environment in February-March 2024 in Nairobi (Kenya).

Decision CP13/17 on the Youth Ocean Ambassadors Network

74. The Secretariat has begun to implement this decision by drawing up the terms of reference setting the Network of Young Ambassadors. Discussions with partners (All Atlantic Forum, Commission of the European Union, etc.) to share their regions experience have also been initiated. Financial limitations have contributed to the slow implementation of this decision.

Decision CP13/18 on action plans for the implementation of the additional protocols to the Abidjan Convention

75. In developing action plans for the implementation of each of the four additional protocols, the Secretariat, with the support of the WACA ResiP project, supported nine (09) Parties (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo) and Sao Tome and Principe, bringing to twelve (12) the total number of Parties with a national action plan.

Decision CP13/19 on the collection, management, and sharing of data and information (link with the Resource Center, the monitoring and evaluation system)

76. The Secretariat, continuing the efforts initiated under the WABICC project, has begun, with the support of the ACP MEAs III and WACA projects, implementing this decision by recruiting a firm to develop and implement the architecture of the Resource Center and the monitoring and evaluation system.

III. Conclusion

77. Despite institutional instability and cash flow challenges, the Convention Secretariat has been able to implement most of the Work Plan as validated by Decision CP13/2 on the 2022-2024 Work Programme.

78. In order to improve the Convention's financial situation, an urgent appeal was launched at the special meeting of Ministers held online on April 22, 2025. This meeting was an opportunity to make a plea to the Contracting Parties concerning the payment of their annual contributions and outstanding arrears to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund. All of which would provide the Convention with effective means to fulfil its mandate.

79. The Secretariat reiterates its urgent appeal to the Contracting Parties to support the Abidjan Convention by taking urgent measures that will lead to the prompt payment of arrears and contributions for the year 2025.

80. As mentioned above, the Convention is now engaged in several regional and global initiatives related to oceans and coasts, ranging from the blue economy to integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning and coastal resilience. In addition to the projects currently being implemented, several others are under discussion with partners such as the GEF and the World Bank.

81. All these ongoing and future initiatives will only take shape if the Parties fulfil their obligations to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund by regularly honouring the payment of their contributions and clearing their outstanding arrears so that the Secretariat can be self-sufficient.

82. Over the next triennium, the Abidjan Convention must establish itself as a financially sound mechanism capable of maintaining its own structure on a sustainable basis. The very viability of the Secretariat is at stake. The 2025-2027 work programme and budget submitted to COP14 are built with this in mind, and they charge 100% of the costs of the Executive Secretariat to the Trust Fund, as has been the case for almost five years now.